

*Northside Educational Improvement Council*

**I. 6:00 p.m. General Meeting Called to Order**

The December 4, 2007 NEIC meeting was called to order by president, Kristi Bolstad, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mary Adams, Diane Aguilar, Susan Allain, Robbie Bland, Kristi Bolstad, Debbie Byrnes, Sue Casey, Christi Evans, Isabel Fears, Kathy Ferguson, Nancy Fox, Matt Foxhall, Lisa Holmes, Robert LeBlanc, Laura Lara, Beverly McCarthy, Elizabeth Moffett, Sunday Nelson, Kathryn Nicholson, Miranda Noack-Snider, Tesila Soliz, Rosemary Perez, Sherry Willome

Staff Present: Dr. Linda Mora, Alvin Bratz, Sara McAndrew, Marissa Jimenez, Sharon Sanchez, Pricelda Landry, Bill Hill, Dennis Alexander

**II. Approval of Minutes from October 2, 2007**

Sherry Willome moved to approve the minutes, Diane Aguilar seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

A general welcome was given by Kristi Bolstad and Dr. Mora gave a special welcome to new members who weren't in attendance at the committee's first meeting along with special guests attending this meeting.

**III. Identification of Technical Assistance Team Campuses for 2007-08 (TAT)**

A report was given by Dr. Mora to inform the committee that TEA has identified three NISD campuses that need to name Technical Assistance Teams. The TATs will assist in the development and implementation of their school improvement plan. Campuses identified are Excel Academy due to its dropout rate, and Ross and Pease Middle Schools due to their performance in science. Each campus must name a TAT team according to specific guidelines laid out by TEA of who is on a team. TAT members must be a subset of the school advisory team including community members, parents, an administrator, and must be led by an external person. The lead person will be Linda Zarakas, Director of School Improvement Initiatives. Ms. Zarakas met with each of the three campus principals and the middle schools' science departments to discuss historical data to begin preparing the groups with strategies for the TATs.

**IV. Discussion of the District Awards for Teacher Excellence Grant**

Dr. Mora led a lengthy discussion about NISD's eligibility to receive \$3,744,242 to award teachers a monetary amount for improving student achievement and for meeting district goals. There is a core team of five members: Dr. Mora, Kristi Bolstad, Sharon Sanchez, Phillip Linerode, and Pricelda Landry. Last week the contingency attended a mandatory meeting with TEA to discuss the potential grant. The goal of the grant is to award teachers who impact student achievement and campuses that need improvement. 60% of the money must be used to award classroom teachers and 40% is allowable for other activities. The core group met to determine which campuses are most in need

because it is not feasible to go district-wide with the grant since there is not enough money for the entire district. Potential campuses identified performed lower than district average proficiency on TAKS, are experiencing above average dropout rate (high schools only), or campuses with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. If the grant were given to the district, it must provide matching funds over a period of three school years which Dr. Mora explained could be an issue. In stakeholder conferences, school districts have expressed that they cannot afford to match the funds. If more districts opt out, there would be more money but that would mean additional matching funds would be needed too. Participation in the grant must occur for two consecutive cycles. At this point, the district needs to determine which campuses are eligible and identify goals for district award. The core group had an initial meeting to discuss what this will look like and what campuses would be considered. Campuses were ranked from high to low by percent of economically disadvantaged. Schools were grouped by levels: elementary, middle schools and high schools. A total of 23 campuses were identified as being in the top quartile. Campuses scheduled to receive funds under the Texas Educator Grant for 2009 were eliminated. The district is trying to decide if we should proceed at this point and is seeking input from NEIC. Dr. Mora then took a question and answer session from NEIC members. After the session, Kristi Bolstad took a vote of the committee members. 13 voted for proceeding with the grant, and 8 voted against it. Dr. Mora thanked NEIC for the great discussion and she will forward to the committee members research on how other districts around the country use incentive pay programs. A special NEIC meeting will be held on January 8 for further discussion on the DATE grant.

#### **V. Discussion Summer School**

Dr. Mora led a discussion about the possibility of operating a four day summer school with extended hours. At Dr. Mora's recent meeting of the Urban Curriculum Council, a group of the 10-12 largest districts in state which meets quarterly, it was discussed how some districts operate four day summer school. Four day summer school was received very positively because it provides three day weekends for teachers and students. NEIC members received the information positively, but raised concern about high school already going to 1:30. Concern was also raised about how the bi-lingual would be affected. Further discussion will be held at the January NEIC meeting.

