

# The Future of Education in Peoria

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*Issues and Opportunities for Moving Forward  
Together in Peoria Public School District 150*

A Community Summit in Open Space  
June 3-5, 2002 - 5:30pm to 9:30pm

**Welcome back!** Please take some time to review this record of what has been most important in our conversations these last two days.

As you go through it, please give special attention to those issues and conversations that you have not yet been directly involved with. If you have any questions about any issue, now is the time to seek out the convener or participants from that session and get those questions answered. After you have reviewed these notes, use the space below to identify and rank those issues that you feel are most important for the future of education in Peoria.

Please vote for the importance of the issues -- not the quality of the notes captured here. Write the issue numbers for your top ten issues in the space below and THEN bring this page to the computer room to enter your votes.

**Please complete this form BEFORE you come to the computers to vote... it will go a lot faster and easier for everyone that way!**

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**An open invitation from the District 150 School Board to all persons interested in...**

## **The Future of Education in Peoria**

*Issues and Opportunities for Moving Forward Together in Peoria Public School District 150*

If you have a passion for youth and education and an interest in the future and success of Peoria Public Schools, we need you!

**Join us for a three-evening Public Schools Summit  
June 3rd-5th, 2002, 5:30 to 9:30 PM each night  
in the Lincoln Middle School Gymnasium  
RSVP Required by Friday, May 31st**

You are invited to participate in a District-wide open forum discussion about the future of public education and its impact on our community. We will use a wide-open process for this event, in which all forum participants will work together and directly to create our working agenda and outcomes.

Our purpose is simple and important: to bring together concerned people from all across District 150 to create a shared vision for our public schools. The results of our work will provide the foundation for moving forward together.

This is an exciting time in our school district. We have many changes and opportunities on the horizon. Because you care about education in our community, you have the skills, experiences and insights that are essential to make our dreams for our children become reality.

None of this can happen without open, honest conversation and commitment from each and every one of us. Please join us for this important event and be prepared to be surprised by what we can do together.

Pre-registration AND pre-payment of the \$15 registration fee is required. The fee will help cover some of the costs. Scholarships will be available according to need. Total registration is limited, but open to ALL. Please commit to attending all three evening sessions. The attached registration form must be returned and payment made not later than Friday, May 31st. See form for details. To apply for a scholarship, or for additional information, contact: The Office of School/Community Relations at 672-6745.

Food will be provided during the three meetings. Parking is available at the Woodruff parking lot and participants may ride a shuttle to the meeting.

Your District 150 School Board looks forward to working with you!

## What Happened?

On June 3rd, 2002, two hundred people responded to the Summit Invitation Letter. They gathered in Open Space\* -- with no more agenda than what is laid out in that letter. An hour or so later, they had raised more than 60 major issues related to the future of education in Peoria District 150 and arranged them into a 5-session working agenda. They added several more on the second night, so that in the first two evenings, they self-managed about 70 working conversations and documented a total of 50 of those sessions.

On the third evening, each participant received all of the notes from all of the sessions. These are included here for your review. Each participant then identified for himself or herself the 10 most important of these issues. Using computer-voting software, this data was tabulated in about 15 minutes and distributed to all.

These tabulated results were presented to the Board of Education and District Administration as the broadest and clearest community vision statement possible and the foundation of a new era in Peoria Public Schools. The top vote-getting issues were taken NOT as political winners and losers, but as practical starting points for the large amount of work to be done. The results of the prioritization and commentary that followed are included at the end of the final version of this document.

The notes presented here are living, breathing, working documents, captured and typed by the participants themselves, in the heat of high learning and active contributing, meant only to enable the round of conversation and action. They are passionate, but not always pretty. Please take them as open invitations to get connected to the important and diverse issues raised at the Summit.

Finally, please visit [www.peoria.psd150.org](http://www.peoria.psd150.org) for more news and the final draft of this Summit proceedings document.

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\*For more about Open Space Technology, visit [www.michaelherman.com](http://www.michaelherman.com) or contact local OST organizer David Koehler at the Peoria Area Labor Management Council at [www.palmpeoria.org](http://www.palmpeoria.org).

## ISSUE #1: Shaping our Facilities into Expanded Community Usage Centers

CONVENER(S): Mary Ardapple

PARTICIPANTS: Jim Lambert, Jane Lambert, Farrell Davies, Barbara Moore, Laura Rager, Don Rager, Bernie Goitein, Aaron Schock, Annette D. Jackson, Pat Kellogg, Wil Helmick, and Francis Duren

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The addition of libraries, parks, city, non-profits, museum, public TV, social services, and neighborhood residents
2. Fill empty buildings with activities for neighborhoods, students
3. Gain community support for building usage, learning centers, etc.
4. Empty buildings are wasted assets; strategize how to get more for our money
5. Have evening art centers, ICC doing on site classes, woodworking, etc.
6. Buildings are a fixed cost not used; invest in the asset, use the asset to attract more investment
7. School near me is mine; identifying with the school in your neighborhood
8. Involve parents at the school during non-traditional hours, more efficient use of their tax money
9. Use buildings as a training/learning center instead of distance learning opportunities; use teachers who are skilled but may not be professional/certified teachers
10. Use of schools will inspire volunteerism
11. Use of the buildings will build relationships in the community
12. Use of buildings should target summer activities/programs
13. Presently in the school districts there are approximately 40 school buildings; develop a selective strategy for usage
14. The buildings should be designed as a multi-use facility.
15. Link usage of the buildings to neighborhood development. Include other public entities such as the library and park district.
16. Also involve social service programs, nutritional programs, recreational programs, counseling, etc.
17. School buildings must be used in such a way as to inspire neighborhood identity and neighborhood pride.
18. Multi-use buildings can affect inter-generational relationships, diverse relationships, etc.
19. School buildings should have a year round presence; seen as a friendly atmosphere.
20. Not using buildings and programming contributes to students falling behind in the summer; no learning challenges.
21. Buildings usage is not about babysitting or simply daycare, but educating in the arts, vocations, recreation, health; more would be less expensive to educate rather than babysit.
22. If we bring in the community to our schools, develop more resources.
23. Make the schools a place of family learning, community learning.
24. Use older children to assist younger children.
25. Partners must be: District 150; Park District; Library System; City; Health Care Providers; Social Service Providers; and City Link.

## ISSUE #2: Class Size

CONVENER(S): Susan McCabe

PARTICIPANTS: Carrie Peterson, Anglea Moore, Gail Illuzzi, Donald R. Jackson, John G. White, Wendy Monahan

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

How can we afford not to meet the needs of each student?

Everyone is different. Abilities vary with varying learning skills. Learning styles are "different".

Recognizing individuals as individuals takes time

Attention span

a) distractions

1) internal (hunger, poor home climate)

2) external

Children have different learning modalities. Some learn by hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting, and smelling.

It is harder to provide optimal educational opportunities with higher numbers.

How can parents help? Can they alleviate class size?

Class size study from NAACP Tennessee Project Star Program recommends class size 14-17.

Uniqueness of individuals needs to be addressed.

Communication for all

What can we eliminate to provide better educational opportunities?

Teachers (H.S.) have more opportunity to know and nurture teens if class sizes are smaller.

Teachers can lead student to find their highest potential. Students learn to be leaders and to become more involved in school.

**COST! DO WE TREASURE OUR CHILDREN? ARE WE WILLING TO PAY?**

We have to educate our children.

Is class size affecting retention and therefore costing the district more?

Are we losing teachers because of class size? Discouragement, feelings of failure, fighting a battle that is very difficult to win

Learning is a lifelong journey. It is not a destination.

Diversity issues are not able to be as easily addressed in larger classes.

District needs 3-5 year plan with incremental reductions in class size. A plan needs to be written for those schools on the watch list. Maybe they need to be targeted for 3 years not 5.

Studies need to be done to determine more appropriate class size for each grade level.

More opportunities for resources in smaller classes.

Funding - Think outside the box. (Endowments to District) Foundations, corporations, government programs, grants/in-kind. How can they help?

Specific targets for funds collected.

People/groups are more apt to contribute if they know the purpose of their monies.

Small class size-Does it improve educational experiences of our children?

Opportunity to change dynamics of schools.

Finding money replacement for lost TIF funding sources.

Reduction in class size leads to reduction in behavior problems. Fewer needs for counseling services====\$\$\$\$\$saved.

ISSUE #3: Reading at grade level

CONVENER(S): Patti Polk

PARTICIPANTS: Mary Jo Likenhausen Pont, Kevin Hill, Karen Heath, Tracy Kupper, Penny Griffith, Kay Royster, Kenny Carrigan, Mike Illuzzi, Sue Mullen, Eugenia Kyle, Lynn Gutierrez

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Group identified problems on not reading at grade level: difference between 3rd and 4th grade reading materials, child may be on level @ first but vocabulary becomes more difficult; 4th grade content is for adults, how we measure reading effectively, can read the words but can't associate with anything---have to talk about and write about experiences from outside classroom---listening to the news, reading newspaper, up to 3rd grade, learn how to read; after 3rd grade, read to learn---

Solutions:

How are we measuring reading levels, need to make sure we are actually measuring the appropriate reading assessment level, kids need to discuss what they are reading and Title I reading program, volunteers, can kids see 10 books in their homes, all teachers need to know how to teach reading---**TEACHING READING IS ROCKET SCIENCE!!!!**

need more parent involvement and education--need more funding sources for reading programs--- Irving School mentors 2, 3 4th grades, have reading specialist at all schools, must build parental trust, need support groups for parents and children, staff development needed, book club for children( for example like Peoria reads but include parents reading the same books as the children for discussion) Children Home has 4 week program for parents to help parents become more involved in their children's education

principals at Kingman and Irving recommend parents---need to expand program---mentor programs within the schools higher levels mentor lower level students (may have problem with time frame for older students and logistics--but good service project for students), community adopts every 3rd grader---every citizen is responsible for a student--great public relations program for the city, discontinue the Sustained Reading program doesn't have any purpose, Success For All reading program should be expanded in more schools--allows tutoring separate from regular reading group as well as being placed in groups by reading ability, and explore model of Valeska Hinton for school calendar thru out the district.

ISSUE #4: Money

CONVENER(S): Dallas D'hondt

PARTICIPANTS: Mary Davis, Bette Johnson, Linda Millen, Herschel Hannah, Sean Matheson, Audrey Galter, Sandy Farkash

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Prioritization of funding

We need to assign differing values to different project goals.

Merit based pay structure.

Longer day (7 55minute periods)

Do away with city TIF districts.

Follow up for spending plans, also 5-10 year planning.

ISSUE #5: Discipline

CONVENER(S): Tammy (Denman) Hill, Education Liaison Catholic Social Service  
Foster Care Program

PARTICIPANTS: Kim Hanks Office of Prevention, Peoria Reg. Off. of Ed.: Oneida Volz, ret. tchr. Dist. 150; Mike Thurwanger, Bradley Professor; Kristie Hubbard, Dean at Manual HS; Deveraux Hubbard, Pastor; John K. Garrett, Supt. Dist. 150; Nancie Smallberger, parent volunteer; Tonia Dolan, parent volunteer; Francis Duren, Jerry Pini, Mike Lawless, teacher

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

suspensions in the district are numerous  
same children being suspended over and over  
equity is an issue: between children, between the different schools, foster children  
receiving more suspensions as group than children who are not in foster care  
parents need to be in the classroom to observe their child's behavior  
too many suspensions that then lead to too many expulsions  
need to be alternatives to suspension and expulsion  
the district has a high mobility rate and the discipline standard may be different at each school

need support for students and parents when a child is suspended  
when a child is suspended the child and the parent or concerned/involved adult  
would attend a class on a topic related to the offense  
upon completion of the class the student's days of suspension would be decreased

this program would help to reduce the number of students who receive multiple suspensions

reasons that children misbehave in the classroom:  
not understanding material/can't keep up with class/don't qualify for special  
services

need to improve children's self image

need parental involvement/hold them responsible

disruptive students are taking up too much time in the classroom  
parents are upset that their child's learning environment is being disrupted by  
other student's discipline issues

demerit system at middle schools concerned that this is causing more suspensions instead of less

needs to be a consistent code of conduct and a consistent standard of discipline  
this should involve the whole community and begin with early childhood ed.  
and go through high school  
have a creative implementation of this policy: involve anyone who the child  
may connect with to help implement discipline

high school dean said that her dream is: "my building would be filled with parents and caring adults."

parental involvement will not change in this community until the people of this city can make LIVING WAGES may be hard for some parents to be involved when both have to work to support the family and some may have more than one job

the answer lies with the parent not the child

suggestions to obtain parental involvement:

- activities at the school
- provide food at these activities
- neighborhood activities

students need to be responsible for their own actions

adults need to be concerned for other people's children

we need to teach students effective ways to cope with students' disruptive behaviors

GOOD TEACHING can solve a great deal of problems

schools are responsible to fill the void of parents who are not involved

there are some students who do not belong in the traditional public school setting  
families, society and children have changed, but the way we educate has not  
students no longer fit the public school mode  
some students need more structure and services than the traditional public school setting can offer  
more alternative schools or programs  
Late Afternoon School 12-4 use as an alternative and students would work their way back to regular school

"Circle of Support" with the child in the center / community involvement  
advertisement idea: baby in crib (support/teaching starts young) and show what happens to a student that does not have the support/teaching that they need

VOLUNTEERS 1 hour a month

mentoring programs in the schools  
the need for these and the opportunity to mentor needs to be communicated to community

Valeska Hinton requires parents to attend courses, one of those classes was: "How to Be an Advocate for Your Child"

teach parents how to support their children  
churches could do this  
schools could do this

ISSUE #6: Edison

CONVENER(S): Mimi McDonald

PARTICIPANTS: Jill Bell, Gail Illuzzi, Chris Burr, Ann Galick, Carrie Wahlfeld, Donna Hartman, Holly Mehawich, Marry McCarty, Loretta Lanpher, Tom Goelzer, Janet Bell, Matt Duncan, Kelly reardon, Barbara Wagemon, James K. Polk, Marr Duncan, LaColis Reed, Jerome Greer, Jean Ashton, Kathy Newell, Jim Decker, Ken Brooke, Diane McDowell and Deanna Golding

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

We, as a group, had a number of questions that we wanted answered by the district from individuals on both sides of the issue. We would like an accurate explanation of the actual costs to educate an Edison student as opposed to a District #150 student. I think we also need a breakdown, not just a figure, so that we know how the individual cost is broken down per pupil to educate the student. We also want to know what costs and for what the district is providing to Edison above this cost per pupil, allocated amount. We understand that Edison has no local, central administration and therefore, they use ours on Wisconsin Avenue. We question who is paying this cost and if Edison didn't exist, wouldn't Mr. Hinton's time be spent differently and more focused on 150 students?

We want a survey given to those parents requesting that their child attend Edison that asks pointed questions that will enlighten us to what attracted them to an Edison school. If we knew, perhaps we could then evaluate if District #150 could provide it in other schools and also because we hear that people are coming to Peoria just so their child can go to Edison. This fact-finding would be enlightening, but could also be productive.

We also would like an exit survey so that we know why parents are leaving Edison. We understand that the reasons for them doing so are the same as in the other schools in the district, but we would still like one.

If they are moving out of one school and into a different 150 school, we would like to know the reason for them moving from one into the other.

