

**Northside Educational Improvement Council**

**I. General Meeting Called to Order**

The May 1, 2007 NEIC meeting was called to order by president, Kristi Bolstad, at 6:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Mary Adams, Diane Aguilar, Susan Allain, M. LaNeil Belko, Robbie Bland, Kristi Bolstad, Christi Evans, Matt Foxhall, Angela Fry, Brad Hebert, Lisa Holmes, Laura Lara, Maureen Lopez, Carolyn Mullins, Jill Palmer, Rosemary Perez, Cindy Plunkett, Vicki Sills, Melynn Young

**Staff Present:** Linda Mora, Priscilla Lurz, Lynda Reyes, Linda Zarakas, Sara McAndrew

**Guests:** Mary Usrey, Paul B. Langer

**II. Approval of Minutes from March 6, 2007**

Diane Aguilar moved to approve the minutes, Susan Allain seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

**III. GT/Enrichment Advisory Council**

The GT/Enrichment Advisory Council President, Paul Langer, presented an overview of the Council's work for the 2006-2007 school year, including recommendations for program development. Mr. Langer is an employee of USAA who serves on the Council. They worked through Priscilla Lurz, the Coordinator of GT Programs.

The Council recommends three additional elementary GT specialist units--four at the middle school and one at the new high school. They further recommend a full time GT teacher at each campus. 11 of the 20 most disadvantaged schools currently have half time GT specialists. These include Hatchett, Knowlton, Mead, John Glenn, Powell, Villarreal, Colby Glass, Mary Hull, Meadow Village, Adams Hill, and Valley Hi. Based on data gathered for the 2004-2005 school year, nominations at elementary campuses with full-time GT/Enrichment specialists averaged 70 per year per campus. At our campuses with half-time GT specialists the average was only 36 nominations per year. This trend continues into the 2005-2006 -school year. A sample of campuses showed that schools with full-time GT specialists averaged 79 nominations, while those with part-time GT specialists averaged only 47 nominations. This disproportion in the rate of nomination also impacts our ability to ID gifted economically disadvantaged elementary students at a rate that reflects their representation in the general NISD population.

Another concern is that Health Careers High School (the only stand-alone magnet school) does not have GT/Enrichment representation. This affects the campuses' ability to screen and identify gifted students, as well as facilitate the participation of their identified students (more than 200) in GT program services.

Dr. Mora remarked that the thinking behind the system at Health Careers was that a majority of those students were taking AP courses and participating in a GT environment already.

Laura Lara, the NEIC librarian representative, stated that when she was at an elementary school where there was only a half time GT specialist, they had to have district personnel assist in the screening testing. Her concern was that many young children didn't do as well on the exam because they were not used to the stranger. She suggested that a full time GT teacher on campus, (that the children were familiar with) would be able to do more testing and would really benefit those students.

The council also recommends that the District extend the contract days of the GT Testing Specialist from 193 days to 202 days and approve additional operating funds for the GT Testing Center.

As the school district grows, so do its programs. An increase in schools and students necessitates an increase in the time required for planning and preparing before and after each school year. For example, this year the GT Testing Center has screened 4,834 students for possible participation in the GT Program, an increase of 304 students, or 7%, over the previous school year.

GT Testing Center services have expanded to include a program designed to identify gifted students among our District's growing English Language Learner population. Over 25% (1,450) of Northside's newly enrolled students in the 2006-2007 school year indicated at the time of registration that someone at home spoke a language other than English. Through testing on one designated Saturday per semester, students who are native speakers of Korean, Japanese, and Farsi, among other languages, have been screened.

The October 2006 Texas Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data showed for the first time that the percentage of Hispanic GT student (45.7%) is larger than the percentage of white GT students (43.7%), as this further indicates progress towards the goal in the District's Improvement Plan of proportionally representing district demographics.

Teddy Beam participated in the Saturday testing that screened students who are native speakers of Korean, Japanese, and Farsi, among other languages. She said parents were there to help translate. They also tested in Thai, Russian, and Mandarin. It's going well, and it's a unique testing situation in San Antonio, and maybe even in the state. NISD GT staff also did testing in Braille and in the future will do ESL testing.

A 2006 summer camp for GT students at Title I elementary schools was successfully implemented. The camp experience will be offered again this summer in addition to a summer camp for GT middle school students from Title I schools.

