

**Edison Elementary School
Collaborative School Committee
March 11, 2009**

Call to Order: 4:40 p.m.

Members Present: Larry Nelson, Assistant Principal; Robert Hudnall, Teacher; Joanne Stroud, Teacher; Lesley Turner, Teacher; Marcia Mason, Paraprofessional; Bret Hann, Parent; Tina Martinez, Parent; Suzanne Leff, Parent; Ann Christy, Principal (joined the meeting in session).

Guests Present: LeighAnn McSherry, Teacher; Jackie McSherry, Teacher; Christopher Scott, PTA President; Susan Hennessey, Parent.

The Committee approved the minutes from the January meeting, the February budget meeting, and the February regular meeting without changes.

I. Budget Recap

The Committee discussed the recent budget decisions and reviewed the factors that affected choices available prior to final budget approval. In summary, the CSC recognized priorities of small class sizes and the support that an assistant principal provides to Edison, with its 575 students. The Committee's priorities weighed in favor of a change in program for the school's arts program. Teachers expressed a preference for offering specials classes that they could not easily integrate into the classroom curriculum; they affirmatively stated that art would integrate most easily into their classroom instruction. The approved budget provides for full-time physical education and music teachers and a .5 FTE drama teacher, which complies with the mill levy requirements for arts funding. Most class sizes remain at approximately 25 students; however, second grade classes are projected to have more students on average than any other grade level. One teacher position was eliminated as a result of the Committee's decision to change arts programs, and the teacher intends to or has filed a grievance that relates to the process applied to this decision.

Robert Hudnall explained the grievance process. Joanne Stroud asked that the second grade class size issue receive attention as a matter of priority if and when the school gets additional funding. Bret Hann requested that the CSC determine whether the District offers budget training that will better allow the CSC to allocate the budgeted monies per the guidelines. A question was raised about where the drama teacher will conduct class.

Action Items: Contact the District to ask whether CSCs can receive training for budget preparation and, if so, schedule training next year; communicate with teachers about where the drama classes will take place in the building.

II. Visual Arts

A. *Spring Pilot/Fall Enrichment Program.* Larry Nelson reported on his plans to engage parent and community volunteers to assist with a pilot of the Enrichment Program that Edison will unveil in the fall. Mr. Nelson intends to send a letter to parents either before or immediately after Spring Break that solicits volunteers for an afternoon enrichment time. He hopes to offer

one enrichment activity in April and another in May and anticipates that the monthly enrichment period will eventually consist of a 2.5 hour block of time in which students can participate in one activity for an hour, rotate, and then do another activity for the remaining hour. The enrichment activities will integrate students across grade levels, with kindergarten through second grade forming one sub-group and third grade through fifth grade forming another sub-group. This multi-age program, with a focus on arts, will rely on at least 25 parent volunteers and teacher assistance. A question was raised about funding for this program.

B. *Fundraising Efforts.* Randy Thoma, an Edison parent, has forged ahead with fundraising efforts to support a full-time visual arts teacher for next school year. He leads a group of committed Edison parents under the name Art for Edison (artforedison.org). This group's activities to date include, but are by no means limited to, attending Arts Advocacy Day at the Capitol and meeting representatives from various Denver area arts nonprofit organizations and engaging in several targeted campaigns, such as (1) Chloe's Campaign, focused on creating and selling student art work; (2) limited edition Oakley sunglasses designed by local artists with proceeds benefitting Art for Edison; (3) community outreach and bumper sticker sales at the Tennyson Street First Friday Art Walks; (4) coordination of a community consignment sale event; and (5) press coverage.

Action Item: Determine what, if any, funds exist for enrichment program budget.

III. School Improvement Plan Tracking

A. *Data Teams.* The Committee talked about how the data teams are functioning at different grade levels. Second grade teachers and kindergarten teachers each meet weekly. Teachers from these grade levels have focused on standardizing student evaluations and creating SMART goals for math, writing (2), and reading. The teachers are working on spelling and literacy continuum for use when monitoring and providing interventions for all students. Fifth grade teachers have met with the area reading specialist to discuss reading intervention strategies. They are discussing the fifth grade research project and meeting with the District's EverydayMath representative to talk about math goals and how to reach them. Teachers at all grade levels talked about using Response to Intervention (RTI) in data teams. Lesley Turner questioned the need for SMART goals when RTI provides more flexibility for teachers to decide the focus of goals that may better serve the students (see discussion of RTI below). The Committee discussed the importance of sharing intervention strategies with new teachers and the possibility of including specific strategies in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) in the future.

