

**Quality Assurance Committee Meeting
November 10, 2005**

Board Members in Attendance:

Commissioner Thompson
Commissioner Powell

Staff Members in Attendance:

Linda Dunsmoor
Patricia Brockler
Aloma Cason
Michael Christman
Marie Cianca
Kim Dyce-Faucette
Cheryl Holloway

Meeting opened at 6:00 p.m. by Commissioner Thompson.

Commissioner Powell joined the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

(With Commissioners James Bowers and Robert Brown absent, the meeting was not officially convened and the following information should be considered notes rather than minutes.)

Cohort 2006 Project

Dr. Christman reviewed the Cohort 2006 Project using PowerPoint slides including information on:

- A breakdown of students by Years 1 -4 on the path to graduation:
 - School by school percentages and numbers
 - Demographics
 - Unduplicated suspensions
 - Attendance comparison
 - Exit information and Codes
 - Declining enrollment by ethnicity
 - Percent poverty
 - Assessments

Commissioner Thompson asked a clarifying question about unduplicated suspensions to determine if a student could be included in the category of short term as well as the category of long term suspension. Dr. Christman said that they could, in fact, be in both categories. Commissioner Thompson would like the breakdown of the duplications across the categories.

Ms. Cason discussed the research behind the pie chart on unduplicated suspensions. In looking at the totals, Commissioner Powell pointed out that some students have left us

and Dr. Christman mentioned that the majority of students that have left us can be explained very specifically.

Commissioner Powell discussed the parameters that defined the 9th grade cohort. Some students are not in the cohort because they may have repeated grade nine.

Commissioner Thompson asked about the reason behind the creation of a category of absences that spanned 30-155 days. Ms. Cason explained that she used 30 absences and above as a cut off she considered excessive and detrimental to successful completion.

Dr. Christman clarified for Commissioner Powell that the absences listed are for reasons other than suspension.

Dr. Christman explained that by Year 4, many students in this cohort were able to catch up to their grade level status even if they had some temporary delays in accumulating credit requirements.

Ms. Cason talked about the numbers of students who exited and the reasons for exiting the system at the end of Year 3. Dr. Christman said that the state allows the denominator of a cohort to be reduced for specific legal reasons. The denominator for any cohort is then lessened for legal reasons and the percentage of completers is more accurate.

Commissioner Powell asked about expulsions and the ages of students. Ms. Cason said that they were age 16 or older.

Commissioner Thompson pointed out the percent of Hispanic students in the statistics.

Commissioner Powell said it would be interesting to see the overall data of the differences in reasons for leaving the system by ethnicity. Commissioner Thompson said that it is helpful to know what is behind the numbers so that Board members can speak to these issues in an informed manner when in the community.

Ms. Cason summarized where the Cohort 2006 students are now. In this cohort, even though there were approximately 1000 fewer students after 4 years, only 6% of this number actually dropped out.

Regarding the poverty statistics, Dr. Christman stated that the secondary poverty rate for the cohort is somewhat “soft” data because of the stigma that may be attached to identifying oneself for free or reduced lunch at the high school level.

Dr. Christman reviewed the summary slide “Where We Are Now”.

As a last point, Commissioner Thompson asked about the failure to update “left codes” on p.5. She pointed this out to staff for purposes of minimizing any delay at the school entry level.

RCSD Reading Conference

Mrs. Brockler presented a digital picture slide show from the First Annual Reading Conference and walked Board members through a notebook that outlined the steps of the planning and delivery for this comprehensive professional development event.

Mrs. Brockler also explained the sequence of activities that took place on Saturday, October 22, 2005 including the session selection process, the keynote speaker presentations, the publishers' displays, and morning and afternoon small group sessions. A diverse range of topics was presented by our District teachers and administrators, all of which pertained to Leading Literate Lives. All of the sessions were evaluated and teachers were given a certificate of endorsement at the end of the day. Participants gave the conference a 99% approval rating on evaluations.

Mrs. Holloway pointed out how our consistent activities in literacy and math can be attributed to the emphasis and focus of Dr. Rivera. The Division is now planning a secondary ELA conference for the Spring.

Mrs. Brockler, Mrs. Holloway and Dr. Cianca recognized the support given by Dr. Freddie Thomas, the principal and staff members in hosting this and other many large District events related to professional development.

Commissioner Thompson asked for the listing of teachers to be sorted by school to have a better idea of the range of attendance.

Grades 3-8 Testing

Mrs. Holloway called attention to the information on Grades 3-8 testing from Dr. Rivera. There are many changes that are occurring this year.

Commissioner Powell and staff members discussed reasons for the changes including NCLB, participation of additional grade levels, and the performance index process. The US Department of Education plays an integral role in setting policies that drive the testing program. Daily work and embedded practices in the classrooms are helping our students prepare.

Additional areas of interest from Commissioner Powell:

Can we look at Grade 7 in the manner that we looked at Cohort 2006? Dr. Christman pointed out how comprehensive this work is and the level of time associated with studies of this nature. Commissioner Powell asked how helpful it would be to look (down the road) at a cohort that now has a better foundation and is better prepared ---as a comparison project. Commissioner Thompson asked if Research, Evaluation and

Testing can think of what the logical next steps might be. Dr. Sullivan will be asked by Dr. Christman to put some talking points around the Cohort 6 study and the misconceptions that are cleared up by this data.

Commissioner Thompson: Can you let us know how many instructional days were lost due to suspensions?

Commissioner Powell: Can we continue to look at Fast ForWord and its benefits? Perhaps we can do this with a control group. Dr. Christman will relay this information to Dr. Sullivan.

Action Items:

Dr. Christman to provide the breakdown of suspension duplications across the categories and tally the number of instructional days lost due to suspension in this cohort.

Provide overall data of reasons for leaving broken down by ethnicity.

Provide listing of teachers at the ELA Conference to be sorted by school to have a better idea of the range of attendance.

Dr. Sullivan to put talking points together around the Cohort 2006 study and highlight some of the public misconceptions that are cleared up by this data. Dr. Sullivan will also review what might be done with the data that is available on Fast ForWord.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, Dec. 8 at 6 p.m.