When is the deadline to keep or break the Edison contract? What does it involve to break it? If this deadline is in the near future, when is the next deadline?

We would like to see other not for profit models to educate our children so we can assess if any of them would be beneficial to consider.

If Edison fails, what's the contingency plan? What would a failure by it cost our district and are we "protected" in any way financially?

What happened to the district "stealing the good parts of Edison" and implementing them in our schools?

Some felt that we should get a team teacher/administrator to model the good parts of Edison.

During the discussion, no one, it seemed, felt that it was fair the Edison schools didn't share in the budget cuts with all the other district schools.

Look at other programs with less cost, or no cost, than Edison.

Several in the group felt that we lack strong leadership and desperately need it.

DONNA HARTMAN ADDED THE FOLLOWING NOTES FOR THIS SESSION...

Question whether the \$2 Million reported in the paper as the cost of Edison is additional cost or replacement cost that would otherwise be spent to educate the same number of students. Dr. Greer indicated this \$2 Million was only due to the teacher's union contract negotiations that required additional pay for teachers at Edison due to the extended year and the extended day.

Audience would like some kind of estimate (even an average across the District) of the cost to educate a non-Edison student so we can see the true comparison.

Audience member that has visited an Edison school believes Edison provides excellent staff development that should be a model for all schools. The Edison design is strong on accountability for educating teachers.

If we the District can't provide what Edison gives to retain families, we will lose families.

Is there a plan in place to take what is good with Edison and apply it to other District 150 schools? There is question as to whether the District could afford to do this.

Audience would like statistics on the number of students leaving and coming into the Edison schools and the District.

Should there be surveys for families exiting and entering schools? This would be all schools, not just Edison, to get a good handle on what is causing families to change schools and school districts.

Is it true that if a student leaves an Edison school to attend another District 150 school that the money for that student stays at the Edison school? This was a problem before the board passed the resolution that students may not move until the semester break so now the money will follow the student.

Question on the re-evaluation of Edison. If District 150 decides they don't want to retain Edison, they have to tell Edison by February of next year. Otherwise, the contract is extended another year by default.

We need to be careful that we do not evaluate Edison too soon. Loucks has many new students and change takes time.

There are extra costs associated with any Magnet school because of busing students across town. The District has been busing children for years from the South end to the North end, for Roosevelt, Washington, etc.

Are there double administrative costs associated with Edison? We give Edison so many \$'s for each student. Administrators don't get money from Edison but could possibly be working on Edison issues. But, Administrators costs are fixed so we are not 'adding' Administrators (and the cost associated with them) because of the work they do with Edison.

We have to remember that change takes time. It will take a few years to see if the children have grown because of Edison.

Most people don't know about the education aspects of Edison. They only hear about the money and the emotion of the private company. When someone was evaluating moving to Dunlap or Germantown Hills, they personally attested to the fact that they were more impressed with Northmoor-Edison. When this person asked those in the city of Peoria that were opposed to Edison what the problem was with the education curriculum, they did not have an answer.

District does not give programs enough time to show success. Programs are killed after 1 or 2 years (reading counts, success for all, Chicago Math, etc) which is not enough time to see the success of a program. Don't kill Edison until we've given it enough time to succeed.

Teacher from a Peoria Edison school: "Edison teachers are excited about the program and are working hard to make it successful. We as adults brought this program to Peoria so it is time to stop bashing it and making it hard on the children. We as a community brought it in so now it is time to support it".

Concern that the financial cuts that are affecting the rest of the District are not applied to Edison because of the contract. Everyone agreed that we should all do our part, including Edison, to help with the financial tough times. This does not mean the supporters of the Edison program are willing to give up the program. But, they agree that if cut backs need to be made to contribute to the District's financial hardships that they should participate as well.

Don't we feel as parents we should be given choices in our children's education?

One parent that was against Edison said that she hopes that the District doesn't do to the Edison supporters what they did to them and take the program away like they took the Northmoor they knew and loved away from them.

ISSUE #7: Get all children to complete high school

CONVENER(S): Rita Fischbach

PARTICIPANTS: Margie Aldridge, Nickie Roberson, Mac Pogue, Ed Bradle, Jan Deissler: Butterfly, John Day: Butterfly, Pam Dolosjych, Wilhemina Terry, Marilyn Ragler, Roberta Parks, Kathleen Murray

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Themes:

More nurturing and caring: students see no hope: develop it  
Relevance and fun of school  
External support (church, neighbors, business)  
Valuing importance of education (through community of learning)  
Give children something they have control over

DISCUSSION

Adjustment from K-8 to High schools. In lower levels students are nurtured and not taught to make good decisions

No cars

Get reading conquered

No drinking, smoking: finish high school

Bring young people to talk to students in middle school

Not "prepared" for high school

Mentoring for freshman "big brother" "big sister"

Have homeroom: stay with same group. Bonding

Take advantage of student grape vine

Reality training "reality fair" teach value of education

Business partners. Human resources. Reinforce what teacher is saying

Make it easy for business person

Match business person with "right" kid

Ask business people where you are strong- questionnaire

Business helps make it relevant and fun (School needs to be fun)

Core group: small learning community

Why do kids not come

"When am I ever going to use this?"

Show that achieving is good:

Low value of person: they feel it

Economic components supporting family- tie to \$ finishing high school

Consequences for rules-good and bad cause and effect. Maybe money

Flunking out happens in kindergarten: look for indicators

Tags-grade change, friends, attendance

Contact parents on changes

Parent teacher/student conferences-quarterly

Support parent (students babysit so parents can come  
Disconnection: make schoolhouse friendly

Business-customer relationship

Feedback from students on other students

Phone in class room-no way for child to disappear. If student has problem, teacher calls home

Administration happy kid in school- he made the effort

Fall out 4-6th nurturing stops

Older kids need to start school later in the day: They need more sleep

Send info home (have classes for) parents on what needs to happen for child to succeed  
such as sleep

TV watching hours

"What I wish I would have known in 6th grade" booklets

Why drop out is so high

Growing up too soon

No one home when they get there

Goals skewed "stars...basketball player, rock star" not education to get out on own

Church involvement-extended family

Young parents are not equipped

We need to provide a place to succeed

## ISSUE #8: What Teachers Can Do To Make Education Better in Peoria

CONVENER(S): Terry Knapp and Mary Connett

PARTICIPANTS: Tracy Lovestrand, Tom Weiser, Ovid K. Wong, Peggy Cornelius, Mable Ross, Governor Foreman, Cheryl Sanfilip, Illa Conklin, Leslie McKnight, Pat Wombacher, Chris Sinclair, Dee Parks, Steve Parks, Tiffany Parks, M. Lawless, Kathy Curren, Alicia Butler and Mom, John Day

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Teachers should:

Be culturally attuned to students

Have ongoing staff development

Quality Teaching versus teacher burnout

Effectiveness of Teacher Recertification

\*Communicate with parents

Engage with students and have quality time with students

Not to spend too much time with discipline

Have better student management

District should help teachers be better with mentoring

Be evaluated by students so that they can be more effective

Have a 360 Degree evaluation

Be trained to identify students' social issues

Play a role in promoting District 150 good things

And have been open in issues and meeting

Have teamwork and Principals should use their leadership skills to help teachers in their buildings

Have the Teacher Academy for professional development and for problem solving in their building

Alternative to suspension for minor problems

Be more sensitive to the home environment-such as have more counselors

Also have more support staff, such as reading specialists

Have evaluations that support enthusiasm and different teaching styles that work

A variety of styles to match needs of learners

Be more knowledgeable in best practices

Be able to visit and study successful schools in other areas of the country

Develop a program to excel students in Math

Have more volunteers to help teachers

Have a better relationship with parents and enhance the communication with parents in a positive way in a variety of ways

Have awards for Good Teachers by the PTA or parents

Be excited about subject matter

Have time for modeling and mentoring

Provide the first encounter between parent and teacher as positive and draw them into the classroom

Follow curriculum guides and stick to the subject

Be supported with mechanisms to help them be better

Need to be encouraged and nurtured to try new innovations

Be aware that Teacher disrespect causes student disrespect

Have incentives for outstanding Teachers who try harder

"Catch Teachers Being Good"

Have all schools and parents honor and recognize Teachers who try harder

Have articulation for Teachers with more time and more meetings with other Teachers in feeder schools

Be recruited with urban backgrounds and more diverse

Have accountability for Teacher complacency

Have incentives for inner city Teachers, such as extra pay

Explore qualifications and less experience for Teachers in Valley Schools

Be culturally diverse

Have better contracts, such as class size

## ISSUE #9: Reduce the Complexity of District 150

CONVENER(S): Kate Smart

PARTICIPANTS: Ann Unes, Jack Craddock, Theresa Smart, Ray Lees, Mike Melhan, Barbara Melcher, Jan Deissler, Wil Helmick

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Analyze the education process from the bottom up: From the students/parents up to the school board/administration.
- Need formal means to involve parents such as finance and educational commissions which determine how money is spent and how children are educated.
- Consider eliminating funds with strings attached. Could we eliminate the administrative red tape and headaches that go along with the acceptance of these funds? In addition, can the entire process be simplified and become less costly as a result of refusing these funds?
- Current system requires that parents jump through hoops to accomplish anything. Three examples were raised:
  - A) School raised funds to purchase new desks for their children.  
Parents felt the need to obtain approvals up the ladder prior to the acquisition of the desks because they feared the funds would be used elsewhere.
  - B) School raised funds to install a new weight room for the athletes at their school.  
After months of being told "no", the parents became livid to the point of refusing to allow the schools access to \$30,000 worth of donations. Has the bureaucracy reached the point of losing reason?
  - C) A parent requested use of a public school gym for basketball practice.  
In spite of the fact that the schools have a policy which clearly states that this is an acceptable practice, the district demanded that the practice team contribute \$50 per hour to use the facility. It required going through 5 layers of administration before finally approval from the superintendent of schools.
- Outside groups have frustrations with trying to work within the school district's red tape. Lakeview Museum representative finds the resources underused (by the District 150 teachers, other groups and teachers make wonderful use of the resources in spite of the fact that the system is incredibly easy for District teachers), the system inefficient, and the red tape very unfriendly. Of course, the ultimate losers are the students and the taxpayers.
- Question? Does the acceptance of federal program money for some programs require all of the red tape for all of the schools?
- This school district is unable to educate all of the students who live within the boundaries of District 150. Private education is educating almost 50% of the students within the district. They do it better, and they do it for less cost.

ISSUE #10: Vocational training

CONVENER(S): Connie Pogue

PARTICIPANTS: Bud Ruff, Eugenia Kyle, Lynn Gutierrez, Peggy Cornelius, Aaron Schock, Clyde Gully, Annette Jackson, Laura Rager, Don Rager, John White, Mary Ardapple, May Jo Lehnhauser Pinte, Marilyn Ragler, Kathy Newell

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Need is greater now for technical training

Not everyone "college material"

Community wants vocational training or applied technology

Applicants not qualified for industry

Community should take more interest - pick freshman - help set curriculum

Skills needed - "practical work force development"

Obstacles: only 6 periods - vocational sequence only have one period left to use

Elective class - hard to support class cost when enrollment is low

Match work force development needs - to student needs and what faculty can provide.

Starting to discuss and present vocational option too late. Should be presented in 6th grade.

In past "informed citizen" was goal of education.

Pekin vocational tech program for "lower students" but community supports

Business wants:

1. people accept responsibility
2. can be depended on
3. have integrity
4. have good work ethics
5. attitude to build customer base

12 years of school and then life for some. Not prepared.

Numbers: 3,600 student in Peoria / 60% college bound / 6 period day / 80 kids in the entire school district. Pointed out that drop out rate causes low numbers to be available for vocational tech.

Parents choose college prep to keep doors open for choice later

Students sit in study hall because they may damage grade point

Students can only take 5 core subjects, then sit in study hall-- cost.

Solutions: redesign curriculum to meet business needs

expose students to different types of work

middle schools need to expose students to "life" work

education parents of tech prep program and other alternative to college prep

better communication with parents earlier.

cat skills trade program

start in middle school.after school programs...expose students to all..

vocational survey course in middle school 6th grade exposure to Kuder

interest survey - 3 part assessment inventory  
block 8 scheduling 6 -50 minute 45-50 in middle school  
4 - 1 1/2 hour classes that you take every other day  
hire non-traditional teachers retired trade people  
have a risk student vocational counselor - there to help students find spot.

ISSUE #11: I am tired of hearing parents of school age children tell me how bad our schools are.

CONVENER(S): Harold Dowell

PARTICIPANTS: Ada Gaten, Jackie Greer-Buchanan, Gail Thigpen, Deloris Turner, Rachael Greenwood, Kathy Curren, Jan Deissler, Garrie Allen

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

The "A+" publication should focus more on the good things in primary and middle schools and not so much on high schools.

It's a home issue, not a school issue; we must create a parent-school partnership.

Parents should talk with one another about their children's school; tell others about the good things.

Parents should have the choice of a school for their child. Giving parents greater choice would cause them to become better informed about all the schools.

Public perception of our schools is seldom based on good knowledge about what is happening inside the school

Good happenings do not get reported in the news; only bad happenings.

Offer public tours of schools while school is in session.

The perceptions are often misperceptions. You cannot really know what's happening in a school unless you have spent some time in the school.

## ISSUE #12: School Suspensions

CONVENER(S): Connie Frank

PARTICIPANTS: Ronya Rhoda, Joan Frickleton, Patsy Santen, Kathy Cobb, Connie Frank, Connie Voss, Varci Comish, Tammy Young, Donna Shepp, Maxine Wortham, Sandy Farkash, Cliff Liniord, Bernie Goitein

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Suspended kids end up in criminal justice system  
Ages get younger and younger  
Need alternative sites for disruptive students  
Staff in-school programs with trained counselors  
Anger management classes/make connection with parents involved  
Teach kids appropriate behavior at school  
Parent education programs  
Contact with counselors even when suspended  
Early contact with parents before problem escalates  
Require (somehow) parents to be more involved (like head start and ECE)  
Mental health counselors in school (\$\$\$???)  
Incentives for those students with poor behavior  
Mentoring from community  
Adopt a whole family with children in trouble  
Bore students to tears while outside of the classroom so they won't want to be out  
Perhaps Title I monies should not be used for in-school suspension??? Should be used for kids.  
Some schools don't have room for alternative to suspension rooms.  
Utilize and develop Saturday suspension  
Train staff/parents in emotional intelligence  
Disengaged kids are often the ones suspended  
Should we be suspending kids for tardiness?  
Train staff in hands-on instructional strategies  
Make classrooms more active, less paper and pencil--sit still  
Community people get involved with kids out on the streets  
Utilize community volunteers for mentoring  
Community agencies get kids to help out at their agencies--pay minimal or give Incentives--amount not important, involvement is  
Don't let tardiness get out of control--intervene before suspension  
Excuses accepted for absences, not tardiness---so kids stay out for a long time just to be counted tardy  
Kids will be absent to get an excuse  
Separate kids with attendance and behaviors for suspension purposes  
Discuss policy on suspension for attendance  
After missing a certain amount of time in class, do not pass class  
Time for time--students make up time. you are late 15 minutes, you owe me 15 minutes.  
What do you do with people that don't fit into "time" mold?  
Stagger starting times--night school like Manual society has trouble with "flex" scheduling ie. sports, salary, after school activities  
Respond to suspensions flexibly!!!

