

HYDE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

To: Hyde Park School Board
From: Shelley Mathias
Subject: Principal's report
Date: May 15, 2010

Adequate Yearly Progress

I am pleased to report some significant improvements in our NECAP results for the 2009. The school achieved adequate yearly progress in the category of all students in both math and reading. We did not achieve AYP for the category of students in Free and Reduced Lunch however we did see good growth in the scaled scores for both FRL and students with disabilities. Despite the improvements, HPES is still a school in improvement because of the FRL category. The results of the scores for students with disabilities are not included in the calculation because of the size of the group (statistically too small and embargoed). We will look at the results during the meeting on Monday.

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American Education Research Association

I attended the AERA Annual Conference in Denver; a massive conference that offered participants the most recent research in all areas of education and social issues. I presented my research in a session that included a study from China and Chile as well as two other studies from the U.S.. All of them had a clear connection to the issue of finance, which I found very interesting (Chile pays for schools based upon attendance, bi-lingual students cannot study in their language despite a constitutional right to do so because there is no money for bilingual texts). I attended several sessions on evaluation in anticipation of the work that ADCO will be doing in that area this summer. I learned about a very thorough system for teacher induction in the state of California which I will be speaking to Dan Regan about at greater length this summer (in his role as Dean at JSC). I also listened to a panel from the University of Chicago report on the use of the Danielson Rubric in the Chicago Public Schools. Results are still preliminary but 56 schools are using the metric.

I was very interested in a session on Value Added Measurement (VAM) which is a system that attempts to attribute the value that a particular teacher or school adds to cohorts of students over the course of a specified period of time. It involves examining scores from at least three years to determine any growth. The cohorts change and the growth model doesn't follow one cohort through the system. Secretary Duncan is an advocate of VAM in his "Race to the Top" – which demands a system that incorporates student test scores in the measurement of teacher effectiveness. As this was related to the area of my research, I was particularly interested in how uncontrolled variables would be handled. The construction of Value Added Measurement would be extremely difficult to accurately determine at the teacher level. The formulas do not adequately control for factors such as transience, complexity of mix of students with disability, initiatives within a school, prior instruction, or level of deficit upon entering school (among a few).

There vast majority of attendees at the conference were in higher education, policy and government. Very few were directly involved in the delivery of primary and secondary education. There is a great deal of worthwhile information presented which can be of value. Additionally, it is important to be aware of (and challenge) some of the research that is being presented because of the potential to impact schools.

Human Resources

We have received over 90 applications for the P.E. position. I have a committee who will be reviewing the applications and beginning interviews. We will be involving Eden in the selection committee as well.

We are also screening applicants for the Functional Behavior Specialist position. The need for this particular position is so great that this would be my first priority in the School Improvement Grant. The FBS would substantially reduce the amount of time that special educators are diverted from instruction and I am diverted from instructional leadership duties. We have not received as many applicants for this position but we do have sufficient qualified applicants.

Senator Sander's Town Hall Meeting

I attended Senator Sander's Town Hall Meeting at the Fred Tuttle Middle School on Monday, May 10. The meeting was reasonably well attended, primarily by educators but there were parents in attendance. Senator Sanders appeared to have a good understanding of the deficiencies of ESEA (the reauthorization of NCLB), and the Race to the Top program which he clearly stated was decidedly inappropriate for rural states that simply could not compete against the larger states. He also indicated that he did not agree with a program that put more resources in the hands of schools doing well when struggling schools with limited resources received

nothing. He clearly understood the inequity in the legislated demand for ever increasing scores despite the differences in starting points. He also alluded to the fact that Vermont's NAEP scores were a clear indication of how well our students were doing as compared to other students in the nation. The vast majority of comments made by the public brought up the points we are all well aware of in terms of the deficiencies of the law:

The inappropriateness of moving Alternative Assessments for significantly disabled students from the student's IEP goals to assessments on academic subject was protested. This refers to the new requirement that demands that a student's growth based upon IEP goals is no longer allowed. Now teachers must develop Alternate Assessments based upon the grade level standards. For example, a fifth grader's IEP goals may be life skill such as identifying a nickel, telling time or buttoning a shirt may be an appropriate goal for some students, but the alternative assessment must somehow test the student on their understanding of grade level standards such as probability and statistics or an understanding of volume.

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2010 Budget Projection

The Central Office has projected a small fund balance. In the interest of conservatism, I would prefer to hold to the projection of a small (proportionally) deficit view in light of the exceptional costs incurred this year through the arrival of so many new students with needs.

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ADCO

The Administrative Council has been working on professional development for next year which will be tied to the work that has been done this year by the Curriculum Council in the area of

goals and learning principals. LNSU will not be absorbing as many professional days as it has in the past two years in response to principal input.

There will be an ADCO retreat in the June to focus on a comprehensive and uniform system of evaluation.

Community

Board Guiding Principles:

- To address community expectations the board commits to generating, assembling, examining and disseminating relevant data on school, program and individual performance.
- Assessment data will be used to recognize success and to make program improvements.

End of Year Schedule and Activities

The last day of school is Wednesday, June 16th. Graduation will be Monday, June 14th at the Hyde Park Opera House. The Sixth Grade trip is on Thursday and Friday, June 10th and 11th. Students will be informed of their classes for 2011 on the last day of school. That information will go home in the report cards. We will hold a Field Day from 9:00 to 2:35 on the last day of school. This was a great success last year. Students and staff had a wonderful time playing together.