

Parent-teacher conferences

Twice each year, in November and April, parents of Dallas School District students have an opportunity to meet with their child's teacher to discuss student progress. These conferences are conducted because the administration and faculty realize the importance of communicating with parents.

This year the elementary conferences are scheduled for November 15, 1993 and April 18, 1994. The middle school conferences are scheduled for November 22, 1993 and April 20, 1994. The senior high school conferences are scheduled for November 22, 1993 and April 20, 1994. Classes will not be held for students in the schools designated

Computers part of everyday learning in Dallas schools

Five years ago, District Superintendent Gerald Wycellis told the central office staff and school level administrators that the Dallas School District was going to become technology-literate.

The District immediately faced a number of problems, not the least of which was how to finance this effort. When the financing of the technology was resolved, the problem of what type of hardware should be purchased needed to be addressed. However, the biggest concern was how to get technology concept to come from the staff, not from the central administration. It's a known fact that, if the teachers were not sold on technology as a tool to help them teach—and to help students learn—the District goals would never be realized.

For the first year, our administrative staff visited many different school districts trying to figure out just what computer technology was and, more important, to find the right model for us. The conclusion that was reached was there is no universal computer technology "model." Implementing computer technology is a process, and the District needed to develop our own plan.

Our staff and administrators, in the process of learning about computer technology, came to believe that the support of our teachers could be gained by showing them what computer technology was doing for others and how it could be useful to them.

Teachers were encouraged to take the computer staff developed programs offered by the District, in the areas of computer hardware and Jostens Learning software.

Learning will never be the same in the Dallas School District. Teachers began to take staff development training and volunteering to do summer workshops needed to acquire the hardware and software skills for classroom management of the computer technology.

Today, computer technology is becoming a natural part of the daily routine in the Dallas School District. The use of an interdisci-

plinary approach gives us the power to tie the teaching teams together via technology resources, computers, videodiscs and CD-ROM units. Using cooperative learning, our students are no longer bound by the four walls of the classroom; they can connect to the real world and concentrate on real problem solving. There are no limits to the learning possibilities using technology.

This transformation didn't come about overnight. Five years ago, our state was facing a financial crisis, and the superintendent believed strongly that it was foolish to try to run a school system without knowing where our next dollar was coming from. So how was this movement funded?

The superintendent went to the school board and proposed a financial alternative to support the cost of new instructional materials and new technology. The alternative was approved by the school board and supported by the community.

The superintendent, the school board, teachers and staff presented the new technology concept to the community—group by group, meeting by meeting. The superintendent wanted as much public input as possible to justify this large expenditure. Public trust in these matters is a must if the District wants the continued support of the community.

One lesson the District learned in this whole process is that computer technology is on a knowledge continuum. Training will always be necessary. The Dallas School District tries to stay on the "leading edge" of what's new, exciting and effective in the technology field. However, the main focus of our technology is assisting teachers with the teaching process and supporting students in the learning process.

For the first two years, the Dallas School District operated three networked integrated learning system labs, one each in Dallas Elementary, Westmoreland Elementary and Dallas Middle School. These labs utilized the Jostens Integrated Learning System, a fully compatible software

for conferences on their specific conference date.

During a conference, observations of the student's behavior, development, and achievement are shared. This gives both parent and teacher better insight into the student's progress and future academic program.

All parents will receive notification prior to these conferences. The elementary schools and middle school will provide specific times and teachers. Parents of high school students will request the teacher with whom they wish to discuss their child's progress. If a parent is unable to attend the conference as scheduled, arrangements can be made to reschedule it.

It is extremely important to meet your child's teacher to discuss educational issues which will impact on your son or daughter's future.

Since the inception of parent conferences in the Dallas School District, the parent participation has exceeded 90%. Arranging parent conferences throughout the year can be accomplished by contacting the teachers or the guidance counselors. The Dallas School District believes that parent conferences are a collaborative effort between the parent and the teacher to develop an appropriate educational plan which will emphasize the social, emotional, and academic success of the student.

