

Educational Advocacy Committee (EAC)
Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2010 – St. Margaret’s Hospital
5:30 p.m.

I. Welcome

Dr. Con Spirrison welcomed all attendees. In attendance were:

Dr. Spirrison, Christine Benson, J. Burt, Jim Carlson, Mike Driscoll, Tina Hardy, Karla Konieczki, Debb Ladgenski, Jay McCracken, Steve Malinski, John Piano, C. G. Pillai, and Steve Wroblewski.

The meeting convened on a motion by Piano and seconded by Pillai

II. Minutes

Minutes from the October 21, 2009 and the January 27, 2010 were reviewed. Piano motioned to approve the minutes, Konieczki seconded and all approved.

III. Poverty Simulation Program

Steve Malinski from the University of Illinois Extension introduced the Poverty Simulation Program. This program is used to sensitize people to the struggles of those living in low economic conditions. It involves role playing and can be utilized for groups up to 120 people. Malinski recently worked with a group from the United Way Agency. Members of the EAC expressed interest in the program and suggested that it may be used for staff development with teachers.

IV. Committee Reports

a. Parental Engagement Committee

Jay McCracken along with other members of the Parental Engagement Committee presented a power point presentation at the LaSalle County Superintendents' meeting. It was well received. They have also offered to present this information to other groups. There has been some interest by the school leadership in Mendota and Streator.

b. Community Partnerships

Ladgenski read the minutes from the committee’s April meeting. Members of the group then asked Wroblewski if they could help in any way with L-P High School’s That Work program. Wroblewski indicated that they could use partners and contacts to present career information to student groups, as well as mentors and/or businesses willing to offer internships. Further discussion was held on the success and outcomes of the program. The committee will schedule a future meeting to include Wroblewski and Mary from the Area Vocational Center to determine a plan of action.

c. Transitions/Rigor-Relevance-Relationships

The group has not met since the last EAC meeting. Carlson gave a brief explanation of their Committee’s purpose to new EAC members.

d. Other Committees

No others formed.

V. Suggested Reading

Spirrison gave an overview of the book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* by Diane Ravitch. This prompted an extensive discussion of testing, school financing and politics. Questions arose as to how we knew if we were really going in the right direction? What do we base a successful school on? What are the expectations of the community? The group did agree on the needs of teachers to focus on the how and why and not so much on the what. They also agreed that the emphasis on innovation and creativity is important and it sets the United States apart from other countries.

VI. Review EAC History & Progress

A brief background of the EAC was presented by Spirrison. The EAC has been in effect approximately 2 ½ years. It was initiated by Pillai and Spirrison as an off shoot of the NCRCB. The group's first major initiative was arranging the Mendota Town Hall Meeting in partnership with Advance Illinois. Following the town hall meeting the initial Educational Advisory Committee meeting engendered the creation of the three committees reported on earlier. This is the fourth meeting of the EAC.

VII. Potential New Initiatives

Driscoll requested that the membership consider developing a position paper directed to legislators to encourage them to improve their methods of school funding. Pillai, Spirrison and Driscoll will meet to develop a draft.

VII. EAC Goals & Directions for 2010

Spirrison will e-mail the EAC members the following goals for review and future discussion.

1) A goal of EAC - help neighborhoods and communities develop social, communication, and trust resources and capacities for their own growth and improvement which might then be of use in improving their school.

2) A goal of EAC - assist in providing a framework for individuals, neighborhoods and communities through which they can more easily see the relationship of their school to their own quality of life improvement. How do school, government, church, and neighborhoods contribute to better living for each of us?

IX. Next Meeting

The Next meeting of the EAC will be scheduled sometime in August of 2010. Committee meetings may be ongoing, as to the wishes of the committee members.

Meeting adjourned on a motion by Burt and second by Pillai.

Respectfully submitted,

Debb Ladgenski