Public school needs compassion more than dictatorial response  
Compassion seems to diminish as kids get older  
Parents tend to bow out more as kids get older  
Use juvenile justice \$ before kids are put in jail--prevention  
District needs to be more open to outside community help  
Ask community for \$\$\$\$ for specific programs

ISSUE #13: Neighborhood K-8 small (500-600) schools

CONVENER(S): Bernie Goitein

PARTICIPANTS: Nancie Smallberger, Jane Lambert, Deloris Turner, Garrie Allen, Sean Matheson, Tom Higgins, Kristie Hubbard

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Well documented advantages to student achievement (in majority low-income student schools of smaller schools, defined as fewer students/grade

Save busing \$

Easier for parents with multiple kids to have them in same school

Continuity -- easier for parents/kids not to change schools at grade 5

Increased teacher communication about kids as they move up

Neighborhood school kids can walk to- maintains community

Retain families who leave schools when kids reach middle school age, increase \$ for district

Closer school increased identification with community, it's OUR school

Maintains/strengthens peer relations

(Need to separate by age group)

Avoid children waiting for buses at 7:15

Avoids problems of "no children left behind" act since performance better as is preference for area school

Prevents disenchantment/disconnection-drop outs

Allows for older kids to mentor/homework/help younger kids

No extra costs

Still preferred mode (K-8) in private/parochial schools

If District cuts teachers and boosts class sizes even at K-3, this organization avoids many of the negative consequences

ISSUE #14: Prevention Programs: Meeting the needs of all children so they can learn!

CONVENER(S): Patti Morris

PARTICIPANTS: Beth Koch, Gerry Brookhart, Pam Dolozychi, Sandy Burke, Martha Ross, Scott Russell, Don Johnson, Herschel Hannah

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Belief: Student Assistance is needed in all schools to determine why students can't learn; to determine what students need to achieve; to teach healthy relationship skills & boundaries - to do Prevention. The organizational culture of the community needs to be oriented toward helping the whole child. The community needs to come together to support the school, the family, and the child.

CHALLENGES and RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Teachers need to be trained to identify those issues putting each of their students "at risk" ..

- Abuse
- Unhealthy relationships
- Unhealthy families
- ATOD Use
- Low academic skills
- Materials needs
- Clothes
- Food
- Medical
- Housing

\*Student Assistance Personnel to assist teachers and families in meeting students needs;

- Home visits
- Working with families

(Every person who interacts with the students in the school setting ie. bus drivers, lunchroom, janitorial staff is responsible for assisting students to succeed. MUST MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY.

WE TEACH CHILDREN-----NOT SUBJECTS!!!!

II. Community Agencies need to coordinate services and present collaborative effort to schools; create linkages between services; Expand time frame in which to offer services

- Inform all school personnel of services: Administration, Teachers, parenting adults, students, PTO/PTA, other school organizations
- Offer programming on evenings, Saturdays
- Work with individual schools/ students to present identified services/varied programs
- Work to reduce competition for funds/grants to provide unified services

III. NOT ENOUGH TIME - Need to expand academic days to allow full "On Task" time for curriculum demands and Prevention services and programs; after school programs may not reach all children in need

- Longer school day/year
- Use of free periods
- Build prevention programs into existing curriculum ie. High School speech classes
- Saturday school
- Evening school
- Access to Early Childhood Education programs

IV. Create positive use of school buildings to build parent/students connectedness with school; adequate space availability

- Adult education possibilities
- Access to Technology- High tech academic/social skill programs to assist students

ISSUE #15: Saving School Programs

CONVENER(S): Audrey L. Gaten

PARTICIPANTS: Audrey Gaten; Mable Ross; Mary McCarty; Jacki Petty; Lynn Pearson; Mary Spangler; Susan McCabe

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. District needs to continue offering various programs to attract citizens to public schools.
2. Accountability - children of district teachers should be required to attend public schools. The teaching should be such that it is good enough for their own children.
3. PRIORITIZE - District needs to concentrate on prioritizing spending/program cutting so that criteria is based on merit and performance of students
4. Increase Board involvement - knowledge of what actually goes on in the schools; benefits of programs proposed to be cut.
5. Provide incentives for parental/family involvement in all schools
6. INVITE private contributions (i.e. CAT, CILCO, etc.)
7. Decisions need to be made with children in mind and not to make individuals "look good" focus on the big picture not immediate gratification for Board
8. Promote diversity & stability via multi-age classrooms
9. Weigh benefits of school projects (portfolios & journals)

ISSUE #16: Special classes for children who don't qualify for special education

CONVENER(S): Tonia Dolan

PARTICIPANTS: Deanna Gueding, Chrisanne Burr, Joan Frickleton, Angelia Moore

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Some children are slow learners but do not qualify for special education classes due to certain test scores in achievement and IQ. Because of this, we have numerous children who are not keeping up in classes because they do not understand what they are being taught. This in turn, creates a bad environment for the students who can keep up with the lesson. The students who are not able to keep up are not paying attention and are putting any answer down on the paper just to turn it in on time. The reading scores for these children are very low because of comprehension. If they are able to be in special classes or have special arrangements made for them concerning their learning disability, they will be able to build a good foundation to go on to the next level of learning.

Some of the ideas and/or solutions to this problem are as follows:

1. Seek volunteers from organizations.
  - \* Businesses
  - \* College tutors
  - \* Church organizations
2. Need Resource teachers.
  - \* High school students volunteer (get credit at school)
3. Training for volunteers.
  - \* Train the volunteers to better accommodate the needs of the children.
  - \* Tri-County Urban League (Free) - Need to advertise this to parents with the need.
4. Grading accommodations based on the individual student and the progress made.
  - \* This will show that the training and help that the student is getting is helping and will track the progress of learning.
5. Need more case study evaluations so that the children with this problem will not slip through the crack but will get help. This is needed so that children can be evaluated by more than one group of people with a wide variety of input for better targeting these cases early.

## ISSUE #17: Race and Diversity

CONVENER(S): Steve Fairbanks

PARTICIPANTS: Sally Weber, Sheldon Schaeffer, Diuanna McCauley, Bud Ruff, Mary Moore, Jennifer Keiksey, Janeea Kirksey, Linda Lyman, Venus Winter, Lynn Pearson, Mary Moore, Mrs. Ray Reddick, Lobby Taylor, Maria Johnson, Jackie Petty, Celia Warr-Hightower, Dave Matheney, Merle Widmer

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

- \* \* All schools should have counselors who help students and teachers with interpersonal issues - academic counselors not the same.
- \* Should offer students more than collegiate guidance - vocational needed too.
- \* "If the perception is that there is no opportunity - sometimes that is true,"
- \* Institute professional development
- \* Must educate and recruit teachers "with caring dispositions."
- \* "If a teacher cares, then race is not an issue."
- \* Student moral is low - (ex.: student disrespect and unruliness)
- \* Sensitivity includes to gender, race, disability, religion, and ethnicity
- \* New guidelines on teacher certification require that diversity be addressed.
- \* However, new guidelines on diversity not mandatory - teachers can choose another topic
- \* District should pay local social service and community agencies to provide services to students and staff
- \* Conduct needs assessment survey of students. There are many "tentacles" to the issue of diversity
- \* Diversity training needs to occur throughout the district - ongoing
- \* Core curriculum training on diversity
- \* Training should be "open and mandated."
- \* Must be in school policy and included in district mission statement
- \* Student input must be included in policy etc.
- \* Must "recruit, retain, and celebrate diversity."
- \* Training "first for the administrators."
- \* Last focus on diversity by the district in late 1980's
- \* "Borderline negligent" that over a decade has passed since last districtwide diversity training
- \* There have been efforts in the past to diversify neighborhoods by offering special housing incentives for executives and business people
- \* Adults can learn a lot about diversity from students who are not as judgmental and aware of race, etc.
- \* Perception that there is equal opportunity for selected students, ie. Washington Gifted program
- \* The "View from the Outside:" "Culture shock" on race and segregation experienced by several African Americans who moved here from bigger cities
- \* Merge school & communities boundaries - a joint effort
- \* For education equity consider scattered site housing in neighborhoods other than southside
- \* It's about "personal perceptions" (from home) about diversity should be reinforced at school

- \* Parental reinforcement, ie. discipline, attitudes, etc., with school support
- \* Curriculum: focus on "non-traditional" history which includes slavery, etc.
- \* Fair treatment across race, gender, et al., from school staff
- \* Parental responsibility a big piece of issue
- \* Support for neighborhood policing
- \* School board should do more to advocate publicly for the district
- \* Should be lobbying now for location of new schools
- \* "We need to look at what's going on in the classrooms," ie., student-teacher interaction issues of special treatment and discipline (from a student)
- \* Promote university - district partnership
- \* We need a new K-12 school which will influence better parent-school communication
- \* Establish "parent liaisons" to intervene and advocate re: student-teacher issues
- \* Establish "student advocates"
- \* Encourage consistency and fairness
- \* Many grandparents raising grandkids - care, but don't have resources or ability to communicate on a timely manner with schools
- \* Staff needs to have better "sensitivity to what's going on in the community."

ISSUE #18: City Identity and District 150 and the relationship between the two

CONVENER(S): Kathleen Murray

PARTICIPANTS: Scott Goodyear, Mike Illuzzi, Gail Illuzzi, Jan Deissler, Pat Landes, Francis Duren, Jim Lambert, Chrisanne Burr

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

City identity - District identity... need cross-functional teams

Mechanisms of communication:

1. leaders of city and district
2. write a shared document
3. scheduled meetings

ISSUE #19: Increased Parental Involvement and Responsibility  
(Combined with: Communicating between parents and educators)

CONVENER(S): Mike Thurwanger

PARTICIPANTS: Rachael Greenwood, Connie Frank, Kevin Hill, Carrie Peterson, Jan Leonard, Kim Hanks, Jan Decker, Barbara Moore, Kelly Reardon, Tracey Kupper, Carrie Wakefield, Wendy Monahan, Dee Parks, Patsy Santen, Libby Taylor, Terry Knapp, Silberm Davies, Lucy Gulley, Mava Engles, Ms. Ray V. Reddick, Kate Smar  
(Plus others who joined in the discussion as the session progressed. My apologies if I've misspelled your name.)

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

This group grew to be rather large and conversation was animated at several points. We did not attempt to arrive at any clear consensus or take a single unified position but included a variety of suggestions for future development/consideration. Working from the notes taken at the session, I have tried to organize them into related topics/issues:

EDUCATION/AWARENESS

Parents need to be empowered; they need to recognize that they are responsible for taking an active role in their children's education. For many parents, there may be a willingness but they feel unprepared or uncomfortable in that role. Several participants noted that many adults may not have had positive experiences in the schools as students or may not understand the school system or its policies. A number of related suggestions were made to address this concern and to help parents/responsible adults take a more active role in the education of their students:

Schools could hold curriculum nights with students demonstrating, teaching and leading discussions concerning what they are learning.

Provide curriculum resources: books, videotapes, fact sheets and brochures (Curriculum books already provided, however questions were raised regarding awareness and usefulness of the books and their appropriateness for parent use.)

Conduct a "Parent School," similar to programs which have been provided in the past, which use experienced parents, faculties and administrators to provide parents short presentations on how to support their student and enhance learning. These might include such topics as developing time management and organizational skills, taking personal responsibility, working with teachers and more effective communications with the school.

Require a meeting at the start of the school year between parents, students and their teacher in which a "contract" is negotiated and accepted by all parties for the coming academic year. Encourage parents to post that contract in a prominent place in the home and refer to it on a regular basis.

Conduct parent orientations at the start of the school year to explain District/school policies and procedures, organization and responsibilities, and to discuss school mission and priorities.

Hold "Volunteer Job Fairs" at each school at the start of each school year in which faculty, staff and student organizations identify and advertise opportunities for parents and other responsible adults from the community can identify needs and opportunities to become more involved in supporting the school and students.

Hold "Information Fairs" for families to learn more about special programs available in the school system, other government agencies and throughout the community to address special needs of the student or their family (which might provide a more conducive home environment for student learning).

## PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Encourage/require at least one visit to the home of each student by their teacher. (Safety concern raised regarding sending a single teacher to homes in the evening. Concerns raised regarding whether some parents would welcome or allow a visit to their home for various reasons.)

Require/facilitate efforts to ensure that every family/parent/responsible adult has a working telephone and that the correct contact information is on file with the school. Stress the importance of the school having the ability to contact adults responsible for the student and send reminders throughout the school year for updates. Where a working phone is not available, provide information/referral for assistance.

Provide teachers training to develop more efficient/effective communication skills to convey student progress/concerns to parents in a way that will best take advantage of the limited telephone/direct contact available and to do so in a way which is most likely to elicit a positive response.

Schedule parent teacher conferences with sufficient time to allow for parents to provide feedback and insight regarding their students. Both teachers and parents voiced frustration with the "assembly line" scheduling that does not allow adequate time for two-way communication.

## LIAISON/OMBUDSMAN/ADVISORY ROLES

Establish parent liaisons (At all schools-not just Title I schools).

Provide parents with a consistent point of contact within the school to reduce the number of "layers"/contacts that they have to work through.

Identify parent liaisons who can serve as facilitators/ombudsman for parents to voice needs or concerns to the school staff/faculty when parents are unprepared or uncomfortable in making their own case. --Provide training for parent liaisons both in terms of working through the District 150 system and in serving the broad scope of needs and concerns of parents. --Initial discussion proposed that these liaisons be parents of students in that school. --Later debate addressed whether these were to be volunteer or paid positions, raising questions regarding whether parents would serve in this role.

Establish an elected Parent Advisory Board at each school, which goes beyond the fund-raiser and support role currently served by most PTO's and gives parents representation and a voice in curriculum, budgeting and policy decisions. This would recognize many parents desire to have direct input into their local school and a greater voice than that provided by limited access to the school board. -- Several participants indicated that a grassroots effort to establish such boards is already underway and a dedicated group will push to make this a part of the policy and decision making process in the future. -- Another participant noted that such boards have been in existence for some time in Chicago with (generally) positive results.

## VOLUNTEERISM/SUPPORT

Make more opportunities available or do a better job of making parents aware of opportunities for involvement, especially at the high school level.

Reemphasize community mentoring programs to increase adult support for students and role models who recognize and reinforce the importance of education and the need to make it a personal priority.

Help each school's PTO develop contact lists of active/potentially active parents who might be able to work through the PTO. (Comments regarding schools' refusal/inability to provide names and contact information due to privacy laws. Alternative suggestion was to assist PTO in providing contact forms to obtain contact information from parents for future involvement.)

Ensure administrative staff are provided a contact list for the PTO and other organizations to put interested parents and other volunteers in touch with those in need of support. Too often potential volunteers are turned off by the red tape and lack of information when they first call the school to make the offer.

## CREATING A CULTURE

We need to strive for a "Partnership culture" in which all parties feel that they are a part of the education system-not only that they will be well served but that they have a responsibility to be an active and contributing part of the learning process

Administrators need to emphasize the importance of parental involvement from the top. Make it a policy of the district and a central part of the organizational culture of the district to encourage parental and community involvement in our schools. This cultural emphasis must be adopted by principals, faculty, staff, students and other parents/adults.

Get away from the term "parental involvement" which implies a marginal role and emphasize "Partnering with Parents," a more active and equal partnership of parents/adults working arm in arm with other members of the education system.

