

Educational Advocacy Committee (EAC)

Meeting Minutes

July 1, 2009 – St. Margaret's Hospital

5:30 pm

I. Welcome

Dr. Con Spirrison welcomed all the attendees and reminded everyone to pick up the meeting materials stacked at a near-by table. Each attendee then introduced themselves and the organization they represent.

Dr. Con Spirrison – EAC Co-Chair, retired Superintendent of Deer Park School District
Ms. Bev Malooley – Small Business Development Center Director, IVCC
Ms. Debb Ladgenski – Economic Development Director, City of Spring Valley
Mr. Steven Wroblewski – Curriculum Director, LaSalle-Peru Township High School
Mr. Jim Carlson – Assistant Regional Superintendent, LaSalle County ROE
Dr. Jerry Corcoran – President, IVCC
Dr. John Piano – Piano Chiropractic
Dr. Michael Driscoll – Carus Chemical
Dr. C.G. Pillai – EAC Co-Chair, Carus Chemical
Dr. Kim Newbold – Retired FBI Agent, Adjunct Instructor – IVCC
Mr. J. Burt – President, North Central Regional Betterment Coalition

Dr. Spirrison provided an overview of the meeting and planned to conclude by 7:30 pm.

- a) Dr. Spirrison explained that the North Central Regional Betterment Coalition (with the EAC as a sub-committee of the NCRBC) and *Advance Illinois* are two separate and distinct organizations.
- b) Dr. Spirrison shared that the EAC's primary focus is enhancing learning opportunities for people in our area. The EAC seeks to make the community better by supporting the continuous improvement of the educational performance of our local schools through the improvement of the students' educational performance.
- c) *Advance Illinois's* agenda focuses on state legislative policy and funding issues.
- d) Dr. Spirrison provided a brief history of the EAC planning team and introduced each of the team members present.

II. Questions & Priorities

- a) Dr. Spirrison asked attendees who were present at the AI/NCRBC Mendota Town Hall Meeting to share which session(s) they attended. Dr. Spirrison requested the Mendota Town Hall Meeting attendees to share the ideas that came out of their respective breakout session(s). Dr. Spirrison asked each attendee to review the breakout session notes that he just received from *Advance Illinois*.
 - a. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT – Dr. Pillai and Dr. Driscoll reviewed and clarified the notes presented by AI.
 - b. CAREER PREPARATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Ms. Ladgenski reported on this breakout session. The section heading – “Student Support & Innovation” – from the AI report did not match up with the topic prepared by NCRBC, however, the bullet points were consistent with what was shared at the Town Hall Meeting. Discussion focused on IVCC, LPHS's majors, soft skill development, American Diploma Project, and how to target the “general kid”.
 - c. STANDARDS TESTING & MEASURING SUCCESS – Mr. Jim Carlson reported on this breakout session. Discussion initially focused on the bell curve research and the need for “power standards” – along with the disconnect between the NCLB assessments in Illinois between elementary school (ISAT) and high school (PSAE). Mr. Carlson commented on the

national discussion centered on using a growth model for NCLB accountability purposes as opposed to the current high stakes testing model. Mr. Carlson shared that a key question is – “What does a successful person look like?” – and how do schools measure this in authentic and reliable ways. Mr. Carlson also reported that the information printed on the AI report did not match up with what was discussed in his breakout session. It was agreed to contact AI for clarification.

- d. SKILLS & TECHNOLOGY – Mr. J. Burt summarized this breakout session.
- e. TEACHERS & PRINCIPALS – Discussion on the State changing the principalship training program requirements along with how to effectively support teachers – especially those that are either struggling or burned-out.
- f. SCHOOL REPORT CARDS – Dr. Spirrisson will contact AI on where this section came from.
- b) New Priorities – The group reviewed the priorities submitted by the attendees prior to the meeting and discussed any patterns among the list. It was agreed to use the list as a starting point.
- c) Other – Mr. Burt suggested that the EAC conduct an evaluation of *Advance Illinois’s* recent recommendations in order to be prepared to either support or question.

III. Potential Starting Projects

Dr. Spirrisson presented the following project topics as possible starting points -

- a) Parent Training
- b) Business Partnerships
- c) Outside Experts in the Classroom
- d) Other

The group agreed to address the following topics with the names of EAC members willing to serve on the project committee:

- 1) Parent Engagement –
 - a. Dr. Michael Driscoll – Chair
 - b. Dr. C.G. Pillai – Scribe
 - c. Mr. J. Burt
- 2) Business Partnership/Outside Experts – (The group agreed to nominate a chair and scribe at a later date.)
 - a. Debb Ladgenski
 - b. Dr. John Piano
 - c. Mr. J. Burt
 - d. Dr. Jerry Corcoran
- 3) Relationships/Relevance/Rigor & Transitions Between Grade Levels – (The group agreed to nominate a chair and a scribe at a later date.)
 - a. Mr. Jim Carlson
 - b. Dr. Kim Newbold
 - c. Mr. Steven Wrobleski

IV. Next Meeting

Dr. Spirrisson suggested meeting as a full committee on a quarterly basis with sub-committees setting their calendars in-between full committee meetings. The group agreed that this would be the best plan.

The next meeting will be held in early October 2009 – with the final date to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Steven Wrobleski
July 6, 2009