

Education Committee Minutes December 3, 2001

Present: Ken Young, Dick Dunning, Sue Dell, Barbara Busenbark, Sue Copley, Denise Holmes, Christy Greene, Diane Creeley, Jane Glines, Tam Drozin, Keith Burke, Paul Bartolomucci, Joe MacGregor, Anne-Marie Irwin

Meeting opened at 7:01

First agenda topic was a preliminary look at the NHEIAP test results for the last school year. **Jane Glines**, a life skills teacher at PES, discussed the **NHEIAP alternative test** that is required for special education students. This is a portfolio assessment of standards based knowledge, which allows all students to participate in the state tests. And according to the state, it encourages higher expectations of educators and greater learning on the part of students.

While the test is designed to improve education, it is the feeling of the special education staff that it has an adverse impact on students and teachers. Time taken away from the classroom to attend five training's and the 50 – 60 hours required per student to assemble each portfolio, is not a productive use of time. The state has mandated that some form of assessment must be in place for special education students, and we do not disagree with that philosophy. Our objection is to the labor intensive, time consuming accumulation of data that does little to enhance student learning. The feeling of the education committee is that we are very pleased with the life skills programs at all levels, and we encourage the teachers to spend their time with students not shifting mounds of paperwork in a make-work directive from the state.

The **NHEIP test results** for typical students was our second agenda item. These tests are a federally mandated assessment. It is important for this school district to be accountable and in order to do that we need standards to measure ourselves by. These tests serve to measure our district curriculum alignment with the state frameworks, and they help to focus our attention on improvements. We use the results to help guide our curriculum work in order to improve both learning and teaching.

Students at the 6th and 10th grade levels are tested in math, language arts, social studies, and science. Students in the 3rd grade are tested in language arts and math. As a district we look for patterns of improvement as we evaluate scores on these high standards tests, and we look for our students to make steady gains as we continue to implement curriculum changes to bring us into closer alignment with the state frameworks.

While the NHEIAP tests are one important indication of how we compare as a district to the state, they are not the only means of assessment. Much of the data promised by the state to help in interpretation is not presently available, but as it becomes available we will provide each principal with the information in order to determine school by school, class room by classroom how we compare to the state. But again, these tests are but one measure of assessment, and it is critically important that we continue to build into our curriculum work other assessment tools.

The **Local Education Improvement Plan**, goals one through three, were our next topic of discussion. This is a five year plan that outlines the direction that this school district will be taking. It follows on the work done several years ago in the Education Forum that involved scores of participants from over the district. This plan gives specific voice and direction to the guiding principals established at the forum learning. It also spells out exactly where we are going, how we intend to get there, and how we will know if we're successful.

Meeting adjourned 8:44, submitted by A-M Irwin, Education Committee Chair