As we discuss participation, involvement and responsibility, use more inclusive terms/titles to recognize and accommodate single parents, foster parents, and other responsible adults who need to be welcomed into the circle of support for students and the schools.

Work to establish and emphasize a TWO-WAY communication process in which information is received and welcomed by the educational system rather than a system in which the only communication is transmitted from the school to the parent.

Schools need to build awareness/acceptance among parents and other responsible adults throughout the community of the importance of their taking an active role and assuming responsibility for the education of our children. We need to make education a top priority for students, their families, the neighborhood and the community as a whole.

Administrative and support staff need to be brought into a school-wide/District-wide culture in which they see part of their job, regardless of their position, as one of providing support to students and serving as a liaison to parents and responsible adults. To achieve this, they must receive information and support from the administration sufficient to make them feel that they have a level of "ownership" in the school system. This should extend to all District employees who have student contact-faculty, office staff, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, playground workers, etc.

Train administrative staff including secretaries and receptionists regarding school policies and procedures. Parents are often confronted with a lack of consistency in terms of the degree of helpfulness provided and the accuracy of information from office staff.

## ASSESSMENT AND ASSISTANCE

District 150 facilitate (rather than serve as an obstacle) to not-for-profit organizations in assessing student needs and obtaining assistance from various private/public sources.

Work with agencies to conduct a family needs assessment at the start of the school year to identify needs and available resources to address those needs at the outset of the academic year rather than waiting until problems force the issue (and the damage has been done).

## MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS/USEFUL SUGGESTIONS

District 150 should study those private schools in the area that have achieved success in terms of partnering with parents as well as more efficient budgeting and improved test scores. While circumstances differ in some respects, surely there must be some important lessons to be learned and applied to our schools in an effort to improve.

District 150 needs to do a better job of marketing itself-building greater community awareness of successes and strengths.

ISSUE #20: Open the schools to more community involvement

CONVENER(S): Ann Unes

PARTICIPANTS: Jim Lambolt, Jack Craddock, Patti Polk, Maria Johnson, Kenny Carrigan, Chris Sinclair

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

\* The community could go into schools as helpers, mentors, to help students know that learning is important and that the community cares about their success.

\*Non-profit organizations could get involved. Help could be obtained from companies and community leaders. Chamber of Commerce has an Education Taskforce that would like to help with a mentoring program of some sort.

\*The schools need to state their needs, and let volunteers come in to help. However, safety is an issue. Screening volunteers can be expensive. Working all together in one room with certified personnel could eliminate safety concerns on the part of volunteers and students, perhaps.

\*Depending on needs of students/schools, training may be necessary.

\*Making schools more of a community could result in more involvement of the surrounding people. Communities could be created in each school, list needs, match with volunteers.

\*Open schools during the summer as a way to increase student success?

\*Volunteers from the community could help establish special interest clubs, such as gardening, chess, sewing or quilting, to build interaction of students and the community.

\*Perhaps set up a volunteer fair district wide or within each school to match needs with volunteers.

\*How can this work? Can schools let community volunteers in safely?

\*Harrisburg, Pennsylvania used community involvement to improve their schools.

## ISSUE #21: Turning Teens on To School

CONVENER(S): Ken Brooke

PARTICIPANTS: Tiffany Parks, Ada Gatlen, Jackie Buchanan, Illa Conklin, Donna Hartman

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

No matter how good our grade school programs are, no matter how creative and energetic kids are in grade school, little matters if by the time they are a teenager, they are turned off of school. They are the final product. They are what the entire system has produced.

A high school sophomore in the group admitted that approximately 50 percent (or more) of high schoolers are giving little or no effort. That result should get a grade of "F" This is a MAJOR problem!

The group gave the following solutions to this problem:

1. We need more teaming with teachers, so creative, exciting teaching ideas can be passed on to each other.
2. We need more real-world activities so learning is exciting and "real" to the students. Actually, the majority of assignments be geared toward the "real" world.
3. We need to have accountability to make sure these teachers are bringing new, exciting, creative, real-world projects and assignments into their classrooms.
4. We need to have an atmosphere that acknowledges student improvement and accomplishments with their projects and not focus solely on grades.
5. We need to approach the community and team with companies to help bridge the gap between the school and the real world. To do this we need a LIAISON to help bring this to a reality.
6. We must make a priority that students feel safe at school. There must be a program in each school that guarantees this. This may include psychologists/counselors in our teen schools.
7. We must develop a program that encourages parent involvement at home and at the school. We must make this a priority.

## ISSUE #22: Every Student Should Be Given Preparation for Postsecondary Education

CONVENER(S): Nickie Roberson

PARTICIPANTS: Loretta Lanpher and Rhonda Moseley

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Discussion focused on the need to prepare every student for postsecondary education of some type, although most of our emphasis was focused on preparing students for college. Recurrent themes suggested that teacher and parent expectations were often too low for the majority of students. Only the most successful students and those from higher income levels seemed to be encouraged to pursue higher education. Many students are only pushed to complete high school and then to get a job rather than pursuing a more lucrative and rewarding career. Many students appear to be discouraged from taking college prep and advanced classes and little exposure to careers and colleges is given to those other than the brightest.

Many students themselves do not value education, let alone higher education. They have too few role models to see higher education as a realistic and accessible option. Students must be motivated to dream greater dreams and strive for higher goals. Parents, teachers and peers must learn to reinforce that dreams can be achieved and that success is important. Often students are told that requirements for college are too demanding for them and many students are convinced that it is too late to think about college study. Additionally, many families are mistakenly under the impression that college is financially way beyond their means.

The group feels that preparation for college often begins too late, often after many unwise curricular decisions are made and poor study habits are entrenched. There is a need to provide greater opportunities to ease the transition of students into high school as well as address the transition from high school to college. Various models of postsecondary school attendance, e.g. college after a year of work or following the birth of a child should be raised and explored by those students who require more time beyond the four years of high school.

The following represent possible solutions to increase awareness of the opportunities presented through postsecondary education:

- Provide early exposure to careers in elementary and middle schools and in the freshman year of high school. Offer or require a "career" class at 5th, 7th and 9th grades to explore the vast array of opportunities and the criteria involved for successful study and career attainment.

- Academies should increase flexibility within their curriculum and schedules to accommodate a larger number of college prep classes.

- The school district needs to develop programs that will increase the number of students in college prep programs. Provide means whereby high school administrators and teachers, students and parents commit to increasing student participation in college.

- Explore the "College Summit" program for District 150's participation.

-Annually provide each individual high school student an hour with a guidance counselor who will review academic strengths, deficiencies, possible colleges or other educational options, and plan of action for postsecondary education.

Develop cadres of career/professional mentors from corporations, agencies and industry to periodically meet with students.

-Increase interhips and opportunities for volunteering in the workplace, especially in fields related to math, science and technology.

-Educate students and parents regarding curricular choices and grades as well as the effects these have on the students' future.

-Continually instill and reinforce the love of learning through opportunities that place student in direct involvement.

-Offer ACT/SAT prep classes at convenient times at each high school

-Educate students and parents about financial aid, scholarships and financing options.

-Develop an incentive program through corporate sponsorship. One idea suggests providing a \$1000 bonus to students once they graduate from college and commit to working in a year in Peoria.

-Utilize the resources of area colleges and universities to assist in preparing students regarding the college admission process on such topics as the application, the college essay, applying for scholarships and financial aid, classroom preparation.

-Provide guidance counselors with the resources to learn more about various colleges, special issues affecting students and opportunities to share information with colleagues across the country.

## ISSUE #23: Educational Equality For All Students In All Schools In The District

CONVENER(S): Margie Aldridge

PARTICIPANTS: Janette Kirksey - Manual HS Student, Jennifer Kirksey - Manual HS Student, Gene Burse - Manual HS Student, Marcis Boone - Peoria High Student, Sharon Reed, Connie Voss, Venus Winters, Sally Weber, Veara Cornish, Linda Millen, LaColis Reed, Linda Lyman, Karin Heath

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Reasons Educational Equality does not exist in all District 150 schools:

1. Behavior assumptions - student in certain area are bad, discipline problems
2. Parental involvement is different
3. Teacher perception of students' ability is different
4. Teacher focus on disabilities and not abilities
5. Lack of continuity in leadership
6. Low expectation (From teachers, academically, in discipline)
7. Outdated conception of intelligence (low income/low expectation)
  - Brain functions at difference levels for different people
  - Different ways to learn
8. Lack of resources
9. Unequal allocation of resources
10. Loss of focus on the common pool (Schools with strong financial supporters should consider contributions to the total school community - perhaps a percentage of contributions placed into a general fund for equal distribution)
11. Address competitiveness
12. Stereotypes

What can be done to address ensure Education Equality:

1. Appropriate allocation of resources (teachers, equipment)
2. Set high academic standards for all students
3. Eliminate academic tracking
4. All students should receive same level of guidance and coaching for high academic achievement
5. \*\*All students should receive high teaching standards. All teachers must be highly effective educators.
6. Early access to early childhood development programs (transpiration, knowledge)
7. Constructive partnership between parent and teacher
8. District utilization of all available resources (community, parents, retired teachers, college/universities HULT Learning Center, Lakeview Museum, Hospitals, corporation/business)
9. Diversity in workforce (mgr. at Cat teaching Business classes)
10. Differentiation in staffing (combine certified and un-certified staff)
11. Co-op students employed by the District
12. \*\*\* Buy-in to the concept: that all children can learn at a high level and our teacher's must believe it.
13. All students must be challenged
14. Holistic Education - Remove boundaries between schools, home, families, community

to address education issue.

15. Education Parents

16. Prevention and Intervention

17. Stimulating Learning Environment

ISSUE #24: How do we service those students who aren't achieving and don't qualify for special education?

CONVENER(S): Joan Frickleton

PARTICIPANTS: Joan Frickleton, Jim Matarelli, Penny Griffith, Rob Kazwauski, Tammy Hill, and Tonia Dolan

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. 504 Plans to make accommodations in regular classes.
2. Reinstate Behavior Disordered self-contained classes.
3. Create more alternative sites and have them start at a lower age.
4. Reinstate vocational education in the district.
5. Alternative families need educational alternatives.
6. Couldn't kids be graded on their progress each year instead of "can he read at 3rd grade level" to pass third grade?
7. Need to have enough alternative tracks at all grade levels to match all children's needs.
8. Early recognition is key!

## ISSUE #25: Choice and competition

CONVENER(S): Rob Parks

PARTICIPANTS: Jim Lambert, Mary McCarty, Chris Sinclair, Tracy Lovestrand, Barb Wagamon, Delois Turner, Donna Hartman, Marcia (I can't read the last name), Dallas D'hondt, Carrie Wahlfeld, Ann Galid, Kelly Reardon, Jane Lambert, Linda Millen, Aaron Schock, Tracy Kupper, Donna Micholson, Tom Goelzer, Karin Heath

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Issues:

- Choice does not necessarily mean vouchers to private schools. In-district school choice is an option that has been recommended to the district and they have made some movement on, but more is desired.
- How does transportation fit into a choice program? Without some transportation solution choice will divide rich from poor.
- Gifted schools are a part of the choice options within Dist 150 - but there needs to be more options for students who want an academically stimulating program (at various levels of schooling). It was also noted that access to gifted education needs to be open to all students for evaluation. There should be no racial screening.
- How is choice defined? The range can be very broad from wide-open choice to restricted or limited options so we need to understand what choice means
- Need magnets or concentrations in many schools rather than the limited number currently available.
- Choice can be a recruiting or retention tool for the district
- Need consistent, fair review and selection process for any choice program or school
- Choice needs to be more "out of the box" defined. One suggestion is the support by the district of small learning cooperatives, sort of like an expanded home schooling option.
- Competition could be enhanced by city wide school open house to allow all schools to "show stuff" and then let students/families apply for the school of their choice
- Competition is already in place, but it happens before a home or living space is identified by the family. It includes test scores, principals, etc.
- Leave no child behind legislation means that choice and competition are here and functioning starting this year. It will be good for all students.
- Use GP Mass Transit to help provide the transportation for choice students.
- Choice may reduce mobility.
- What has the school board/administration learned about other choice options and the benefit of choice from investigating and implementing the existing choice programs, i.e. Edison, Academies, Roosevelt, etc.
- Has the district looked at how many families have come to District 150 from private schools or other districts and how many have been retained in the district from the presence of Edison
- Choice options and educational opportunities should be offered to young parents to help them understand the importance of early childhood education

Solution:

- District 150 should explore more choice options
- District 150 should investigate intergovernmental agreement with GP Mass Transit on providing busing for older choice students (and possibly all older students)
- More community partnerships need to be developed to get realtors and others to better understand what is currently offered in choice programs and the benefits of each so they can match them to the interests of parents.
- Open schools to allowing more community based organizations to assist with program offerings that help define the "specialties" of the schools. Also to make parents/students aware of help and assistance that is available to them.
- Get businesses to fund more of the choice options
- Establish better collaboration on funding for choice options
- Replicate successful programs from one school to another. Utilize best practices
- If there is choice within the district there must be marketing of those choices. In fact there must be marketing of the district anyway!
- Investigate doing an ad supplement in the PJS regarding the choice options (or just of the programs/successes within the district.

## ISSUE #26: Reduce School Mobility

CONVENER(S): Pat Landes

PARTICIPANTS: Ovid Wong, Connie Pogue, Jackie Petty, Lynn Pearson, Sean Matheson, Jan Leonard, Roger Kilpatrick, Rhoda Moseley

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES:

ADOPT A POLICY THAT KEEPS THE STUDENT IN THE SAME SCHOOL, ALL YEAR LONG, BY BUSING.

\*\*The precedent for this may already exist in Valeska Hinton, Roosevelt, and Washington Schools. (Note: These schools are schools of "choice" and may be different from other schools. However, a "non-choice" school, Lincoln, allows its eighth graders to stay in the school the entire year, regardless of where the student moves within the district.

\*\*The policy could be either mandatory or optional. Mandatory would provide consistency, stability, and, for the cases of parents that may not be interested, a positive option that may not be considered by the parent. The optional category could provide an inter-action opportunity for the school to interface with the family, and provide flexibility for those families that are experiencing positive housing change.

\*\*Another busing option would be lateral, east/west busing, instead of the current north/south pattern.

\*\*When discussing busing, the group noted the downside was the cost and the impact on other students' bus schedules. The upside was the student would remain in the same classroom, enjoying consistent teacher/peer relationships and a stable environment (in contrast to a home environment that is changing).

FOR STUDENTS THAT ARE CHANGING SCHOOLS, MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF THAT MOVE

\*\*Teacher prepares write-up that would accompany the student, with other appropriate school records, in a TIMELY fashion, to the new school.

\*\*The new school would have a "welcome/orientation" process to facilitate a more positive transition to the new school.

\*\*Tracking all students to see if they are in school, and if they are not, where are they? (Note: Comments were made that a student could stop coming to school for a period of time and drop out of the system for a number of months, never noticed MIA.

HAVE HOME SCHOOL FACILITATOR FOR EACH HIGH MOBILITY SCHOOL.

\*\*Responsible for tracking and finding truant and mobile students.

HAVE A RESOURCE BOOK AT EACH SCHOOL FOR THE STAFF TO KNOW HOW AND WHERE TO REFER STUDENT FAMILIES THAT ARE SUBJECT TO EVICTION/FORECLOSURE

\*\*Resources exist in the community for payment of rent, mortgage, and utility bills.