#### **VI. Impact of 4 x 4 on Career & Technology Courses (CATE)**

A PowerPoint presentation was provided by Dennis Alexander, Director of Career and Technology Education, with support from Bill Hill, Head Counselor at Warren and Dr. Healy, Director of Guidance Department on the impact 4 x 4 on Career & Technology Courses. A schedule with 4x4 is hard to accomplish. Health Careers is on block and is not impacted. Block schedules allowed students to take 8 different subjects as opposed to traditional scheduling which eliminates four opportunities for taking classes. Projections show that NISD will lose 1,900 students in CATE courses if scheduling stays the way it is now. HB 3485 allows some courses to count as 4<sup>th</sup> year if they are similar and rigorous as 3<sup>rd</sup> year courses. Ideas suggested were to return to block or 8 periods, implement Career Investigation classes in middle school, encourage students who are interested in occupationally specific courses to put off taking PE until junior year, or utilize optional

zero hour and 9<sup>th</sup> hour to offer additional opportunities to students. Comments were taken from NEIC members.

**VII. Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) Report**

Dr. Mora provided a PowerPoint on a snapshot view of the 2006-2007 AEIS report. An update on the last year's disaggregated data provided some areas of positive performance and some areas that need improvement. In January, this will be taken to the Board along with campus performance objectives. Highlighted areas compared NISD data to state and region in ELA/Reading, math, science, and social studies and showed that NISD continues on an upward trend. Student groups in reading, social studies, and science continuous to be an area of concern and has been the focus of improvement efforts. Completion (graduation) rate is going down which is an issue of concern for the district. The dropout rate is decreasing .2 of a point and this is not an issue for NISD. Enrollment is continuing to grow at 200-300 students per grade level. The current enrollment is approximately 86,000. Student demographics show that economically disadvantaged, limited English proficiency grade placements and disciplinary placements were down in the district. In 2006 compared to 2005 graduates continue to go up with distinguished graduates. Data on student enrollment, staffing and tax rate information were also shared.

**VIII. Update on Parent Connection-Discipline**

A recommendation to pilot parent access to student discipline data in Parent Connection was presented by Kelly Smith. Parent Connection is hugely popular and posts students results for TAKS, assessments, absences, and enrollment. A pilot program for discipline data will begin and be used as an early intervention tool. This tool should promote communication among parents, teachers, students, and counselors. Parent Connection is timely data since it is updated nightly. Administrators input discipline offenses and is uploaded into CMS. Only the current year can be seen by parents and administrators. All incidents and actions will be loaded. Comments of teacher and administrators cannot be loaded. The teacher making the referral will not be put in the system. The descriptors were revised to make them more user friendly. The schools piloting the program will be Locke Hill, Rawlinson, and Clark beginning January 22, 2008. A letter will be sent to parents of these schools describing the discipline Parent Connection and how to access data. The pilot will be evaluated by keeping parent logs to get comments. An example of how to access the information was provided. A committee will reconvene before spring break to assess the program and determine whether or not to end, continue or expand the program to all schools. Questions and comments were made concerning the program. The next phase of Parent Connection will provide parents with the option of adding money into a student's cafeteria account and a review of history of lunch choices. Initially, the pilot will be for parents who are employees of Northside and will be available for five schools.

**IX. Other Issues**

None

**X. Adjourn**

The motion was made by Laura Lara and seconded by Robbie Bland 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.; Sherry Willome, Ward. Intermediate: Wendi Costas, Blattman; Sue Casey, Helotes. 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): Beverly McCarthy, Health Careers.; Dori Peterson, Stevens H.S.. (Business): Miranda Noack-Snider, Marshal H.S. High School (Other): Kathy Ferguson, Clark H.S. Special Campuses: Abby Kested, N.S. Vocational: Counselors: Kathryn Nicholson, Comm. Arts. Librarians: Laura Lara, Ward Elementary, Nurses: Nancy Fox, Leon Valley Elementary. Elementary Administration: Sunday Nelson, 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:** Debbie Byrnes, Robert J. LeBlanc, Elizabeth Moffett

**PTA COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:** Lois Pearson

**COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:** Karen Nance, Christi Evans, MathildeScully, David Maze, Jeannette Honermann, Isabel Fears

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

**President – Kristi Bolstad; Vice President – Diane Aguilar; Secretary – Sue Casey**