

Northside Educational Improvement Council

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

President Jill Palmer called the May 5, 2009 meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mary Adams, Diane Aguilar, Susan Allain, Anne Best, Robbie Bland, Sue Casey, Christi Evans, Isabel Fears, Lisa Holmes, Robert LeBlanc, Belinda Lerma, Beverly McCarthy, Kathryn Nicholson, Jill Palmer, Dori Peterson, Tesilia Soliz, Miranda Snider

Staff Present: Dr. John Folks, Dr. Linda Mora, George Torres, Sara McAndrew, Lynda Reyes, Don Schmidt, Linda Zarakas, Jackie Horras, Sharon Sanchez, Priscilla Lurz, Teddi Beam-Conroy, Yonne Avina

Guest: Paul Langer

II. Approval of Minutes from April 7, 2009

Mary Adams motioned and Susan Allain seconded the motion to accept the minutes.

Dr. Folk thanked everyone for completing the TAKS tests last week. He also mentioned that the swine flu has presented an interesting scenario. He recognized Dr. Fernando Guerra and Northside's Director of Health Services, Shirley Schreiber, for dealing with children and parents during this outbreak. As of yesterday afternoon, there were only two confirmed cases in Bexar County and 38 probable cases. Northside will not be shutting down a school with only two or three cases. The CDC said that schools will not close based on a few cases. Northside is closely monitoring the district attendance which is averaging about 3-5%. If the absentee rate hits 10-12%, then we'll get concerned.

It has been a very busy legislative session which ends on June 1st. There are three bills which are of concern for schools. The House Appropriations Bill calls for spending federal stimulus money to balance the state budget. Dr. Folks' mentioned that the he doesn't agree with it. The second bill contains three bills and all the bills will feed the district about \$10 million. In first year of bi-annum there will not be a lot of money for a district this size. The three bills contain an accountability issue. This will not mean less testing because there will still be TAKS and end-of-course testing at the high schools. One change will allow more flexibility with math and science courses for the 4x4 high school requirement; students will decide what electives to take. The distinguished (advanced) diploma will remain basically the same. There will be push for college readiness to prepare all students to go to college. Dr. Folks said that probably not all students will go to college, but the district needs to prepare them anyway. Also, there is consideration for providing districts the flexibility for number of indicators used

to determine ratings. This would alleviate the problem of one subgroup adversely affecting a rating.

Budget and Finance has been working on the district's budget with the board but it's going to be lean. The challenge will be salary increases but they won't be major. It is not known when the economy will turn around, but we're beginning to see some movement in two areas. One is from out of state people coming to San Antonio and still buying houses in our area. We are also seeing many students leaving private schools to attend public schools. We may have more growth than originally anticipated this next year.

III. Update on GT/Enrichment Programs by the GT/Enrichment

Priscilla Lurz, Gifted and Enrichment Coordinator spoke briefly before introducing Paul Langer, President of the Gifted and Talented/Enrichment Advisory Council (GTEAC). Mr. Langer presented the year-in-review of the council and GT. The council is comprised of volunteer parents and teachers. Mr. Langer explained that there are three committees in the council: program development for all students; public relations to increase awareness; and fund raising from NEF for GT Projects.

Program Development committee evaluated district growth and demographics relative to GT staffing. The committee identified an area to research next year related to curriculum and instruction for curriculum alignment at the elementary level. He thanked the district for providing the GT staffing by increasing staff. It is a goal to staff full-time GT specialist at economically disadvantaged schools. Another goal is to increase testing staff resources to accommodate district growth and diversity.

The Public Relations committee modified its meeting format in January by holding the GTEAC meeting with guest speaker Dr. Folks. The committee developed a one page letter to communicate key GTEAC information for 2009-2010 school year. In addition, it evaluated a survey mechanism to gather information, and is also developing a way to communicate with parents about GT.

Fundraisers included a trip to Laser Quest and bowling. A mechanism is being developed to request, evaluate, and award grants. This year there were four Ignite Grants for classes at Boone ES, Ward ES, Luna MS, and Zachary MS. He thanked the Grants and Recognition Department and Sharon Sanchez and her staff for assistance with Ignite Grants. Also he thanked Bonnie Ellison and staff for the work done for Ignite which is a designated fund of NEF.

The Enrichment Summer campus for GT and Title I, AVID coordinator, AP campus coordinator, Destination Imagination coach, Academic Decathlon coach, are additional ways NISD supports academic excellence. Also, the administration of PSAT/NMSQT saw an increase from 7 to 48 national merit semifinalists along

with 51 for national Hispanic finalist. Mr. Langer congratulated Dr. Folks as Region 20 GT Advocate of the Year.

Dr. Mora pointed out that the district continues to work on staffing for GT as budget constraints allows.

Dr. Folks mentioned that GTEAC really does a great job. They continually challenge the district but that's okay. We have school districts in the state that don't have GT specialists just like many schools don't have art teachers. We have to start talking about all the things going on with GT and we have more than doubled student enrollment in AP and dual credit in the high school level. A lot of good things are going on with the GTEAC council. The council has had to balance good discussions.