\*\*Consider Peer Family Liaisons to communicate the community resources.

CONSIDER CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL CURRICULUM WITHIN THE DISTRICT (Note: There was not full agreement on this idea.)

FIND OUT WHY FAMILIES ARE MOVING TO GATHER DATA TO FURTHER ASSESS AND ADDRESS THE PROBLEM.

REQUIRE A WRITTEN LEASE FOR THE LEASE OF ALL RENTAL PROPERTIES, AND HAVE THAT LEASE INCLUDE THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOTH THE TENANT AND LANDLORD.

\*\*A written lease provides protection to responsible landlords and responsible tenants.

RESEARCH OTHER CITIES TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY ARE DOING ABOUT THE MOBILITY ISSUE

\*\*Group said this was already DONE!

\*\*This information should be shared with some group that will take responsibility for pursuing ACTION!

\*\*Heard that in Ft. Wayne, they bus 19,000 students a day, out of 32,000.

\*\*ACTION will only occur if the entire community works on the issue from various perspectives.

ISSUE #27: Lack of Minority Teachers

CONVENER(S): Donna Shipp

PARTICIPANTS: Audrey Gaten, Annette Jackson, Jackie G. Buchanan, Gail Thigpen, Terry Knapp, Harold Dowell, Mary Spagle, Francis Duren, Susan McCabe, Donna Shipp

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Problems:

Perception of minorities not being qualified to teach and lack of respect from students and the public in general.

Why doesn't Richwoods High School have any minority teachers when other schools do?

My daughter has attended district 150 schools for 12 years with only one minority teacher why is this and what is being done to correct this problem.

Why did Richwoods not replace minority teachers with minority teachers?

Recommendations to correct the problem:

Provide those who recruit minority teachers to the District the tools needed to do the job; i.e. videos and visual presentations to give to perspective new hires.

Increase the number of minority role models for young children in the district to look up to.

Identify children at an early age who want to become teachers (third and fourth grade) and support and nurture them.

Give signing bonuses and incentives to attract minority teachers to the district.

Incentives given to current teachers who recruit new minority teachers to the district.

Quality mentoring program to help retain new teachers.

Grow our own teachers to insure the pool of minority teachers is adequate.

Assign a Host to new hires who come from outside the City of Peoria to help them become familiar with the city and establish ties to this community.

Develop a plan to retain minority teachers.

Recruit minority education majors and allow them to student teach in District 150 Schools.

Ask questions of minorities during exit conferences as to why they choose to leave the district and use this information to work on a plan to retain others in the future.

Actively recruit minority teachers.

ISSUE #28: Better Parent/School Relations

CONVENER(S): Jack Craddock

PARTICIPANTS: Libby Taylor, Wendy Monaham, Barbara Moore, Ed Bradle, Joseph Fahner, Veia Cornish, John Garrett, Lyn Gutierrez, Bette Johnson, McFarland Bragg.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Tried to come up with ways and approaches to improve the relationship between the school and the FAMILIES that they serve.

Create ways to make the school more consumer friendly towards parents.

(Parents are sometimes afraid or intimidated to come in)

Create a liaison between school and parent to develop a volunteer list for parents.

Create a volunteer job fair at school, plus training so parents can come and help.

Empower the parents to get involved in the school.

Encouraged and solicited out service agencies to offer their services to parents, (child care, medical services, help with bills, etc..

Identify what the parents can do.

But the school also needs to be more responsive to parents' needs and not defensive

Teachers should have training to be more willing to have parents volunteer, and not be on the defensive..

## ISSUE #29: City's Relationship With Its Public Schools

CONVENER(S): Sandy Farkash

PARTICIPANTS: Mike Thurwonger, Pat Wombacher, Mary Jo Lehnhausen, Eugenie Keys, Ray Lees, Will Helmick, Harry E. Brehm, Jim Lemon, Connie Frank, Sally Weber, Herschel Hannah, Donald Jackson, Chris Burr, Cheryl Sanfilip, Lucy Gulley, Peggy Cornelius, Lynda Lyman, Jan Deissler, Ken Carrigan, Roger Kilpatrick, Nickie Roberson, Ann Unes, Ed Le Vevre, Scott Goodyear, Tom Higgins, Sheldon Schafer, Joe Hazz, Rachel Greenwood, Mike Illuzzi, Merle Widmer

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Engagement
2. What have other cities done?
  - Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
  - Chicago, Illinois
  - I-74 Corridor et al
3. Develop upscale housing that attracts people back into the community
4. Absence of city leadership at this open space forum - mayor and city manager??
5. School district loses up to one million per year!!!
6. Need for creative bargaining between the city and its school district regarding TIFs
  - Community concern: 75% of our students who go away to college DO NOT return to Peoria.
  - 85% of our students who DO NOT go to college STAY in the community.
  - This creates a leveling impact on economic growth.
7. Lack of leadership demonstrated by a variety of governmental units
8. Increase communication with all stakeholders - political - This is a community problem which must involve all community members - business, industry, education, etc.
9. Deal with realtors
10. Curriculum, instruction, and reasonable assessment must address the needs of all students!!!  
Changes are needed! We need to start with our youngest stakeholders and articulate curriculum and instruction from pre-K - 12.

ISSUE #30: Suspensions for Tardiness too much!

CONVENER(S): Marcus Boone

PARTICIPANTS: three people

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations: Work off time: Pick up trash.  
: Notify parents.  
: Put them on probation or set up a contract.

ISSUE #31: Can District #150 adopt an in-school suspension policy for the students who commit minor offenses?

CONVENER(S): Tammy Morris-Young

PARTICIPANTS: Carrie Peterson, Deanna Goldring, Patti Morris

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Our group was unanimously against out-of-school suspensions. Out-of-school suspensions are a waste of time and provide students the opportunity to get into more trouble. A large percentage of suspended students end up at home unsupervised because their parents have to work. We also feel that the District should change their suspension for tardiness policy.

Recommendations are:

1. Saturday in school suspensions - Saturday suspensions can be staffed by school staff, parents and/or hired security person.
2. Community service hours
3. Students can serve suspension by cleaning the school grounds
4. Parents should be required to accompany students to school for entire day.
5. Schools to implement a mentoring program whereby troubled students will be paired with school personnel (i.e. janitor, cafeteria worker, principal, secretary)
6. Each school to have a staff person who acts as a liaison between parents and school. This person would be responsible for monitoring excessive tardiness and suspensions. The liaison partnering with families and schools to find out why a student is excessively tardy and /or acting out in school and assist families in finding resolutions
7. In school suspensions where students make up work missed in school. Allowing students the opportunity to receive partial credit for assignments during suspensions. Receiving zeros during suspensions negatively affects grades which affects behavior and academic performance in class.

ISSUE #32: Intent of Public Education

CONVENER(S): Kate Smart

PARTICIPANTS: Fern Polidori, Ada Gatén, and some others

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

The convener intended to discuss the original purpose of education from the standpoint of our founding fathers. Several quotes were read including:

Dr. Benjamin Rush - The only foundation for a useful education in a republic is to be laid in religion. Without it there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments.

Thomas Jefferson - The philosophy of Jesus is the most sublime and benevolent code of morals ever offered to man. A more beautiful or precious morsel of ethics I have never seen. As an aside, Jefferson did not believe in God, but he attended church services every Sunday because he acknowledged that it was to his own personal benefit to understand the teachings of Scripture.

John Adams - But if any citizen wants to benefit from the sound civil order and good habits of liberty essential for the survival of a free Republic, observation will teach him that such habits are the result of a sound religious education.

Noah Webster - The Christian religion ought to be received, and maintained with firm and cordial support. It is the real source of all genuine republican principles. It teaches the equality of men as to rights and duties; and while it forbids all oppression, it commands due subordination to law and rulers. It requires the young to yield obedience to their parents, and enjoins upon men the duty of selecting their rulers from their fellow citizens of mature age, sound wisdom, and real religion.

Based on these quotes, it is clear that our founding fathers intended for the moral absolutes laid out in the Bible to be taught and supported in the public arena. This does not mean that the public schools should teach religion, but rather they should teach the moral underpinnings found in the Bible. The public schools have fallen away from these moral absolutes. Now, the moral absolute shifts, depending upon who is teaching it. Although some in the group felt that morality is what society deems it to be, and that schools should educate students to deal with the inevitable problems which result from immoral behavior. Others in the group believed that moral absolutes that do not change and that the best source of determining those moral absolutes is the Old and New Testaments. The dilemma raised was as follows:

1) All agreed that slavery was not beneficial to society and was wrong. All agreed that pregnancy outside of marriage was not beneficial to society and was wrong. However, teenage pregnancy was viewed as a problem that would never leave us, and as such we should teach students what to do in the event that their behavior finds them pregnant. No one felt that we should teach individuals how to be better slave masters. If there are moral absolutes, then they need to be taught as moral absolutes instead of morality as the individual sees it.

Others felt that students should be taught how to operate a good democracy (republic). Morality was an issue for parents and their children, but the schools should focus on democracy.

Other topics included the fact that schools emphasize the academic achievements of the students as determined by standardized testing to the point that good citizenship is lost in the crowd. A shift in focus from only academic standards needs to occur in order to generate good citizens for the future.

There were others in the group who felt that the ability to read and do math is fundamental to the success of any school, and without those fundamental abilities, it will be monumentally more difficult for any student to become a truly productive citizen.

In conjunction with this, schools must educate students for the world of work or future schooling if so desired.

Educate students so that they can compete, since competition is in every aspect of life. Competition occurs in work and home settings. Students must learn to compete to attain their personal best level of accomplishment. Failing to instill this desire to compete leads to mediocre accomplishments. Others felt that while competition can lead to great things, in life, learning how to peacefully work together to incorporate the ideas of all team members.

## ISSUE #33: Marketing District 150

CONVENER(S): Linda Millen & Steve Fairbanks

PARTICIPANTS: Joan Frickleton, Lynn Gutierrez, Jim Matarelli, Aaron Schock, Eugenie ?, Gail Illuzzi, Mike Illuzzi, Make Lawless, Penny Griffith, Susan McCabe, Merle Widmer, Ray Lees, DeWayne Bartels, Governor Foreman Connie Frank, Barbara Moore, Scott Goodyear, Carrie Wahlfeld, Donna Nichol森, Tracey Kupper, Mike Thurwenzler, Connie Voss, Margie Aldridge, John G. White, Bette Johnson, Harry Brehm, Wil Helmick, Jim Lemon, Bud Ruff

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Discussion focused primarily on suggestions for creating an aggressive marketing plan to promote the many positive attributes of Peoria District 150: Herewith are many great suggestions:

- \* Market the unique programs offered in schools
- \* Highlight developments in district
- \* Utilize CD-ROMs, brochures
- \* Feature students on billboards - grads who've achieved and mainstream hard workers
- \* To discourage "steering" homeowners away district should promote a "Realtor's Day" in schools to encourage realtors to tour schools
- \* Encourage City Council and PHA to "live up to their " to district
- \* Create "common ground" between city and school districts - "work together"
- \* Network with the school board's Community Relations Committee
- \* Weave these recommendations into board committee and Mayor's Peoria promotion committee
- \* Promote district's "hidden gems"
- \* Teachers are important PR messengers
- \* Discourage "curbside judges"
- \* Encourage more person-to-person communication and promotion of district
- \* Use "ABC's" of marketing - identify audiences - new residents, parents of young children, et. al.
- \* Make schools more "user friendly," as possible considering safety concerns
- \* Encourage school board to become more "user friendly" - have been "too defensive."
- \* District speakers' bureau - faculty, administrators and students (Optimist's featuring Dr. Royster at next July meeting - contact Merle Widmer for details)
- \* Encourage "professional dress" in faculty
- \* City Council can highlight district events, etc.
- \* "Bombard" community with news of positive attitudes and events
- \* Promote using PJS news and non-traditional publications like "Tidbits"
- \* "Gotta sell the students" in promotions
- \* PJS news could offer one page a month promoting district happenings
- \* Must update website - make it "current"
- \* Run TV station promos
- \* Establish an education channel - not just sports from RHS
- \* Caution against relying too much on technology to promote district - personal contact important

ISSUE #34: How to continue In-school Health Centers

CONVENER(S): Pam Doloszycki

PARTICIPANTS: Ed Bradle, Fern Palidori, Jane Lambert, Patti Morris, Maxine Wortham, Jackie Petty

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Purpose of In-School health is to bring the services to the students, keeping students in school, healthy and ready to learn. 95% of students seen in the health centers are returned to the classroom. Health centers care for children with common childhood illnesses and problems, as well as, life threatening conditions such as asthma, seizures, diabetes etc.

\$ 750,000 currently needed to keep the nine Health Centers open - biggest cost is personnel- Medical Director, Nurse Practitioner, Nurse/clerical person, Social worker

Current Status: After four years of the collaborative partnership of all three hospitals in providing major funding for nine In-School Health Centers, the hospitals have ended their contract with District #150 due to State Medicaid cuts. The only current funding is small state grants. 501C Status and By/laws are being pursued with District #150 and the hospitals to offer a framework for new models to continue this vital program for our students.

- Equipment will remain at the sites through the summer
- Valeska Hinton Health Center is under a different contract and currently remains unaffected

Community has become more aware of In-School Health Centers -

- Alliance
- School Board
- City Council
- Journal Star

Barrier: Immediate and sustainable funding

Other models could be developed:

- Social workers could be contracted through Agencies that could bill Public Aid
- "Hubs" could be developed and students transported to Health Centers
- Needs assessments to determine which schools need which health services
- Health Centers owned and operated by the school district with Nurses/NP's supervising other personnel

Exploring Grants to utilize health Centers as training sites for medical/nursing/social worker students:

- Emphasize recruiting minorities into health care
- Concentration on underserved populations
- Developing clinical training sites for nursing schools

Other:

- Federal Health Care 1H Grant

- State funds could be increased by creating a full service health center at a High School including STD Testing and Pregnancy Prevention provided by the Health Dept.
- All State of Illinois DHS Grants must be supported by -
  - Local health dept.
  - School district
  - Options of:
    - Hospitals or Community Agencies, Corporations or Government entities

SUSTAINABILITY:

- Endowments
- Donations
- Business Community
- Soft money
- Grants
- New partnerships
- Krispie Kreme Donuts!!!

