

*Northside Educational Improvement Council*

The meeting was called to order by President Kristi Bolstad at 6:00 p.m. in the NISD Board Room on Tuesday, November 7, 2006.

**Members Present:** Mary Adams, Diane Aguilar, Susan Allain, Robbie Bland, Kristi Bolstad, Christi Evans, Matt Foxhall, Brad Hebert, Lisa Holmes, Laura Lara, Elizabeth Moffett, Carolyn Mullins, Karen Nance, Jill Palmer, Rosemary Perez, Dori Peterson, Vicki Sills, Melynn Young

**Staff Present:** Dr. John Folks, Dr. Linda Mora, Dr. Sara McAndrew, Brian Woods, Barbara Parish, Dough Shudde, Linda Zarakas, Lynda Reyes, George Torres, Don Schmidt

**Guests:** Scott McKenzie, Jody Fries

**I. Approval of Minutes from Past Meeting**

Susan Allain made a motion to approve the NEIC meeting minutes from September 2006. Dori Peterson seconded the motion.

**II. Impact of the 4x4 High School Requirement**

Dr. Folks shared that he has written in his Monday message about the 4x4 (four required science and four required math courses) high school requirement and is very concerned. That is why he keeps sharing these information updates. Since he spoke to the State Board in September, (where he felt they listened to the concerns), public pressure may cause the State Board to revert to their original position. Now middle school algebra or geometry would not count towards the 4x4 requirement. Also, a 4<sup>th</sup> year of math with an Algebra II prerequisite (Pre-Calculus in NISD) would be required. Dr. Folks does not have a problem with 4x4 being required for the distinguished diploma, however students will be locked into specified courses, especially gifted kids, and preventing them from making more choices. In science, IPC (a specific science course) could still be one of the four courses; however, that stipulation will only be allowed for a couple of years. We're looking at our eighth graders next year and trying to make decisions now to make sure they will be covered. For example, what kind of physics are we talking about? Conceptual physics or "real physics?" We were even to the point of having a "Principles of Technology" course count towards science. This physics class is fine for the distinguished diploma but the recommended diploma needs to be left alone. The state is getting ready to force a lot of kids to the minimum requirements, and they won't be as prepared for college. Parents have already shared with Dr. Folks that their children will be moving to the minimum requirements so that they can participate in more electives such as band and art. He also doesn't see enough pressure being put on the state legislators from educators. There are 26 periods that now have specific courses assigned for graduation...if you graduate in four years, that's only 28 credits total, leaving only 2 credits for student choice. Dr. Folks suggests that universities can put these things into their admission requirements and not have them as high school graduation requirements. Nov 15-17 is when the State Board will meet and decide. Dr. Folks and other people who have testified will be arguing on our schools' behalf.

An NEIC member shared the ongoing difficulty in finding qualified math and science teachers graduating from our universities. Dr. Folks and many others agreed and shared their experiences with this. Another member shared that her daughter is being discouraged from becoming a science teacher by her professors. Kristi Bolstad asked about a zero period alternative. Dr. Folks shared that we are looking at doing that and summer school offerings in order to give high school students more time during the year to participate in electives. Summer school would be offered on a tuition basis.

Dr. Sara McAndrew shared a handout about the possible changes that the state board will be making to the previous draft of this new initiative.

### **III. Update on High School Allotments**

Dr. Sara McAndrew introduced Mr. Brian Woods, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, to share information on the HS allotment. HB 1 awards \$275 per high school ADA. NISD will provide \$200 per high school ADA with the remaining \$75 in a control account for special or district level programs. Allotments range from \$20,000 to almost \$650,000 per campus. There are five goals that individual high school plans must address in how they will direct the spending of these funds:

1. Increase percentage of students graduating from high school.
2. Increase enrollment in advanced courses, including AP and dual credit.
3. Increase number of students with recommended and distinguished diplomas.
4. Increase higher level achievement TAKS scores for reading.
5. Increase higher level achievement TAKS scores for math.

Dori Peterson asked, "Once the money is released, when will it be spent by campuses?" Mr. Woods responded that some of it may be spent right away.