IV. Discussion of Excel Diploma from Home Campus

Dr. Mora discussed the recommendation for students completing their high school credits at Excel Academy to receive their diplomas from their high school home campus. There are more resources at home campus and recently there has been a slight decline in enrollment at Excel. By the time students go to Excel, they have accumulated 17 credits. Excel Academy allows for flexible scheduling and hours. There is a demand for allowing a student to get diploma from their home campus. A question was asked how this would affect home campuses attendance; it wouldn't. Dr. Mora said some of these students struggle because they're torn between getting a diploma from their home campus and working. The Excel program allows students to attend school any 30 minute window from 8:30-1:00 and stay a minimum of four hours.

Dr. Folks mentioned that these students already have 17 credits and have passed TAKS. They go to Excel because they have problems attending school on a traditional schedule. Allowing students to get a diploma from their home campus provides an incentive to finish school.

V. Revisions on 504 Federal Regulations

Dr. Mora talked about the Congressional amendment of the Individuals Disabilities Education Act by expanding the definition of 504 beginning January 1, 2009. There are six key changes to the act: new provisions add new major life activities; substantially limits is no longer considered the same as significantly restricts; episodic impairments in remission will result in eligibility; mitigating measures no longer considered in disability determination; guidance on interpretation of the law included; changes to regarded as analysis. The changes broaden the definition and the district needs to be really diligent since this will impact record keeping. There has not been a lot of guidance given on the changes.

Don Schmidt added that the district needs to decrease students in Special Education program. He indicated more students will be designated as 504 with maybe even a 10% increase. There is no funding for 504 from the federal or state

level. There is a designated coordinator on every campus, and parents cannot waive 504 designation.

Secondary campuses have already participated in a teleconference about the changes.

VI. NCLB Planning for 2009-2010

Sharon Sanchez distributed a handout with NCLB overview. There is a continuation with \$12+ million which will serve 46 Title I as well as an additional seven campuses. These campuses are: Ward ES, Rhodes ES, Northwest Crossing ES, Jordan MS, Rudder MS, Holmes HS, and John Jay HS. Funds will be used as follows:

- Title I, Part A services include (but not limited to) supporting supplemental reading and math teachers; academic support teachers; community support services; instructional assistants; counselors; instructional materials; high quality staff development
- Title I, Part A Stimulus includes a program that is aligned with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Stimulus). This included increasing efforts to institute rigorous post-secondary standard and high-quality assessments; enhancing pre-k to post-secondary data systems that track progress and foster continuous improvement; ensure continuing to improve teacher effectiveness; expands the state's support and effective interventions for the lowest-performing schools
- \$50,000 from Title I Part C will provide money for additional students
- Title II Part A will allow for staff development
- Title II Part D Technology Fund with \$122,825. 25% of these funds have to be spent on staff development
- Title II Part D will be announced in the release of the application in the fall 2009
- Title III Part A \$603,830 will maintain and current program services based on an assessment of campus and district needs
- Title III has been for immigrants but we did not meet requirements this year
- Title IV Part A funds are for the Safe and Drug Free School program for \$190,858 experiencing great reductions

VII. Update on Title I Stimulus 2009-2010

Dr. Mora discussed more about the designation of seven additional campuses as Title I. Campuses are now planning on how to allocate and use the additional funds. George Torres and his staff have made accounting adjustments that will allow for easier tracking of the monies. The district's website provides a link to information about what is being done with the stimulus money. There will be needs assessments and all kinds of data for campus improvement plans for the next two years.

Staff hired will be for two years and such language will be stipulated in their

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contract. There is a concern about carrying the cost through the years. The principals will be meeting again on May 19 to finish the planning process. Dr. Mora also mentioned that math continues to be an area of concern with all sub-groups. Campuses want long-term staff development assistance, citing a need for a Title I Professional Developer. Any instructional assistants at new Title I schools will have to be highly qualified. The Learning Tree Century 21 grant is expiring and the district is investigating ways to support these campuses.

Don Schmidt mentioned that the stimulus money is related to IDEA.

VIII. Other Issues

None

IX. Adjourn

Robbie Bland motioned to adjourn the meeting and Diana Aguilar seconded the motion. The mentioned adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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 1st 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 Jill Palmer, NEIC President, at Helotes Elementary School, (397-3800) 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.; Belinda Lerma, Krueger Elem. Intermediate: Jill Palmer, Helotes Elem.; Sue Casey, Scarborough Elem. Elementary Specialist: Diana Aguilar, Ed Cody Elementary. Middle School (Academic Core): Lisa Holmes, Jordan M.S., Anne Best, Jefferson M.S. (Other): Monica Pohovich, Jordan M.S. High School (Academic Core): Beverly McCarthy, Health Careers; Dori Peterson, Stevens H.S. (Business): Miranda Snider, Brandeis H.S. High School (Other): Vacancy. Special Campuses: Abby Kested, N.S. Vocational. Counselors: Kathryn Nicholson, Comm. Arts. Librarian: Janis Lappeus, Stinson M.S. Nurse: 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, Holmgreen Center.

PARENT REPRESENTATIVES: Debbie Byrnes, Robert J. LeBlanc, Lis Krimbill, Ché White

PTA COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Tesilia Soliz

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES: Christi Evans, Dave Gannon, Isabel Fears, Nancy Medrano

BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES: Matt Foxha11

President – Jill Palmer; Vice President – Beverly McCarthy; Secretary – Sue Casey