-

ISSUE #35: Gifted Education

CONVENER(S): Christine Sinclair

PARTICIPANTS: Ann Unes, Illa Conklin, Sean Matheson, Jean Ashton, Tom Goelzer, Wendy Monahan, Tracy Lovestrand, Gene Burse, Annette D. Jackson, Ovid K. Wong, Mary McCarty, Pat Wombacher, Mary Jo Lehnhausen Pint, Deanna Gording, Dawn Zimm

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Appropriate for those that qualify.
2. Gifted is special ed, but at the different end.
3. Offer at all schools. Expand horizons of all students.
4. Improve selection process.
5. What are the methods to determine the students selected.
6. Letter to every 4th grade parent (Layman's terms).
7. Gifted in different areas. Within gifted school address special areas ( Math vs. science vs. English).
8. Washington is a draw for our district.
9. Don't cut gifted education.
10. Draw for new people and people don't move out of district. "I don't want to leave."
11. Need second gifted school. More students are gifted then just 60 students.
12. Team approach. Elementary - group by achievement. Less students in the bottom level equals more help for them. Teach to achievement and discipline problems will decrease.
13. To increase class size for the gifted is not fair to them.
14. Team teaching. 7 teachers across 3 grade levels. Team teaching can offer acceleration.
15. Before 5th grade need something for these students.
16. Washington works. What is there for K-4.
17. Grouping is against regulations.
18. District 150 encourages primary schools to provide enrichment (leadership, music).
19. It is in the school calendar that every school provides enriched programs.
20. Can # of students accepted at Washington vary by year?
21. Need to educate 4th grade teachers and principals about referral techniques.
22. Scores could be reported back to the home school and at Washington.
23. AP classes have 5 - 8 students. Different AP classes offered at different schools.
24. Is it important to sustain AP and enriched classes in high school? YES!
25. Boundary waiver to attend AP classes.
26. Problem with AP at one school only = lower scores at other schools.
27. Coordinate schedules so AP classes offered in PM. Bus students over lunch. Take 2 AP classes and go home.
28. Close Manual, Woodruff, and Central and build 2 state of the art schools.
29. Smaller number of high schools = better for the gifted.
30. CONTINUE WASHINGTON!
31. IB - Couldn't answer our questions.
32. Colleges look at IB positively.
33. State grant is \$60,000 to Washington. Rest is for other schools.
34. Fine arts High School in 2003 at Central.
35. Can't downsize Washington. If anything, need more.
36. Comfortable with gifted programs in middle school and high school. Not comfortable in primary school.

ISSUE #36: Teenage Pregnancy

CONVENER(S): Maria Johnson

PARTICIPANTS: Venus Winters

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

That regardless that the teens put themselves in that situation. That we shouldn't push them to have to leave their schools and put them at Urban league or YMCA for their educational needs. We create a whole can of worms by doing that, due to we are moving them from their peers that are going to be there for them more than their families. Utilize the community agencies to come in and be a support system for the teens. Also, to built preventive programs before they get to the stage of being pregnant. Create a program for the teen and parent to be aided in educating the middle and high school age students to be educated to talk about the subject of sex. Go to the basics of sex. Create tactics before hand, when problems are arising, so they don't turn to sex.

## ISSUE #37: Chronically Disruptive Students in the Classroom

CONVENER(S): Barbara Wagamon

PARTICIPANTS: Approximately 20

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

The problem was identified and described. There was agreement that chronically disruptive students are a significant part of the crisis in public education today. They weaken the educational enterprise in a variety of ways and fuel frustration throughout entire buildings. Teachers accomplish less in a school year due to time off task caused by disruptions, and there are not adequate programs to service the needs of students who regularly disrupt the learning environment.

What can be done?

We must determine what causes students to be disruptive. We need better ways to identify various causes of behaviors. After we identify the problems the students face, we must develop approaches to address the problems. For example, some students may be dealing with devastating personal issues that prevent them from behaving appropriately. Others may be unable to do the classwork they are assigned. There should be immediate intervention when a problem is identified so that the problem does not follow the student from grade to grade. We must be very careful about labeling students. It is understood that labels must be applied in order to qualify for grants, but labels stigmatize children. Those who are labeled 'behavior disordered' may live up to the label. More service options, including, but not limited to, behavior disorder classrooms, are needed for students who constantly disrupt the learning environment.

We must provide in-service for teachers so they are able to set consistent behavior expectations and manage student behavior. Some students are disruptive because there are no meaningful consequences to their behavior. For example, suspended students may be glad to be out of school; whereas, if a parent was required to accompany their student for three days of in-school suspension, the students may be more motivated afterward to behave.

Collaborations among schools, parents, churches, and the larger community will help serve the interests of all children. We must develop a group of persons that acts in the interest of each child so those students with behavior problems have a support system. Monitoring programs should be expanded. Each child deserves to have an advocate. Some children have no advocate to come forward to speak on their behalf. A strong partnership between teacher and family is essential. Teachers must develop genuine appreciation of a diversity of cultures in order to form strong partnerships with a family member of each student. Diversity training is a means to achieve this end as are home visits from the teacher.

Some student behavior is the result of poor parenting. To address the educational needs of the child, we may need to first provide support for parents so they may develop good parenting skills. Sensitivity on the part of the school to the home situation is essential. Some parents do not support school activities because they lack convenient transportation. Parent-to-parent partnering and other creative ways to get parents involved is recommended.

We need to look at other models for ideas. We need to look first within our own district for successful examples to follow. There are many successful teachers and programs and schools in Peoria that could provide a model of success for others.

At the district level, we believe a liaison position to improve relations between the home and the school is essential.

Most of all, we believe the means to address the problem of chronically disruptive students in our classrooms rests in the human element. Strengthening and creating partnerships ---this has the greatest potential to address the needs of all students, especially disruptive students.

## ISSUE #38: Counseling in the Middle School

CONVENER(S): Illa Conklin

PARTICIPANTS: Jean Ashton, Sandra Barbe, Gene Burse, Alicia Butler, Pam Dolozych, Dave Koehler, Martha Ross, Chris Sinclair, Ann Unes, Tom Wieser, Venus Winters

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Middle school is such a time of change -- physical, emotional, hormonal, etc. Every person in the group agreed that counselors in the middle schools are important for numerous reasons. Teachers can't do it all. Counseling is a way to prevent problems later. It's important to have someone students can talk to who knows about the school but who doesn't give grades. A counselor can serve as an intermediary with parents and teachers. In addition, counselors can be a link to community services. A counselor can work with individuals, as well as groups to improve peer relations, anger management, study skills, self-esteem relaxation techniques, bullying prevention, etc. Counselors who are familiar with students can find a way so that students don't feel a stigma for going to a counselor. The philosophy needs to be that it's o.k. to need to go to someone to talk. Counselors from the middle school can communicate student problems/situations with high school counselors, who can be proactive.

Intern counselors aren't the answer for several reasons. There are not always enough interns available to fill all school programs. The quality of counselors varies greatly, and principals have little to say about who will work with his/her students. There is no continuity from year to year when a new counselor comes each year. About the time a counselor establishes a way to work with teacher/student schedules and begins to understand the school culture and climate, the school year is over. Then another intern is assigned, if available, the next year. Also, a counselor needs time to establish rapport with students, teachers, and parents. Students need to be able to self-refer if they have problems, and that isn't likely if the students aren't fairly familiar with the counselor. Moreover, counselors may prevent some of the referrals to special education by determining the causes of inappropriate behaviors that may be mistaken for 504 needs.

It was mentioned that in our district we have a fragmentation of services. We don't know who does what from the social workers, counselors, school psychologists, S-teams, to home school facilitators. We need communication and coordination to prevent overlap. It was felt that school social workers and counselors aren't used to do what they're trained to do. They work more with special education referrals and paperwork. Home school facilitators aren't used as real liaisons between home and school. They could enhance communication between parents and school. Also, community agencies could be utilized to extend services.

People felt that services should be provided in the neighborhood when school isn't in session. After all, students shouldn't stop being provided services for 3 months. Also, it was felt that counseling services should be provided to parents in the form of workshops or meetings at schools. Parents could be taught skills to relate to their teenagers in more appropriate ways with anger management, study skills, etc.

Participants saw the following problems with attaining counselors in middle schools including lack of space, scheduling, and funding. However, the entire group agreed that having counselors in the middle schools is important enough that these problems should be seen as challenges that could be overcome.

ISSUE #39: Grants: Who should write them? What should we go after?

CONVENER(S): Connie Pogue

PARTICIPANTS: Sandy Burke, Kathy Newell, Tom Wieser, Maria Johnson

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Go after Foundation Grants: there are organizations: Grantsmanship Center

People that are willing to help find grants to apply for - all you have to do is go with an idea.

Doss Book

- Appears District #150 does not want grants. Why?  
\$ commitment that goes away - called soft money.
- All \$ are soft money. Federal and State included
- Have to track and don't have the proper way to do that: worried about accountability
- Not listening to the needs of students. Do not want to work with community agencies.  
District #150 blocks community agencies that have services to provide from providing them in the schools.  
Sees themselves as one unit.
- They need to pool resources with other agencies to get grants. That's what the providers are looking for.
- District still tries to hold total control

Many of district departments are one-person departments. Cannot cover all bases.

Example: Technology grant that Washington high school received. Did not collaborate as needed. Things not in place to carry it out.

NEED TO OBSERVE WHAT WORKS IN OTHER SCHOOLS..

DISTRICT DOES NOT WANT COMMUNITY AGENCIES IN BUILDING. Community agencies have counselors that need people to work with...why doesn't the district want to "allow" them to provide services?

ISSUE #40: Mentoring Programs

CONVENER(S): Carrie Peterson

PARTICIPANTS: Tamera Butler, Deanna Golding, Tammy Morris-Young, Donna Shipp, Angelia Moore, Steve Parks, Wendy Monahan, Carrie Peterson

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Mentoring programs are needed to teach life skills, coping skills, work skills, peacemaking skills, integrity, morals and ethics in order to produce effective, competent, whole, productive, happy adults.

This needs to be done during school, after school and weekends.

Young men are in need of this most.

This can be done through college fraternities (all races). They can work mentoring into their national and community programs.

Churches can provide mentoring from Pre-K through adult, male and female.

Promotion of the programs through flyers, radio, T.V. etc.

Businesses can budget the resources scholarships, grants, contributions from the city.

In-school Mentoring - students suspension is to work along side: Principal, Librarian, Custodian, Cafeteria worker, Security guard, etc.

Mentors need to be qualified: what is their reasoning for being a mentoring. (Legitimate).

To make it happen we need an effective communication system between parents, teachers, mentoring group.

Top administrators of the school district need to spend a week of mentoring. (Donating their time, talent and skills).

Field trip mentoring - have students go on study hall time etc.

ISSUE #41: Caring and Engagement

CONVENER(S): Dr. Linda Lyman

PARTICIPANTS: Jackie Petty, Nickie Roberson, Susan McCabe, Dave Weiman, Chrisanne Burr, Gerry Brookhart, Lynn Gutierrez

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

How can we promote caring schools and classrooms to strengthen student and family engagement with learning and school?

Any classroom and/or school can become caring

Children are not commodities

Caring leads to learning

Role of administrators set the example

Principal - interactions with staff

Flexibility

"Family" schools vs. "Bureaucratic" schools

Caring builds community -- examples: PAHS, Kellar, Whittier, Harrison

Smaller schools (HS)

Smaller class size

Structure - a fine line

Curriculum supports caring

High expectations for all students (Reciprocal influence on staff)

Support teachers so they can support students

Touch hearts of children and you reach the family

Two-way communication

Outreach from teacher

Nurture the whole person

Work with family

Reach parents who had a bad experience in school

Perception is reality

Climate survey

Interactions with families that are positive

Proactive rather than reactive

Make parents look good in eyes of their children

"Pre"school open-house

Culture change

Teach "children" not "subjects" Change and risk

Lots of work

Publicity for good work

New vision of purpose of school

Reward teachers; recognition of new roles

"Not factories of knowledge"

ISSUE #42: Are the city of Peoria's growth policies (or lack of) hurting District 150?

CONVENER(S): Sheldon Schafer

PARTICIPANTS: Jean Ashton, Harold Dowell, Aaron Schock, Karin Heath

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Short answer - yes

City is encouraging development to the north and west in portions of Peoria that are in Dunlap School District, or newly annexed areas are left in Dunlap Schools.

Use of city utilities should be coupled with growth of District 150; require annexation into District 150 when utilities are extended and properties are annexed into the city.

City is not developing neighborhoods in the central city. Dollars go to north end, not to revitalize older neighborhoods. More initiative needs to be taken by city officials. Don't have policies that discourage "smart growth".

Growth policies for revitalization of neighborhoods or expansion need to help increase District 150's tax base, not that of other districts. The future of the city of Peoria and the future of public education are linked. City officials need to recognize this soon, if it's not too late.

(Except for religious reasons) Public officials of Peoria should have their kids go to public schools in Peoria.

Public officials should care as much about the tax base of the city and school district as they do about the sales tax.

## ISSUE #43: Impact of Attitudes toward Poverty on Student learning

CONVENER(S): Dr. Linda Lyman

PARTICIPANTS: Tom Higgins, Gail Thigpen, Rhoda Moseley, Tamara Butler, Jan Leonard, Roger Kilpatrick, Ann Galick, Libby Taylor, Ken Carrigan, Sandra Burke, Dave Weiman, Harold Dowell, Patti Polk, Kim Hanks, Steve Parks

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

We focused the discussion with a question: To what extent do attitudes of educators toward poverty affect student learning and achievement?

The ideal would be for an expectation of success for all students to come from their families and be supported by the neighborhood/community of a school. But who gets this expectation of success started when the ideal is not reality?

Several suggestions were made:

Educators must know the children and their families. One person can make a difference.

Focus on and build from the strengths of the child and his/her family as well as the strengths of the school and community -- a strengths/empowerment model, not a deficit model.

When the group was redirected to look at attitudes of educators we agreed that these attitudes were terribly important because teachers spend so much time with children -- attitudes matter.

How do we get staff who have positive or productive attitudes about children who live in poverty? We look for them in the hiring process; perhaps involve parents in the hiring process.

But we also must work with existing staff at all stages of their careers to support/create productive attitudes. These attitudes are not primarily a system problem, but a people problem. The changes needed must be internal. Working with existing staff can take a variety of formats. One possibility would be to work with attitudes toward poverty as part of the school improvement planning process.

A suggestion is that parents can help educate other parents. A suggestion was for advocates for these families in poverty be in place at each school. The efficacy program was discussed and the role of attitudes toward poverty in its failure to be implemented.

Diversity education for teachers is a priority in terms of this topic because societal beliefs that people are poor through their own failures of character/effort permeate our culture. How does a teacher who has absorbed this attitude treat or interact respectfully with the parents of a child from an economically poor family? To provide staff with more information about how the economic system works may be a good strategy to consider to impact attitudes.

Next our group looked at how attitudes play out in policies and how they are implemented. We must examine the assumptions behind policies. We spoke of the need for a board level equity policy (Lincoln, NE Public Schools have such a model) that holds teachers accountable for their

own education around issues of equity, and holds principals responsible for monitoring practices for equity in their buildings.

Finally, the group focused on the importance of ongoing professional development centered on this topic -- that is well funded, provided with time, creative, linked to incentives, and mandated.

A final idea was to let the presence of parents in classrooms throughout the district help with increasing sensitivity to diversity.

But finally, the group settled on the principal as the key to a staff's having productive attitudes with children of poverty.

ISSUE #44: Adequate Facilities/To Close or Not to Close

CONVENER(S): Pat Landes

PARTICIPANTS: Tom Higgins, Jim Matarelli, Mac Pogue, Harry Brehm, Sean Matheson, Ed Bradle, Rob Parks, Ed LeFevre, Bud Ruff, Penny Griffith, Mary Connett, Dallas D'hondt, Jim Lambert, Pat Kellogg, Rob Kazlauski, Mike Illuzzi, Annette Jackson, Ken Carrigan, Deloris Turner, Anne Gallick, Kelly Reardon, Annette Johnson, Bernie Goitein, Terry Knapp

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Criteria:

Does it exist: age, condition, flexibility, and operational cost

How many new in last 25 years? Mark Bills, Charter Oak

How many new in last 10 years? Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Center and Lincoln Middle School

Population - size, quality/engaged

Adequate Facilities:

1. How many or which one?
2. Infrastructure at some schools - no child in 6-8 schools
3. Build now.
4. High schools less than 150 graduated
5. Operational costs
6. Physical condition
7. Population - District 150 - include trends and shifts
8. Change class structure

Purpose of the Facilities Committee: Look at recommendations of consultants and make recommendations to the Board of Education.

