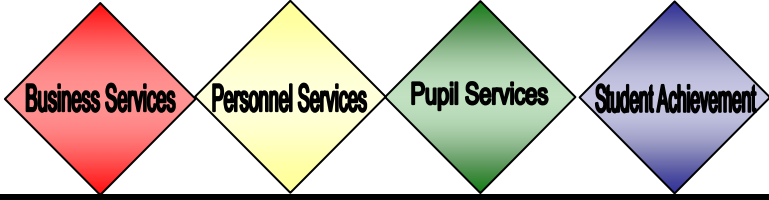




School District of New London



MONTHLY UPDATE

By: Bill Fitzpatrick
 District Administrator
 Date: April 2009

Project Lead the Way

We met with state representatives of Project Lead the Way (PLTW) on March 25. PLTW is a nationally recognized pre-engineering curricula for middle and high schools. We were also excited to learn about a new extension of the curriculum into Biomedical Sciences. With its strong partnership concept, PLTW leverages the collective knowledge and efforts of secondary schools, colleges and universities and industry to give students a rigorous, relevant, reality-based knowledge to better prepare them for college. The representatives discussed the curriculum and professional development with some of our science, math and technology education teachers. Kathy Gwidt will be presenting a plan to incorporate this curriculum into our middle school next year and high school course of studies in the following year at our April 13 meeting.

4-year-old Kindergarten

We continue to explore 4-year-old options for our community. We will be hosting a dinner meeting for child care providers on the evening of April 15. Ruth Chvojicek, an expert on the topic, will facilitate the discussion around the concept of Community Collaborative and what it might mean for New London. We have invited child care and pre-school providers to join us for dinner at 5:30. Ruth will help those attending understand the collaborative approach. We will be seeking a commitment from those attending that will be necessary in order to continue to move forward. With a commitment, a formal implementation plan will be developed to be shared with the Board. Absent the commitment of enough key partners, we will be unable to proceed. Please feel free to join the group for these discussions. Let Jill know if you plan to attend so that dinner arrangements can be made.

Parent Advisory Council

The PAC will next meet on Monday, May 18, at 7:00 p.m. The topic for the evening will be the Career Portfolio and Advisement Program that was shared with the full Board at our last meeting. In light of the tragedy involving one of our recent graduates, we will also share the results of the Youth Risk Behavior survey that was also shared with the Board.

Policy and Technology Committees to Make Recommendations

The Policy Committee has been meeting to update those policies related to the use and misuse of technology in our schools. They hope to have their recommendations ready for Board review in May or early June for adoption next year. The Technology Committee is recommending that the new policy include teacher competency in the area of technology use as a condition of employment. That language will be added to the policy statement before the next Policy Committee meeting.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) appropriates significant new funding under Special Education and Title 1. The overall goals of the ARRA are to stimulate the economy in the short term and invest in education and other essential public services to ensure the long-term economic health of our nation. The direction given by the Department of Education rests on four guiding principles.

1. Spend the funds quickly to save and create jobs.
2. Improve student achievement through school improvement and reform.
3. Ensure transparency, reporting and accountability.
4. Invest one-time ARRA funds thoughtfully to minimize the "funding cliff" when the funds are no longer there.

There are a great number of limitations in trying to accomplish these goals because they were appropriated only through Special Education and Title 1. Any expenditure must meet the strict guidelines of those federal programs and may not be used to replace current spending in those areas. They must also be used to benefit the student populations for whom those laws were written. As new guidance comes to us from the state and federal departments of education, we will develop plans that will maximize those funds to the greatest number of students. Because these funds must be spent by the end of the 2010-2011 school year, we will be looking to use the money to improve teaching for all students as best as we can.