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SIP
MEMO

01/30/08

to: All Staff
from: Dr. Jill Shackelford, Superintendent of Schools
subject: District Organization
date: January 30, 2008



One of the primary responsibilities of a superintendent is to organize the process of setting goals for the system, and to make sure that the system is on track to meet those goals. Last year, we set the 2010 Goals: All students will achieve 85/75 proficiency in reading and math, enter first grade ready to learn, and exit 12th grade ready for college.

Over the past several months, I have been working with the Cabinet to refine and strengthen the district's organization and strategy, in order to make sure that we remain on track to meet those goals. Our goal is to make sure the system resources are organized to provide the support schools need to be successful.

One of the strategies that we will need to employ over the next two and a half years, in order to reach our 2010 Goals, is the close monitoring of instruction. In order to strengthen the capacity of our executive directors of instruction to support schools, I am adding a fifth executive director position, and changing how their work is organized. Moving forward, there will be four executive directors of instruction who will each be assigned to one of our existing clusters (Harmon, Schlagle, Washington and Wyandotte,) and who will supervise K-8 buildings in their cluster.

The fifth executive director position will continue to be responsible for high schools. I envision the five executive directors of instruction as organizing the system's support of the work of principals, instructional coaches and teachers to improve instruction. Their responsibilities will include: supervision of principals and instructional coaches, leadership development for principals and instructional coaches, support for the continuing the transformation of our small learning community structure into professional learning communities, and the on-going monitoring of instruction.

I am also creating two additional positions: an Executive Director of Elementary Teaching for Learning who will be responsible for pre-k to 6th grade, and an Executive Director for Secondary Teaching for Learning, who will be responsible for grades 7-12. These two positions will be responsible for all work around standards, benchmarks, curricular materials and professional development.

I believe we are in the second phase of First Things First. The structural changes are in place, and they have allowed us to make the remarkable growth in achievement that we have seen in the past ten years. Now, we must dig deeper into teaching for learning, and I am confident that these changes will strengthen our capacity to reach our 2010 Goals.

All of the existing executive directors will continue in the ED role. As planning continues to move forward, I will continue to communicate and keep you informed.

SIP
MEMO

01/30/08



to: All Staff
from: Teresa Boose, Web Manager
subject: PTA on the President's Pell Grants for Kids Proposal
date: January 30, 2008

[Email from Patty Jurich – January 29, 2008]

Hi Teresa, this is the National PTA President's response to President Bush's statement concerning vouchers in his speech last night. I am sending it on to you so our district staff and principals can read it as well, in case anyone is interested in where PTA stands on these issues. We must continue our advocacy efforts on behalf of ALL children and their families.

From: Kimberly Barnes-O'Connor [kbarnes-oconnor@pta.org]
Sent: Tuesday, January 29, 2008 1:20 PM
To: Federal Legislative Chair
Subject: PTA on the President's Pell Grants for Kids Proposal

Good afternoon,

In the President's State of the Union Address last night, he brought forward a school voucher proposal that he calls "Pell Grants for Kids." In response to this \$300 million voucher proposal, the PTA National President has issued the following statement. This statement will be available (before the end of the day) on our website, pta.org. In addition, it has been faxed to every member of Congress. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Todd Haiken, Acting Manager of Public Policy (thaiken@pta.org 202-289-6790).

Thank you for supporting and sustaining PTA's 111 year history of advocacy on behalf of children and families.

Kimberly Barnes-O'Connor
Deputy Executive Director
National Office of PTA
202-289-6790
Every child. one voice

January 29, 2008
United States Senate
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Members of Congress:

The National PTA, comprising millions of parents, teachers, students, and other child advocates, is firmly opposed to President Bush's proposal for "Pell Grants for Kids", a national voucher program that deprives public schools of critically needed taxpayer funds by diverting those funds to private schools with no taxpayer or educational accountability. Public funding for education needs to support and improve our nation's public schools. In one breath, Mr. Bush called for the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), saying that we must "work together to increase accountability, add flexibility for states and districts, reduce the number of dropouts, provide extra help for struggling schools." In the next breath, Mr. Bush called for the diversion of \$300 million dollars in taxpayer funds to support schools that are not accountable

to the public, have no requirements for teacher quality, and show no evidence of improving student achievement. This seems contradictory, at best.

Vouchers benefit few students while taking scarce resources away from those who need it the most. Vouchers take money away from public schools, where 90 percent of all school-age children are enrolled, and give it to private schools. Public schools must meet federal state and local standards in a broad variety of areas including teacher qualifications, core curriculum and student achievement, and report their status to elected school boards and the taxpaying public. Private schools have no public accountability for the expenditure of public funds. Public schools must demonstrate student achievement and progress. Private schools are not required to demonstrate anything. Students receiving vouchers are not required to take core subjects such as reading, math, history, and science much less demonstrate proficiency in these core subjects. Private schools are not required to have “highly qualified” teachers or even meet minimal state teacher qualifications. Private schools are not required to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

The “choice” in “choice programs” lies with private school administrators, not with parents. Supporters of vouchers claim that they give choice to parents; that is not the case. Vouchers will not ensure parental “choice.” Private and religious schools may deny applications for enrollment for any reason. Furthermore, private schools are not required to follow the parental involvement provisions of NCLB, a provision that Congress embraced heartily just a few short years ago.

There is no strong evidence that voucher programs—whether funded directly, or indirectly through education tax subsidies—improve student achievement. In fact, a recent study by the Department of Education shows that public school students do as well or better than their private school counterparts in 4th grade math and reading and in 8th grade math on the National Assessment of Education Progress.

Americans have consistently rejected vouchers, both in surveys and in referendums. What’s more, Congress has consistently rejected voucher proposals just like the President’s most recent proposal.

If we are serious about keeping America competitive, we must be equally serious about our support of education. If we want student achievement to continue to rise, high-school graduation and college enrollment to increase, and the student drop-out rate to decrease, there is no better investment than public education. Children succeed when families, schools and communities work together. Together, we can make every child’s potential a reality.

If National PTA can provide you with any further information or assistance, please contact Todd Haiken, Acting Manager of Public Policy, at 202-289-6790 or thaiken@pta.org.

Sincerely,

Jan Harp Domene
PTA National President