B. *Daily Guided Reading Groups.* In a previous meeting, Ms. Christy indicated that she would present requirements for daily guided reading groups at an upcoming staff meeting. To date, she has not presented these requirements, although she is developing them. The requirements will likely include a body of evidence, such as assessments, conference notes, comprehension tests, etc. Susan Hennessey noted that this type of body of evidence often means more to teachers than it does to parents.

C. *Response to Intervention.* Lesley Turner presented information about Response to Intervention (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/RtI/LearnAboutRtI.htm>) and how it relates to data teams. In her overview of RTI, Ms. Turner described it as a paradigm shift that takes away the

regular and special education dichotomy that has developed over the years in education. RTI introduces a tiered approach to identifying student needs and helps to ensure that teachers serve every child's needs without labeling the children themselves. The RTI tiered approach is depicted as a triangle with the wide base at the bottom and the point at the top. The triangle is divided into three horizontal sections consisting of a larger section, denoted as tier 1, at the bottom, a mid-section, tier 2, and the smallest section, tier 3, at the top. The majority of students fall within tier 1; these students are engaged and meeting the standards. Tier 2 students typically experience some struggles with attaining standards, evidence room for improvement, and receive interventions. Tier 3 students may consist of traditional special education students but may include other students who have not attained grade appropriate standards or who exhibit problem behaviors. Ms. Turner explained that teachers identify which students are at specific tiers in data teams. All schools within DPS must implement RTI by August 2009. Teachers at Edison during the 2008-09 school year received training in RTI as part of a pilot program, but not all current teachers attended trainings.

Action Items: Schedule RTI training for all Edison teachers to ensure formalized and consistent use of the intervention strategies; decide on common assessments and/or processes to use in data teams; provide training or assistance to teachers to help them understand the data generated from assessments; identify and memorialize specific strategies that work to move students from tier to tier; determine whether to convene a work group to identify teaching patterns across classrooms and grade levels; include some or all of these items in the SIP for next school year.

IV. HGT/Traditional Class Structure

A. *December PTA Meeting.* The Committee reviewed and discussed notes from the December PTA meeting discussion about class structure and program offerings at Edison. Christopher Scott presented the background on why the PTA held the December forum on this topic, stating that, prior to Thanksgiving 2008, discussion about changing Edison's education model surfaced among parents. Mr. Scott summarized the themes from the PTA forum and other discussions as (1) use learning families; (2) provide enrichment programs; and (3) look at modules for instruction. Mr. Scott explained that he would revisit the education model topic with the Edison community after talking with the CSC, District, and administrators. He articulated a goal of identifying two things from the community input and discussion to include in the SIP for next school year.

B. *Plan and Coordination.* Joanne Stroud stated that this type of program change constitutes an educational decision and requires teacher input. The Committee discussion honed in on the desire for more opportunities to integrate Edison parents, students, and teachers. The teachers talked about the possibility of a staff retreat to help shift the culture of the school toward a more collaborative environment. Discussion further focused on the extensive efforts to apply differentiated instruction to all students, additional possibilities for integrating classes and grade levels (i.e., project based learning and platooning), and the need for a uniform positive message about Edison and the educational opportunities that the school offers to all of its students. LeighAnn McSherry and Jackie McSherry described how the kindergarten classes work together on projects and units throughout the school year. The Committee talked about the possibility of using focus groups to help decide the direction the school should take. In the end, the CSC members recognized two distinct areas that require further discussion: (1) differentiation (how

does Edison currently differentiate instruction and what models may fit the Edison community?) and (2) public relations (developing a message about the school that emphasizes its inclusiveness and the educational opportunities for all children).

Action Item: Provide all CSC members with electronic copy of PTA notes from December meeting; continue discussion on this topic at next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:35 p.m.