Dallas High School prepares for evaluation

The Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools conducts approximately two hundred secondary school evaluations annually. Most of these evaluations take place in the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. A lesser number occurs in the District of Columbia and outside the continental United States, Puerto Rico, The U.S. Virgin Islands, Europe, Africa and Asia.

A Middle States Association secondary school evaluation requires a carefully designed process for promoting the improvement of programs, services, staffing and facilities of the member schools of the Association. This process also includes the services of a Visiting Committee which is composed of educators selected from MSA member schools who conduct a comprehensive, on-site review of all facets of a school's organization and operation.

Dallas High School is presently working on its self-study which is based on completion of forms as prepared by National Study of School Evaluation. These forms are divided into the following sections: School and Community, Philosophy and Goals, Curriculum, Auxiliary Services, Guidance Services, Learning Media Services, School Facilities, School Staff and Administration, Student Activities Program, Other Programs, Individual Faculty, All of our in-service days have been dedicated to the completion of these forms.

The Chairperson of our evaluation will be Mr. Arthur H. Ebeling, who is principal of Chatham High School in Chatham, New Jersey. The Assistant Chairperson will be Dr. Daniel Charrier, who is principal of Montoursville Area High School in Montoursville, PA. There will be a pre-visit by these two men to see how Dallas



Preparing for evaluation Seated from left, Mr. Frank Galicki, Mrs. Helen Hughes, Mr. John Turner, Standing, Mr. Charles Preece, Mr. John Chapple

is progressing with self-study at the end of January. The dates of Dallas Middle States Evaluation are March 8, 9, 10, 1994.

The following is a listing of staff members and their committee assignments:

Steering Committee: Mr. Turner, Chairperson, Mr. Preece, Mr. Chapple, Mrs. Hughes.

School/Community Committee: Mr. Turner, Chairperson, Mr. Pope, Mrs. Makowski, Mrs. Whalen.

Curriculum Committee: Department Chairpersons and Dr. Griffiths.

Philosophy Committee: Mr. Hopkins, Chairperson, Mrs. Pike, Mrs. Kennard, Mrs. Whalen.

Auxiliary Services: Mr. Shewcock, Chairperson, Mr. Argento, Mrs. Bren, Mrs. Sprau, Mrs. Trebilcock.

Guidance: Mrs. Russin, Chairperson, Mr. Bancala, Mr. Isaac, Mrs. Campbell, Mr. Shevock, Mrs. Carvey, Mrs. Makowski.

Learning Media: Miss Augustine, Chairperson, Mrs. Buda, Mr. Howantiz, Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Morris, Miss Kinnush.

Facilities: Mr. Judge, Chairperson, Mrs. Berger, Mr. Helgeno, Mrs. Kennard, Mrs. Bayer.

Staff/Administration: Mr. Wagner, Chairperson, Mrs. Fosko, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. Eyer, Mr. McCarthy.

Student Activities: Mr. Cicon, Chairperson, Miss Ide, Mr. Hunter, Mrs. Orfanella, Mr. Pope, Mrs. Dudick.

Other Programs: Mrs. Storz, Chairperson, Mr. Hutges, Mr. Matyzczak, Mrs. Trebilcock, Mr. Mathers.

In summary, the Middle States Evaluation will give us valuable information as to how the High School is delivering services. It is a healthy exercise, one which we are looking forward to.

School district is leader in teacher preparation

Dallas School District recently hosted a meeting of educators from Wilkes University in recognition of the district's leadership in the Professional Awareness for Cooperating Teachers (PACT) initiative.

The PACT program was developed by Wilkes University and public school educators in 1990 to update techniques for preparing college students to become teachers. The graduate-level course at Wilkes University opens channels of communication between the university and the local public schools, encouraging public school teachers to refine their training of university students competing student teaching with them. Public school administrators express their support for their staff members' participation by letters of recommendation submitted to the university. The contemporary plan is one in which the student teacher, the PACT cooperating teacher, and the school principal coordinate efforts and energies each day for the benefit of all students.

Student teaching for Wilkes students at Dallas now is a coherent effort of cooperating teacher and university. The careful coordination of public school standards and university goals provides a highly refined experience for both the student teacher and the public school students.



