

The Word

JUNE
2009



WALK ON THE CHILD'S SIDE Mini-Walk and Rally for School Funding Reform

To demonstrate that School Funding Reform needs to happen now, we are planning a "Walk on the Child Side" reunion in Madison, up State Street and to the Capitol, with a loud and clear message

"TEN YEARS AND THE KIDS ARE STILL WAITING!!!"
Come to Madison on Tuesday, June 16, 2009 to walk, rally & talk with your legislators.


11:00 a.m. - Meet at Library Mall, 700 block of State St.
12:00 p.m. - Rally on the Capitol steps.

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FEDERAL STIMULUS DOLLARS

The federal Department of Education has issued guidelines and identifies a number of specific strategies

(<http://www.ed.gov/programs/statestabilization/guidance.doc>) on use of federal stimulus. Make no mistake about it:

Federal stimulus monies are intended to prevent devastating cuts to education, to prevent layoffs, and to save and create jobs.

DOE encourages use of money to “support and restore” current education programs. The precise language from DOE guidelines states: “LEAs have considerable flexibility in determining how best to use Education Stabilization funds. ... The funds may be used to support both current expenditures and other expenses such as capital expenditures. Among other things, the funds may be used for activities such as: paying the salaries of administrators, teachers, and support staff; purchasing textbooks, computers, and other equipment; supporting programs designed to address the educational needs of children at risk of academic failure, limited English proficient students, children with disabilities, and gifted students; and meeting the general expenses of the LEA” (p 19). The funds may not be used for the payment of maintenance costs; stadiums or other facilities primarily used for athletic contests or exhibitions or other events for which admission is charged to the general public; purchase or upgrade of vehicles; improvement of stand-alone facilities whose purpose is not the education of children (including central office administration or operations); or increasing reserve funds (p.25). (Source: “Guidance on the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Program,” U.S. Department of Education, April 2009.)

The stabilization funds should be used to maintain current levels of staffing, while simultaneously preventing their use for one-time expenditures on objects unrelated to student achievement. A recent DPI memorandum circulated to school districts noted that if it can be demonstrated that the spending is intended to help student achievement, it is well-aligned with federal suggestions. Examples include:

- Increase participation in AP courses, International Baccalaureate and/or college prep courses—all of which have obvious staffing implications.
- Attract effective teachers—low paying/hard to staff districts can argue that starting pay should be increased in order for districts to remain competitive.
- Any new curriculum or data system should include staff training, and professional development should also be targeted to help specific subgroups.
- Train teachers in new data systems that monitor student progress; train teachers in new high-quality curriculum acquired by the district; train teachers for specialized curriculum for non-English speaking or special needs students; train teachers to identify specific help students need and adjust instruction and ongoing professional development to those strategies; and train staff to partner with families.
- Develop a fair and reliable teacher evaluation system that is based on objective measures and that informs teacher professional development and advancement.
- Use highly effective teachers as expert instructional leaders and coaches.
- Redesign teacher compensation (e.g. career ladders).
- Support teachers in the first two years with mentoring and structured professional development.
- Provide incentives and bonuses to move effective teachers to low performing schools.
- Create intensive summer institutes for staff and principals to develop improvement strategies at low performing schools.
- Add time to the school day and year - after school and summer programs including one-on-one and small group instruction.
- Strengthen early learning, including preschool with credentialed staff for schools with high poverty children.

In conclusion, there is strong guidance from DOE suggesting that federal stimulus monies should first be used to support current levels of programs and services in education, including staffing. After that, DOE suggests a range of possible uses, including professional development, teacher attraction and new models of compensation, extra pay for extra work, and other initiatives intended to help improve student performance.

From PR&R

Peggy Oberbeck

1. **Collaboration/Preparation Guidelines**

– have been shared with many staff members during the in-service in May and suggested changes were discussed at Labor Mgt. The Preparation Period Guidelines from previous negotiations should remain a separate document, or add a letter F to respect the concept of a dedicated prep period. Needs further discussion and final approval at Exec Board.

2. **Collaboration Log** - suggested changes have been made. Make sure it says, *Collaboration Log* and not *Weekly Collaboration Log*. Needs discussion and final approval of the log at Exec Board.

3. **Daily Schedule** – continued discussion on the calculation of prep minutes, instructional minutes, duty minutes and the daily teacher schedule. Time is too tight in the schedule and could cause some issues with staff losing prep time next year. The district also views the minutes as per week not per day. Jim Kurovsky and Cathy Probst have submitted changes to Kurt Wacholz for consideration in the teacher schedule for next year.

4. **Student Teacher Guidelines** – district administration has put together a booklet for Student Teacher Guidelines. Some of the changes may conflict with the requirements of the universities that place student teachers. Needs to be shared with staff that supervise student teachers and compare to university policies.

5. **Labor Management Notes** - suggested changes have been submitted to the administration before final approval.

6. **Graduation Pay/Retirees** – only a few staff members were affected. Time Sheets have been submitted for payment on last paycheck.

7. **Lay offs** – There were 32 staff members laid off at the end of May. The district anticipates being able to rehire them with Federal Stimulus Funds. There was a concern about benefits/COBRA from many of those laid off. See the Podcast from the superintendent.

8. **Grades due before end of year** – FLW Intermediate school staff are being told to post grades by Tuesday, June 9th for printing by June 10th. More information is needed from all IS.

WAWMEA Scholarships

The West Allis - West Milwaukee Teachers' Association Scholarship was awarded to two West Allis seniors this year.

Congratulations to Hale Senior Thomas Koch and Central Senior Joe Klobukowski. Each winner received a \$500 Scholarship.