There has been a long process in the development of the individual campus allotment plans. We are in the final phase of that process. The board will hold a public hearing and then vote to approve them in November.

Dr. McAndrew made a point about credit retrieval in which a student must have a 60-69 grade to enroll and re-test. Course retrieval is a different thing. Many campuses do this each 6 weeks and not wait for the student to have a semester failing grade.

Mr. Woods continued his presentation by sharing items common to many of the high schools' plans. Some of these include:

- Credit Retrieval Expansion
- Credit Acceleration
- Additional Staff
- Expanding AVID Programs
- Assisting students in paying for tests
- Additional tutoring
- Increased staff development
- Increased technology support
- Implementation of guided study halls
- Hiring student success advisors
- Providing TAKS preparation outside of the regular school day

Dr. McAndrew shared information about teacher training at various places (including UT) that helps prepare students for advanced testing. Mr. Woods also shared the individual high school plans. Rosemary Perez asked how this will affect middle school...what can we do? Mr. Woods said the commissioner shared that only the district money that was withheld could be used and they are looking at expanding AVID in middle school. Dr. McAndrew said to email her with any further questions.

#### **IV. Waiver for Early Release on January 19, 2007 for Stevens High School**

Stevens H.S. is hosting the Region IV Academic Decathlon and needs many staff members available to support that. They are requesting an early release schedule be implemented on Friday, January 19, 2007.

Laura Cohen motioned that the waiver be approved and Robbie Bland seconded. Susan Allain shared that this was a wonderful opportunity for people to volunteer.

#### **V. Demonstration of E-Gradebook**

Doug Shudde and Barbara Parishier demonstrated the new E-Gradebook and what the Parent Connection looks like. Parents can see their children's attendance, grades, assignments, special notes about assignments, course averages, special notes teachers can post for parents, etc. Mr. Shudde shared that he uses it to keep up with his own two children. Questions were asked about whether attendance accumulates during the year (yes) and if tardies are listed (yes).

Ms. Parishier said that Gradespeed is the company that developed this program for Northside; and they are based in San Antonio, so they can adapt things for us easily. Teachers can color code assignments, weigh the grades (for example, tests are worth more), and give assignment specifics (ex: due dates).

Rosemary Perez asked whether a parent could go to this report and determine which assignments were due to absences. Ms. Parishier shared that parents can't necessarily, but teachers can make special notes to parents in their gradebook about make up work. There is also a monitor built into the program that can send special notes to attendance officers, etc. Administrators can also determine when the gradebook was last updated by a teacher.

Dori Peterson asked when high schools can use Gradespeed. Barbara said they were looking at it. Elementary teachers are also taking daily attendance this way. Mary Adams shared that the one hour window to take attendance is very frustrating. She asked if the teachers aren't getting it done without reminders. This notice sometimes requires teachers to interrupt their lessons. Ms. Parishier shared that unfortunately state law doesn't allow us to submit attendance before 9:00 am, and campuses are on a tight schedule to get complete attendance records so the attendance secretary can complete their reports showing daily totals. Jill Palmer asked if a "Left Early" column could be added. Barbara said they are talking to Gradespeed about it, however at this time, teachers should use the comments section. Kristi Bolstad asked if upper grades could use a column to designate ISS kids and what happens when a teacher is absent. Barbara replied yes, that a column would need to be added. When teachers are absent, a paper attendance form is submitted to the office, and the attendance secretary enters attendance for the absent teacher. Carolyn Mullins asked if the high school principals had reviewed this product. Secondary schools use Excelsior. We are investigating the possibility of phasing in Gradespeed.

Mr. Shudde shared that this system is web-based, therefore, teachers can access it at any time. Dori Peterson shared that a lot of new high school hires asked why NISD doesn't use Gradespeed. Mary Adams asked why we couldn't do attendance first thing in the morning...Barbara shared that it's a security issue, and the program kicks you out after a certain amount of time. Kristi Bolstad asked about having different types of science grades. That can be done.