- Many people say NIMBY (not in my backyard) regarding closings
- Other options - move existing programs.
- Needed criteria and public input and did not have a clear charge.
- Need to know service/social infrastructure/curriculum to make brick/mortar decision.
- Look at existing new facilities as models
- Should school be part of community?
- Building not the driving force - use/service is program

It is a no-brainer: Harrison, Glen Oak should be GONE!

- dollars available from State of Illinois - in future - maybe, no guarantee

Question on recommendations to close high school. Plan did not recommend, but indicated that it would be physically possible to do so.

Dollars are tight. Need to consolidate.

Possible Criteria for determining closing or not:

1. Most beneficial to student learning.
2. Facility orientation to learning.

3. School size
4. School structure, i.e., K-8, K-5, other
5. Cost reduction/containment.
6. Curriculum offering - 13 building consolidation based on income.
7. Safety
8. Population - trends, current, shift.
9. Armstrong Act regarding desegregation rulings.
10. Neighborhood impact
11. Family choice.

ISSUE #45: What happens from Wednesday night's end into the future?

CONVENER(S): Jan Leonard

PARTICIPANTS: Kim Hanks, Veara Cornish, Margie Aldridge, Lacy Gulley, Gail Illuzzi, Governor Foreman, Patti Polk, Venus Winters, Bernie Goitein, Kate Smart, Sally Weber, Eugenia Kyle

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Points/recommendations for the district include:

1. Approach Caterpillar Incorporated with the idea of forming a 6-Sigma Team to take the recommendations from these three nights and proceed into that structure and process. In other words, utilize a proven method to tackle challenge areas that involves the major corporation in Peoria.
2. Committee to develop a matrix surrounding the issues with categories and priorities based on time, cost, effort, and personnel
3. Realize that change can be short term and long term, but that often change takes a considerable amount of time.
4. Ask for a post open space task force to be created with a variety of stakeholders and other interested citizens. This group should be able to give a status report from time to time.
5. At the district level, have a commitment made for follow-up from this event.
6. Evaluate this event in terms of: whether or not it achieved its purpose, if all of the stakeholders were here who needed to be here, and if the results "hit the target."
7. Request that the School Board respond to the question, "What other opportunities can be given for this group to be involved in the improvement process?"
8. In reference to this group of 150+ people: this group needs to:
  - a. attend School Board meetings
  - b. contact board members individually
  - c. be involved in a school's PTO - not only parents but wider school community members in a broad agenda that crosses over more than basic PTO functions.
  - d. hold the School Board accountable
  - e. request a follow-up event annually
  - f. organize a database of individuals to continue proactiveness
  - g. assist with the prioritizing of tasks related to accomplishing the addressing of challenge areas for the district.

ISSUE #46: Mentoring Program

CONVENER(S): Maria Johnson

PARTICIPANTS:

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

We need to have more support system for the students so that the teachers are not having to wear more than the hat of just teaching the students. With the counselors being cut out of the schools, it's going to increase more problems for the students. So we need to create programs that can be brought out from the community agencies like a mentoring program of Teen group, parenting skills, college bound, self-esteem, and turn these programs back to the students where they have to create ways to fund it by doing fundraisers where the supplies and activity fees of what might be needed in or to group be successful, would come from the students that participate. The responsibility is theirs with a liaison leader to oversee it. That way they feel that they have avenues to direct their negative or positive behaviors met or pressures that they have to deal with on a daily basis when they can't talk to an adult or parents.

ISSUE #47: Gang Harassment In School

CONVENER(S): Marcus Boone

PARTICIPANTS: La Colis Reed, Tammy Hill, Janece Pearson, Mable Ross, Keri Hill, Linda Millen, Joseph Johnson, Jackie nhan, Rhoda Mosely

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Problems:

Kids being harassed by gang members

Recruiting

Extortion

Selling drugs

Physical violence

Danger is clear and present

No action on reports to teachers

Administrators don't take action -- maybe they are afraid of tarnishing the schools image

Solutions:

Educate teachers to recognize gang activity

Enforce zero tolerance policy consistently

Provide safe learning environment

Create confidence level so that students know the problem will be addressed.

Student must report problem to someone in authority and strong action should be taken.

Encourage parent and church involvement in the school

Identify those involved

Provide alternatives to negative behavior

Solicit peer involvement

Collaboration with law enforcement and school administrators

Make sure school administrators recognize the problem and adopt a pro-active attitude with support to students, parents, teachers and administrators

ISSUE #48: Stereotyping of Students

CONVENER(S): Jenette Kirksey

PARTICIPANTS: \_\_\_\_\_

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

Students feel that teachers think less of them if they are black or from the south side. Teachers make that clear to them and treat them differently.

Treatment would be different if more teachers & administrators were minorities.

People flee perceived problem areas. The perception of problems is often perpetuated by people who have no children in that particular school.

We need to identify the cause of this perception. Where is it coming from? If there is some truth to it, how do we get rid of it?

We need to look for the root cause, but we must realize that these problems did not start with this generation. We need to look back into our history to see that many of the problems have been perpetuated over many years.

Students and parents feel that discipline is unequal based on race and class . . . especially race.

There is also the impression that we don't defend our schools and we don't adequately promote the students who do well.

Some teachers get placed in schools they don't want to be in and they can't understand and appreciate the needs of the students.

Students who try hard and do well often don't get positive feedback and this is very hard to get over if you are that student.

When we hear the stereotypes, what are the real facts? Some of the stories told are the opposite of the truth. Do we ever question these statements? We need to know the facts when we can and defend our schools and students.

The demographics in Peoria have changed considerably over the past years. Many of the teachers are the same or have not adapted to the change. This is not a good thing for our students.

Fear causes flight away from the perceived problem areas and schools.

Principals should be held accountable for school performance.

The community needs to be in the schools.

We need to form parent networks. Parents need to encourage other parents to be active in the schools and at school activities.

We need to develop mentoring programs for the students.

We need to reach out to schools other than our own.

## ISSUE #49: Copying America's (and our own) Best Schools and Programs

CONVENER(S): Ken Brooke

PARTICIPANTS: 10 people

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

"Most problems with Education have Been Solved Somewhere"; let's not re-invent the wheel, lets copy and take ideas from each other.

1. FINANCIAL: The group decided that a "Task Force" is needed that consists of teachers, board members, city officials, business leaders, consumers. The purpose of this Task Force would be to look at how District 150 is raising and spending money and compare that to schools around the state that may be doing it better. Surely, there are school districts in the state that were in similar financial condition of 150 that have creatively raised money and solved all or much of their problem. We need to find those districts and learn from them.

2. CURRICULUM: We need to make sure that District 150 is "cutting edge" and providing programs that work. We need to make sure that we are providing programs that produce the type of graduates the business and "real-world" community wants and needs. To do this, we need to create a team from each school that consists of several teachers, parents and administrators. Then offer a "Sharing Summit" that provides guest speakers and presenters sharing their successful stories to the teams. These speakers can be from around the state, from other District 150 schools and from the business community. The teams attend the sessions that need improving in their own schools or just attend to try new, exciting ideas.

The teams will be required to implement and be held accountable for what they learned at the sessions and share the implementation at board meetings. This accountability is essential. .

ISSUE #50: Support Teachers through...

CONVENER(S): Mac Pogue

PARTICIPANTS: Kathy Newell, Connie Pogue, Terry Knapp, Alicia Butler, Mary Connett, Joan Frickleton, Sally Weber, Rachael Greenwood, Jim Lambert

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

The key requirements fostering teacher effectiveness and their building of relationships with students:

Match the class size to the particular group of students (e.g., K - 3 < 20).

Small schools foster improved relationships among students, teachers, and staff.

Ensure teachers have the right kind and amount of job enrichment.

Improve process for handling disruptive students.

Create a foundation for funding staff development.

Foster a teacher-friendly environment.

Valuing/appreciating teachers' work.

Problem: pink slips in the spring; hire teachers earlier in the year for following school year by better planning and forecast of retirements.

Foster the concept of Teachers as a Community of Entrepreneurs.

Make curricula meaningful and applicable to students -- e.g., Vocational Education.

- Change perception -- call it Applied Technology
- Apply for state \$\$\$ and joint planning with city -- partnerships
- Auto Mechanics
- Hands on Curricula
- Learn from successes in Pekin (e.g., house building, etc.)
- East Peoria: computer careers initiative

Foster partnership with ICC:

- Distance learning
- ICC teachers come to D150

Foster partnerships with Labor

- Teach classes
- Career training

Field trips to local factories.

Tri-county \$\$\$ for Vocational Ed.

Implement a robust Mentoring Program utilizing community volunteers.

Take control of attendance problems (negative effect on test scores): clearly communicate responsibilities.

Implement initial training/orientation for new teachers.

Nurture new teachers:

- Initial training and orientation for period of time (1 - 2 yrs): educational, group experiences
- Two Rivers mentoring program (funded by state)
- Laptop for new teachers (funded by business partnerships)

Chat room for teachers

Computer based collaboration tool for teachers (sharing experiences, documents with their peers).

Provide more consistent support staff.

Funding of programs:

- Foster cooperation between city and D150, mapping to the city's economic development plan -- forge a true partnership and cooperate during the strategic planning process for synergy and mutual benefit

\*\*\* Reminder: Kids are the future of our city! \*\*\*

- Ensure cooperation and planning with city for D150 new construction.
- Need housing strategy/policy for rebuilding neighborhoods, building on economic diversity.
- Riverboat \$\$\$ from Peoria city council committed to educational needs (prioritize higher than spending on property acquisition)
- Parents should feel free to contribute funds to support teacher needs.

Capitalize on Regional Bio-Tech initiative to improve science education and foster relationships with the scientific community and provide careers to hold the students as they graduate from college.

Create a rich educational environment that attracts these scientists and other professionals to live within D150.

Latest cuts in D150 budget were too deep: Result will be further erosion of student achievement and more flight from D150 to suburban school systems --

- Teacher cuts ==larger class size
- Counselor cuts
- etc.

Lack of philosophic basis: D150 needs a Common Vision and Strategic Plan to support it.

Need follow on Open Space Forums to develop the solutions with community buy-in.

- e.g., Facilities Study should set priorities based on student achievement needs: design, where build, etc.

- Computer strategy with the right teacher training consistent across the district.
- Improved computer networking and software for collaboration tools for teachers.
- Science rooms.

Foster greater communication between middle schools and high schools.

Sponsor Education Day (e.g., State Farm, Bloomington)

## **And where to begin...**

On the third evening of the Summit, all participants were asked to identify the 10 issues that were most important to the future of education in Peoria. They entered their top ten issue numbers into computers that tabulated and graphed the results for all participants.

Participants were asked to vote the importance of the issues not the quality of the write-ups. Their prioritization of these issues represents a first sorting that creates a number of starting points. This is not the end of this story. It is a new beginning.

In line with this, the top nine issues were posted and everyone was invited to associate the rest of the other issues into those top nine. Then they were invited to add any comments, recommendations and/or next steps that could be taken by the board or any other concerned parties.

The raw results of the voting are shown below. The graph shows total votes per issue and total points, which is votes weighted by rank order, with 10 points for each #1 vote and one point for each #10 vote. The issues are listed in order of total points.

The associated issues, comments, recommendations and next steps notes for the top nine issues are included on the pages that follow this one. These comments, etc. didn't come out of formal discussions, but were simply collected at nine flipcharts around the room. So you'll notice some direct contradictions in some lists.

Again, these nine issues and all of these notes are presented not as final solutions, but as practical starting points for the future of education in Peoria.

## **Issues Getting Most Points in Weighted Voting (see graph on next page)**

A - ISSUE #19: Increased Parental Involvement and Responsibility

B - ISSUE #3: Reading at grade level

C - ISSUE #2: Class Size

D - ISSUE #17: Race and Diversity

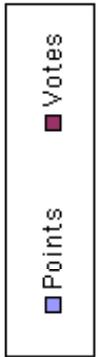
E - ISSUE #33: Marketing District 150

F - ISSUE #10: Vocational training

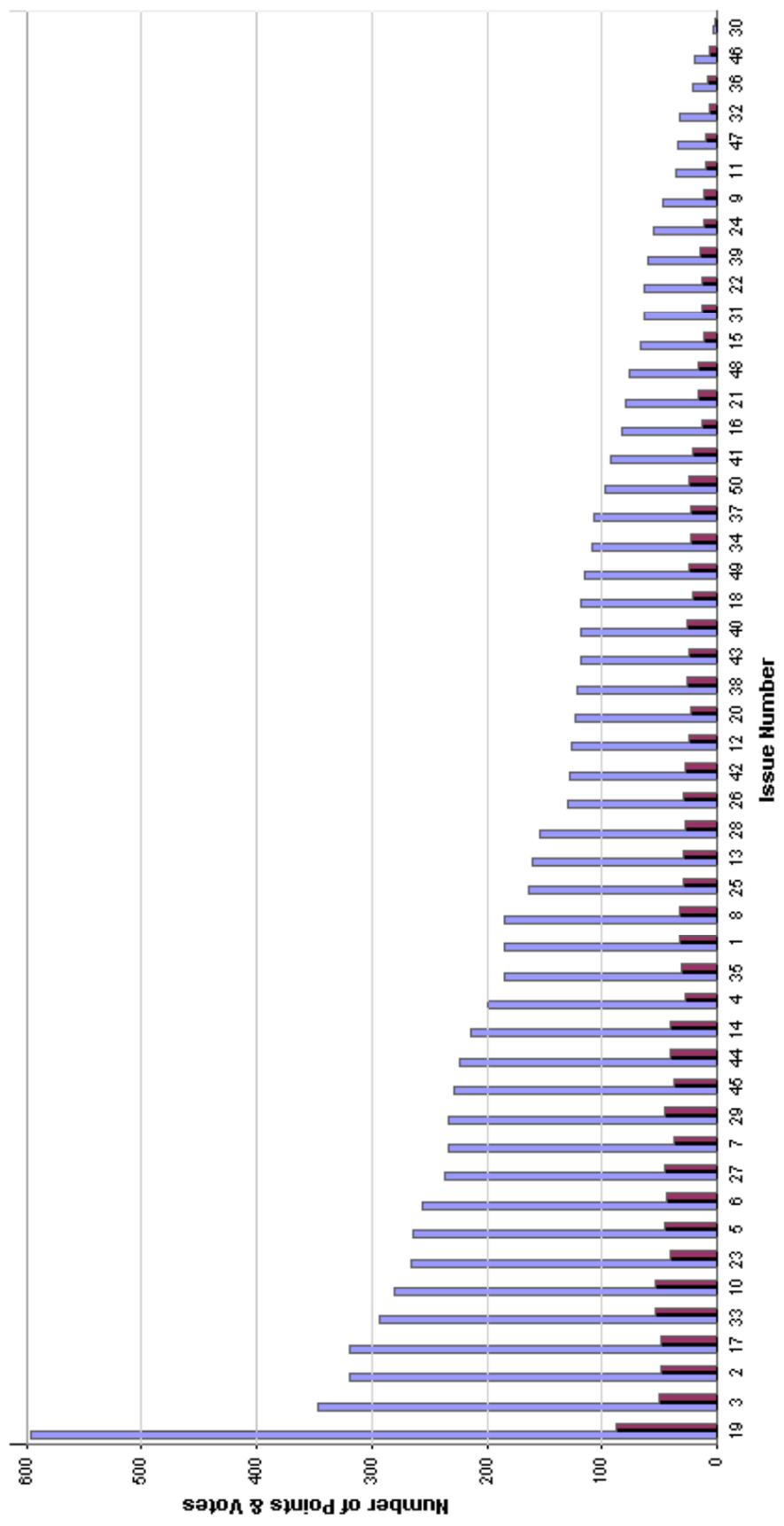
G - ISSUE #23: Educational Equality For All Students In All Schools In The District

H - ISSUE #5: Discipline

I - ISSUE #6: Edison



### All Issues by Total Points



## A - ISSUE #19: Increased Parental Involvement and Responsibility

### RELATED ISSUES (to be considered in addressing this issue):

ISSUE #5: Discipline

ISSUE #7: Get all children to complete high school

ISSUE #8: What Teachers Can Do To Make Education Better in Peoria

ISSUE #9: Reduce the Complexity of District 150

ISSUE #12: School Suspensions

ISSUE #13: Neighborhood K-8 small (500-600) schools

ISSUE #14: Prevention Programs: Meeting the needs of all children so that they can learn!

