



## **Contract for Excellence (C4E) Public Hearing Minutes June 30, 2008**

- Review programs provided by external partners and examine fiscal support for those with improved results for students (cost per pupil)
- Time on Task for HW Smith: Concerns regarding increased class size was raised; Response to Intervention concerns about time frames; projected class size for the 3 kindergarten classes with allegedly 90 students enrolled.
- Restructuring of Classrooms/Programs at Corcoran: Are there classes for “repeaters”? There was a discussion on the importance of mixed groupings to ensure students were learning from each other.
- AQE: Stated there was a survey to gather input with respect to use of C4E funds. Feedback: Full Day Pre-K (w/transportation); Literacy focused after school programs and align with community programs; Parental involvement – literacy support for parents such as read nights with funding for refreshments etc. Perhaps quarterly literacy events (possible through Title I – Parent Involvement fiscal resources); books that are culturally diverse in all schools (classrooms and especially for distribution to families) and matching books to community efforts including the SCSD PUMP Bus.
- Leadership: Shifting of administrative staffing rather than “new” administrative staff each year. Focus on instructional leadership (DL)
- Bellevue Middle Academy: What is in place to ensure that students are prepared as they enter High School? Community School focus promoted involvement of parents (ex. selection of previous school administration).
- Early intervention: PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> emphasis with intensive resources – additional targeted resources towards students at 4<sup>th</sup> grade plus to ensure preparedness for rigor of High School. Supported the idea of expanding Pre-K services and increasing literacy supports at the primary level.
- Question: Use of funding NJROTC as opposed to targeting resources to teach reading/heighten literacy PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grade (including parental involvement). Can the C4E funding be used for NJROTC? Concern that NJROTC is the most effective approach to promoting discipline, motivation, improved behavior? Have we considered programs such as outward bound? New middle school foundation is expeditionary learning (outward bound) (DL).

- America Reads – Partnering with higher education. Jenna Foundation – tutoring programs with institutions of higher learning.
- National Action Network: Behavior and in-school suspensions. Opportunities to improve literacy and conflict resolution strategies when students are assigned to in-school. The experience should be targeted to address the specific behavioral, social, and literacy needs. Improve communication between schools and home to ensure that the parent/guardian is aware of what has been targeted.
- Identification of students with possible disabilities early in school career (ex. – all students at the kindergarten level). Target the interventions and services to address the specific defined needs of students. Ensure that parents are provided the supports and services are provided to students.
- Back to the Basics – Handwriting expectations were discussed; Discipline, manners, etiquette, and respect needs to be expected, reinforced, and enforced. Needs to be a greater emphasis on student behavior and management in the classroom/school. Challenge students to meet expectations. Suggest ensuring that consequences are meaningful and purposeful experience. After school detention as possibility as a consequence. Keep class size smaller will assist with reducing number of management issues and possibly fewer discipline issues. Concerns about class sizes as transfer (Huntington). There is a plan in place (GW). Resources to support “stretch learning” for all students; Community wide dialogues, valuing cultural differences, and training for staff. Emphasis on rigor, relevance, and relationships. The relationship component is the key between staff and students (CV).
- AQE: Maintain the focus and consider all ideas and strategies to ensure that all students can achieve literacy. Recognizing the community for the work and the information that is being shared to best serve all students. Compliance and community involvement are essential; Title I and funding for books is allocated in other budgets (CV). Suggestion: Targeted Community Forums to discuss and make impacts on student literacy.
- Use of the C4E Money specifically – how is this money specifically used to impact students – there are other funding areas – but that is not the focus of this forum.
- Discussion: Programs and supports for students struggling with behavioral and discipline issues.
- Writing: Ability of students to express thoughts and understanding through the written word. Students with behavioral difficulties often have significant difficulties with respect to reading and writing. Improved literacy in the aforementioned areas would result in improved self-concept and reduced behavioral challenges. More testing to ensure that students do not have a

disability that is impairing the ability to learn. Define problems before they enter the 4<sup>th</sup> grade or there is a heightened risk of failure.

- Corcoran Changers: Transition of students from “alternative” programs (Beard/VINTA) providing an 18 hour course – conflict resolution. Truancy programs with mentors to experience the possibilities of the future. Mentoring programs and structured tutoring/homework support programs. Read materials that all students find relevant to their personal experiences. Bullying is an issue at many schools (ex. cyber bullying). Need to address the issues that are impacting teaching and learning. Improve communication, opportunities to support within the school (heighten visibility) for parents and community partners.