Based on an idea by NEIC member Dave Gannon, a pilot academic mentorship program was implemented at Valley Hi and Knowlton Elementary Schools. These two schools

have half-time GT/Enrichment teachers. The GT/Enrichment Program partnered with the Junior Achievement Program to coordinate academic mentor visits at these schools. These mentors were trained in identifying traits of gifted children and asked to nominate students after providing the Junior Achievement Program enrichment curriculum. The results were the following: Valley Hi 2005-2006 Begin: 20; End: 23 -2006-2007 Begin: 15, End: 20. Knowlton 2005-2006 Begin: 32; End: 42 and 2006-2007 Begin 28; End 33

The enrichment experiences were well received by the students and staff. Both schools have requested that the program continue for another year. We hope to expand the program to other schools with part-time GT specialists.

The GT/Enrichment Council is working to increase the amount of money in the “iGniTe” Northside Education Fund designed to award mini grants to GT/Enrichment teachers and their students. Besides donations made specifically to this account, the council is organizing fund raising events.

The committee commends the district for:

1. Promoting the study of differentiated instruction
2. Approving and administering the PSAT/NMSQT to every 10<sup>th</sup> grader
3. Restructuring of the intensive College Test Prep Course called TOP NOTCH
4. Progress on a plan of action for vertical alignment between middle and high school classes of pre-AP/Honors and AP classes
5. Providing high school credit options such as geometry and AP Spanish at the middle school level
6. Successfully increasing the number of students graduating recommended and DAP
7. Having a high number of National Merit, National Hispanic, and National Achievement Scholars

Dr. Mora—every year we go through the difficulty of not having adequate funds to provide enough staff for proper identification and testing of the children.

#### **IV. No Child Left Behind Planning 2007-2008**

Rosemary Perez, Director of Compensatory Programs, shared plans for the use of the No Child Left Behind funds for 2007-2008. These plans must be reviewed, and input taken before submission to the TEA.

There are eight federal programs under this application:

Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs

Title I, Part C – Migrant

Title II, Part A – Teacher & Principal Training & Recruiting

Title III, Part A – Limited English Proficient (LEP)

Title II, Part A – Immigrant

Title IV – Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program

Title V, Part A – Innovative Programs

Mrs. Perez listed the campuses that are currently qualified to receive Title funds, and how that determination is made. Projections for the 2007-2008 school year place 32 NISD elementary schools and 6 middle schools as the recipients of these federal funds.

Each year, the district develops a plan of how NCLB funds will be used under each major category. This plan is based on last year's budget because we do not yet know how much money the state legislature will designate towards these programs for the 2007-2008 school year. A summary of next year's plan was provided to each NEIC member.

The needs assessment process is ongoing, and NEIC is a part of that process. Mrs. Perez shared a handout that is the current checklist for how programs are to be funded. Initial planning is based on exactly the funding received last year. In addition, three new schools will be Title next year: Driggers Elementary, one of the new schools, Oak Hills Terrace will return to Title funding, and Timberwilde will be added too. The percentage break-off will change from year to year; this year it is 48%, and 46% district-wide. Laura Lara asked about large schools that are on the edge and how they can get additional help. Mrs. Perez answered that they used other district funds to help out with funding additional positions, etc. We are fortunate to have Dr. Folks in the district now, because needs can be brought to the table every year and demographics are looked at instead of just formula funding. It is not only the basic allotment anymore. Jill Palmer asked a question about getting funds once a year. Mrs. Perez shared that almost always there are no changes during the school year. Now, if charter schools for example do not get to use all of their funding, they send it back to the school district and those dollars are re-distributed, sometimes late in the school year. Each year the budget plan is built on estimates since it is not yet known what the state will fund.

Susan Allain asked when money would be available for tutoring, etc. Mrs. Perez said that is a top priority and will probably hear about this during the summer. Operations are on last year's money for this summer and will be looking at next summer's programs when we get the information.

Mrs. Perez also provided an input form for all NEIC members to make suggestions for changes or additional considerations for the NCLB funds plan. She asks that all members send it to her office no later than Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>.

#### **V. Broad Prize National Finalist**

NISD has been named one of five finalists for the 2007 Broad Prize for Urban Education, a prestigious national award given annually to school districts that have made the greatest improvements in student achievement while closing gaps among ethnic groups and high and low income students.

We have been designated to receive \$125,000 for being one of the five finalists; and if we win, we would receive \$500,000 total for scholarships.

Dr. Mora shared the electronic presentation the NISD staff prepared. This presentation is available at the following website:

<http://broad.nisd.net/>

The schools being visited next week by the prize committee are: Marshall, Jones, Cable, Mc Dermott, and Raba. These campuses were selected based on specific criteria that came from the Broad Foundation. There was a very short turnaround time to get ready for the foundation's site visit, and Dr. Mora commends the staff members who worked diligently to prepare.

## VI. Other Issues

No other issues were presented at this time.

## VII. Adjourn

Melynn Young moved to adjourn and Robbie Bland seconded the motion.

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, Wanke 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 Foxhall, Candice Muster

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