Dr. Mora shared that the elementary report card is much better now. The report card is a parent tool, not a teacher one, and now it is much more streamlined. Jill Palmer shared that she was glad the kinder report card is still developmental (they do a checklist in Microsoft Access). However, it is very difficult to complete in Access and requested that Dr. Mora, Barbara Parisher, and Dr. Reyes (along with Pat Mesquiti) please come back and fix it sometime soon. Dr. Reyes shared that many hours were spent on it and they are still wanting to do some new things. Dr. Mora shared that they are looking for a better solution for kindergarten.

## **VI. Discussion of 2006 Gold Performance Acknowledgement Awards**

TEA has released the list of schools who received Gold Performance Acknowledgements (GPA). Dr. Mora shared this list which was prepared for the board. Overall, the district did quite well. At the middle and high school levels, every school got at least one indicator each. Indicators were listed and include attendance, AP/IB results, commended performance in different subjects, comparable improvement in different subject areas, number of students in the recommended high school program, SAT/ACT results, and higher education readiness indicators. One point was made- you have to have 97% attendance to receive the attendance gold star indicator, and none of the elementary schools qualified. Many members agreed this was a very high percentage considering all of the childhood illnesses that young children may endure. A correction was made that one elementary indicator should read “science” and not “social studies.”

## **VII. Other Issues**

Barbara Parisher shared today’s mock election results. Perry won with 37% of the vote. Some schools were able to vote on a computer. It was a great lesson for the students.

## **Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by Dori Peterson and Diane Aguilar seconded.

The Northside Educational Improvement Council (NEIC) is the district decision-making committee established in accordance with Texas Education Code Sec. 11.251, and 11.252. NEIC has 39 members, including staff, parents, business, and community members. The purpose of NEIC is to involve professional staff, parents, and community members in establishing and reviewing the district’s and campuses’ educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs. Staff are elected for a two-year term by their staff peers; parents, business, and community members are appointed by the Board for a two-year term. NEIC meets at 6:00 p.m. on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month, in the Northside Board Room at 5900 Evers Road, unless otherwise posted. Meetings are open to the public. Items to be considered for the agenda may be submitted to either Kristi Bolstad, NEIC President, at Connally Middle School, (397-1000) or Linda Mora, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, at Central Office, 5900 Evers Road, 78238 (397-8635). Agendas of all meetings are posted at Central Office and at each school; minutes of all meetings are posted at each school.

### **NEIC MEMBERS:**

#### **STAFF REPRESENTATIVES:**

Primary: Mary Adams, Carson Elem.; Jill Palmer, Helotes. Intermediate: Wendi Costas, Blattman; Angela Fry, Knowlton. Elementary Specialist: Diana Aguilar, Ed Cody Elementary. Middle School (Academic Core): Lisa Holmes, Jordan M.S.; Kristi Bolstad, Connally M.S.; (Other):Cindy Plunkett, Pease M.S. High School (Academic Core): Romy Vela, Jay H.S.; Dori Peterson, Stevens H.S.. (Business): Carolyn Mullins, Business Careers High School (Other): Brad Hebert, Health Careers High School. Special Campuses: Vicki Sills, N.S. Children’s Center: Counselors: Melynn Young, Connally M.S.. Librarians: Laura Lara, Ward Elementary,. Nurses: Maureen Lopez, Galm Elementary. Elementary Administration: M. LaNeil Belko, Ward Elem. Secondary Administration: Susan M. Allain, Connally M.S., District-Level Prof. Staff : Rosemary Perez, Dir., Compensatory; Paraprofessionals: Robbie Bland, Mead Elementary

**PARENT REPRESENTATIVES:** Kim Neal, David Gannon, Dr. Bette Austin, Elizabeth Moffett

**PTA COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:** Meri Ann Christopher

**COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:** Karen Nance, Christi Evans, Mathilde Scully, David Maze, Jeannette Honermann

**BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES:** Matt Foxhaff, Candice Muster

**President – Kristi Bolstad; Vice President – Matt Foxhall; Secretary – Jill Palmer**