ISSUE #17: Race and Diversity

ISSUE #20: Open the schools to more community involvement

ISSUE #26: Reduce School Mobility

ISSUE #28: Better Parent/School Relations

ISSUE #34: How to continue In-school Health Centers

ISSUE #40: Mentoring Programs

ISSUE #41: Caring and Engagement

ISSUE #43: Impact of Attitudes toward Poverty on Student learning

ISSUE #50: Support Teachers through...

### COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

- \* Family-Educator liaisons!!!
- \* Make parents accountable for actions of their children
- \* Analyze how private schools have such high parent involvement
- \* Investigate the issue thoroughly before proposing solutions
- \* Support parents' access to information and educational opportunities
- \* Outreach through nurses/social workers in school health
- \* Parent advocates to work with parents
- \* Welcome parents to the school - explain programs - ask for help!
- \* Develop a structure known means of interfacing with the board and administration
- \* Assume goodwill from parents; provide more info
- \* Require parent/community involvement on each school's school improvement plan
- \* Require all school district administrators to attend a training on how to create a climate conducive to involvement from the community and parents
- \* We need to make our schools 'consumer friendly' we need to create a climate where parents and students 'want to be' and not 'have to be'!
- \* We need to focus on the 'relationship building' process that MUST take place between families and schools. It cannot be an option that staff partner with parents to help students succeed. It must become a valued philosophy across the school/district and enforced by administration.
- \* Start planning now to implement 'volunteer/info fair' recommendations, implement parent school including neighborhood GED/vocational training opportunities to bring disenfranchised parents/adults back into building - give something to get something

B - ISSUE #3: Reading at grade level

RELATED ISSUES (to be considered in addressing this issue):

ISSUE #2: Class Size

ISSUE #5: Discipline

ISSUE #8: What Teachers Can Do To Make Education Better in Peoria

ISSUE #12: School Suspensions

ISSUE #19: Increased Parental Involvement and Responsibility

ISSUE #20: Open the schools to more community involvement

ISSUE #23: Educational Equality For All Students In All Schools In The District

ISSUE #26: Reduce School Mobility

ISSUE #40: Mentoring Programs

ISSUE #49: Copying America's (and our own) Best Schools and Programs

COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

- \* Reading specialist in every primary school - reinstate Reading Recovery!
- \* Technology-assisted reading
- \* Priority should be to partner with parents regardless of the curriculum
- \* Reading in content areas
- \* Mentoring with city at #150 schools, churches, and other civic orgs
- \* Look to retired community for help
- \* Use Bradley Reading Program that are being used at after-school program at Catholic Social Services PCAP
- \* Get rid of 'Success for All'
- \* Parent volunteers to work with struggling readers one on one
- \* Add 'Success For All' reading and Wilson reading
- \* Start before grade K
- \* More 'fun' book or theme clubs with reading emphasis and age appropriate topics for students and parents to do together

## C - ISSUE #2: Class Size

RELATED ISSUES (to be considered in addressing this issue):

ISSUE #4: Money

ISSUE #5: Discipline

ISSUE #7: Get all children to complete high school

ISSUE #8: What Teachers Can Do To Make Education Better in Peoria

ISSUE #12: School Suspensions

ISSUE #13: Neighborhood K-8 small (500-600) schools

ISSUE #16: Special classes for children who don't qualify for special education

ISSUE #24: How do we service those students who aren't achieving and don't qualify for special education?

ISSUE #26: Reduce School Mobility

ISSUE #37: Chronically Disruptive Students in the Classroom

ISSUE #41: Caring and Engagement

ISSUE #44: Adequate Facilities/To Close or Not to Close

COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

- \* Class size reduction grant (lower grades only and kindergarten)
- \* Provide greatly reduced class sizes where the population of at-risk students is higher
- \* Make CLASS SIZE one of the KEY REQUIREMENTS for the District to determine for various student segments
- \* Teachers can better accommodate the needs of children who need more assistance in class
- \* Must be a priority in decision-making process
- \* How will class size be reduced if several schools are consolidated?!
- \* Monthly assessment of testing over state standards
- \* Look at class sizes of watch list schools
- \* Small schools too! (K-8)

## D - ISSUE #17: Race and Diversity

### RELATED ISSUES (to be considered in addressing this issue):

ISSUE #3: Reading at grade level

ISSUE #5: Discipline

ISSUE #11: I am tired of hearing parents of school age children tell me how bad our schools are.

ISSUE #12: School Suspensions

ISSUE #13: Neighborhood K-8 small (500-600) schools

ISSUE #14: Prevention Programs: Meeting the needs of all children so that they can learn!

ISSUE #23: Educational Equality For All Students In All Schools In The District

ISSUE #27: Lack of Minority Teachers

ISSUE #30: Suspensions for Tardiness too much!

ISSUE #35: Gifted Education

ISSUE #40: Mentoring Programs

ISSUE #43: Impact of Attitudes toward Poverty on Student learning

ISSUE #48: Stereotyping of Students

### COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

- \* Hire the best qualified
- \* Using local resources and best practices - create a professional development plan for new teachers and then another ongoing program for veteran teachers
- \* EXPAND the 'grow your own' program to other schools
- \* Ensure the onus to address this is not saddled on the shoulders of African-Americans; Caucasian and others need to commit huge time and resources to this as well - jointly - together!
- \* Mentor new teachers. Make environment appealing by helping them fit in. Don't just help them get hired.
- \* Develop programs to help direct more students of color into professional careers
- \* Set high expectation and standards for ALL students
- \* Need strong high school programs for 'future teachers.' students could help in primary schools at end of each day
- \* Revisit efficacy!

## E - ISSUE #33: Marketing District 150

### RELATED ISSUES (to be considered in addressing this issue):

ISSUE #1: Shaping our Facilities into Expanded Community Usage Centers

ISSUE #6: Edison

ISSUE #11: I am tired of hearing parents of school age children tell me how bad our schools are.

ISSUE #16: Special classes for children who don't qualify for special education

ISSUE #18: City Identity and District 150 and the relationship between the two

ISSUE #20: Open the schools to more community involvement

ISSUE #25: Choice and competition

ISSUE #28: Better Parent/School Relations

ISSUE #29: City's Relationship With Its Public Schools

ISSUE #34: How to continue In-school Health Centers

ISSUE #35: Gifted Education

ISSUE #40: Mentoring Programs

ISSUE #45: What happens from Wednesday night's end into the future?

### COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

- \* Hire/contract marketing firm - develop a BUSINESS marketing plan
- \* Washington Gifted School is a positive for the District
- \* Improve relationships with parents
- \* AP for ALL high schools
- \* Task force with city officials, business leaders, school board, and school admin on marketing
- \* Use Edison as a positive
- \* Use ALL schools as a positive!!!
- \* Need to market education as a profession and recruit talent to teach in Peoria
- \* District must recognize those in community and city who collaborate with them, change perception by being a better partner
- \* If not able to have a special class, hire teacher assistants to periodically help out the students with the special needs who need more help while learning. This will help them to keep up with the lessons taught.

## F - ISSUE #10: Vocational training

### RELATED ISSUES (to be considered in addressing this issue):

ISSUE #4: Money

ISSUE #7: Get all children to complete high school

ISSUE #14: Prevention Programs: Meeting the needs of all children so that they can learn!

ISSUE #20: Open the schools to more community involvement

ISSUE #21: Turning Teens on To School

ISSUE #22: Every Student Should Be Given Preparation for Postsecondary Education

ISSUE #24: How do we service those students who aren't achieving and don't qualify for special education?

ISSUE #25: Choice and competition

ISSUE #29: City's Relationship With Its Public Schools

ISSUE #36: Teenage Pregnancy

ISSUE #37: Chronically Disruptive Students in the Classroom

ISSUE #38: Counseling in the Middle School

ISSUE #40: Mentoring Programs

ISSUE #43: Impact of Attitudes toward Poverty on Student learning

ISSUE #46: Mentoring Program

ISSUE #50: Support Teachers through...

### COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

- \* 6-8th grades exposed to trade and career fairs (girls too)
- \* Ask the students what training would benefit them
- \* A necessity for non-college-bound students
- \* Build awareness early middle or even primary
- \* Raising expectations and support of all students
- \* Needed - it's a type of ability/intelligence that is necessary in our society and deserves attention and respect
- \* Student needs have changed in the last 20 years -- schools have not
- \* Needs have not changed - applications of the needs have changed
- \* Accommodations for different styles of learning
- \* Think 'out of the box' in creating schedules that will accommodate more access to programs for more students
- \* More info to parents @ current programs. Learned at this summit from Mr. Bradle that programs now available for all HS students -- PHS student can go to Woodruff, for example... who knew??!!

## G - ISSUE #23: Educational Equality For All Students In All Schools In The District

### RELATED ISSUES (to be considered in addressing this issue):

- ISSUE #2: Class Size
- ISSUE #3: Reading at grade level
- ISSUE #4: Money
- ISSUE #5: Discipline
- ISSUE #8: What Teachers Can Do To Make Education Better in Peoria
- ISSUE #14: Prevention Programs: Meeting the needs of all children so that they can learn!
- ISSUE #17: Race and Diversity
- ISSUE #19: Increased Parental Involvement and Responsibility
- ISSUE #26: Reduce School Mobility
- ISSUE #27: Lack of Minority Teachers
- ISSUE #28: Better Parent/School Relations
- ISSUE #29: City's Relationship With Its Public Schools
- ISSUE #32: Intent of Public Education
- ISSUE #33: Marketing District 150
- ISSUE #34: How to continue In-school Health Centers
- ISSUE #35: Gifted Education
- ISSUE #38: Counseling in the Middle School
- ISSUE #39: Grants: Who should write them? What should we go after?
- ISSUE #41: Caring and Engagement
- ISSUE #43: Impact of Attitudes toward Poverty on Student learning
- ISSUE #48: Stereotyping of Students
- ISSUE #49: Copying America's (and our own) Best Schools and Programs
- ISSUE #50: Support Teachers through...

### COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

- \* Reading programs that increase knowledge at their level - Wilson reading, etc.
- \* Choice and competition would encourage movement toward equality or result in the decline or demise of lesser performing schools
- \* Make testing for gifted schools made available across the board for ALL SCHOOLS
- \* Reach ALL students - lower, average, and gifted with appropriate education. Challenge and ENRICH all students in ALL schools!
- \* Appreciate diversity
- \* Must have high expectations FOR ALL STUDENTS
- \* This should be the No. 1 goal of District 150

## H - ISSUE #5: Discipline

### RELATED ISSUES (to be considered in addressing this issue):

- ISSUE #2: Class Size
- ISSUE #7: Get all children to complete high school
- ISSUE #8: What Teachers Can Do To Make Education Better in Peoria
- ISSUE #10: Vocational training
- ISSUE #12: School Suspensions
- ISSUE #13: Neighborhood K-8 small (500-600) schools
- ISSUE #14: Prevention Programs: Meeting the needs of all children so that they can learn!
- ISSUE #16: Special classes for children who don't qualify for special education
- ISSUE #17: Race and Diversity
- ISSUE #20: Open the schools to more community involvement
- ISSUE #21: Turning Teens on To School
- ISSUE #22: Every Student Should Be Given Preparation for Postsecondary Education
- ISSUE #26: Reduce School Mobility
- ISSUE #28: Better Parent/School Relations
- ISSUE #30: Suspensions for Tardiness too much!
- ISSUE #31: Can District #150 adopt an in-school suspension policy for the students who commit minor offenses?
- ISSUE #34: How to continue In-school Health Centers
- ISSUE #37: Chronically Disruptive Students in the Classroom
- ISSUE #38: Counseling in the Middle School
- ISSUE #40: Mentoring Programs
- ISSUE #41: Caring and Engagement
- ISSUE #46: Mentoring Program
- ISSUE #47: Gang Harassment In School
- ISSUE #48: Stereotyping of Students

### COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

- \* Discipline can be positive growth with social skill training
- \* Create alternatives to suspension in all buildings that include a helping component and a parent component
- \* Be serious about zero tolerance
- \* Build classes for student struggling with classes they cannot successfully complete - adds to poor behavior patterns
- \* Provide adequate counseling (at ALL grade levels) and coordination with available support/resources
- \* There is a direct connection between this subject and class size
- \* Develop more peer programs, so that would reduce less need to discipline
- \* In school health - social workers, anger management, relaxation, self esteem
- \* Publish a report on the # of suspensions - include demographic info

## I - ISSUE #6: Edison

### RELATED ISSUES (to be considered in addressing this issue):

ISSUE #3: Reading at grade level

ISSUE #4: Money

ISSUE #13: Neighborhood K-8 small (500-600) schools

ISSUE #15: Saving School Programs

ISSUE #17: Race and Diversity

ISSUE #19: Increased Parental Involvement and Responsibility

ISSUE #20: Open the schools to more community involvement

ISSUE #25: Choice and competition

ISSUE #32: Intent of Public Education

ISSUE #33: Marketing District 150

ISSUE #38: Counseling in the Middle School

ISSUE #45: What happens from Wednesday night's end into the future?

ISSUE #49: Copying America's (and our own) Best Schools and Programs

### COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

\* Dr. Greer Comment? Edison Schools \$6,000/student and 10 bus routes extra... other schools average \$3800/student

\* Misinformation creates a negative atmosphere for those interested in truths not political agendas

\* Identify best elements - all #150 schools

\* Better measurement of success than test scores: parent satisfaction, children's love of learning, exposure to the arts, second language, etc.

\* FORUM (Board members and Edison staff) to really understand each other

\* Can schools be maintained (teachers, curriculum, schedule, etc.) independent of Edison and managed within District as a 'magnet school' keeping \$millions within District??? NO! Great Idea!

\* PROMOTING the success across the District! PROMOTE the students' increase and successes! throughout the city!!!

\* Can we afford it? Can we afford to not give the choice?

\* Family and student support teams

\* Take lessons learned from Edison Schools and apply them to other schools