Pictured are P.A.C.T. participants, as follows: Seated, from left, June E. Eyer, M.S., Superintendent of Schools, Dallas High School District; Christopher Breiseth, Ph.D., President, Wilkes University; Frank P. Galicki, M.S., Principal, Dallas High School; Diane Polachek, Ed.D., Wilkes University Education Department. Standing, from left, Marsha Spear, M.E., Teacher of first grade, Dallas Elementary School; Mary E. Nulton, M.E., Teacher of English, fifth grade, Dallas Elementary School; Samuel A. Barbosa, Elementary Principal, Westmoreland Elementary School; Ruth Tetschner, M.S., Elementary Principal, Dallas Elementary School; Douglas Lynch, Ph.D., Wilkes University Education Department; William R. Wagner, M.S., Dallas High School Science Department; Donna Trebilcock, M.Ed., Dallas High School English Department; Eleanor T. Buda, M.A., Dallas High School English Department; Anthony B. Martinelli, M.S., Principal, Dallas Middle School; Maryann Storz, M.S., Dallas High School Social Studies Department. Unavailable at time of photo: Grace Reiskus, Dallas Elementary School; Charles M. Preece, Dallas High School Mathematics Department.

Group counseling aids students

The middle school counseling and nursing staff will soon be starting a series of group counseling experiences for the students in our school. Group counseling has been found to be very helpful in assisting certain youths in dealing with specific problems. It is an excellent way for some students to learn new skills, develop self-confidence, and better understand how to deal with many problems life presents.

It is important to distinguish between group counseling and group guidance. Group guidance involves sharing information with a large group, such as an entire class. This information can help students make better life decisions about such matters as use of drug/alcohol, career paths, etc. Group guidance is designed to

present issues from becoming problems and is something every student needs and deserves on a regular basis. Group counseling, on the other hand, is remedial in nature. It is meant to help those who are already having problems with specific issues and to address these concerns as early as possible. In group counseling, small groups are selected by the counselor to receive this service. Group counseling is not the best choice for every child who has problems. Some youngsters need more intense, individualized help and would best be served by individual counseling or family therapy. For example, a child who is involved in a crisis of some sort would not be an appropriate candidate for group counseling. A youngster who is so shy that he or she cannot interact in a group would also not be suited.

So, although a student might need help very badly, group counseling might not be the best type of service. If you know of such students, the counseling staff would be happy to assist in finding appropriate help.

The first group counseling experience will be for students dealing with separation/divorce in the family. We also hope to offer a group for students dealing with loss/grief. This group will meet later in the year.

Any parent who would like a son/daughter to participate in either group or desire more information about the groups should contact Mrs. Radele Oliszewski or Mrs. Laura O'Malley at the middle school.

Bond refunding saves \$232,590

Dallas School District recently completed a refunding operation of several series of the School Districts existing General Obligation Bonds. Based upon the current financial market conditions of lower interest rates, the refunding of the 1979, 1989 and 1990 Series of General Obligation Bonds will generate net savings of \$232,590 to the district. Most of these savings will be realized in the 1993-94 fiscal year through reduced debt service payments. The state of Pennsylvania through the Pennsylvania Department of

Education, also will realize savings through this refunding since the state reimburses the school district for a certain percentage of their debt service payments. The original debt was incurred by the district for building projects such as the Dallas Elementary School addition in 1989, Senior High school addition in 1990, and the remodeling and expansion of the Dallas Elementary School after its original purchase in 1979.

The issuance of the \$4,335,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series

of 1993, Aaa-rated, insured bonds were and will be used to refund the outstanding series noted above, as well as, pay issuance costs associated with the new Series of 1993 Bonds.

During a time of increased demand by government entities for taxpayers' financial resources, Dallas School District was fortunate to be able to take advantage of current financial market conditions to help alleviate the taxpayers' burden for the school districts' debt service payments.

New telephone system

The Dallas School District has implemented a new telephone system to insure a more efficient and effective utilization of staff. Community members calling the District telephone number (675-5201) will make contact with an automated attendant who will present the following telephone menu:

Mr. High School - Press 1
Middle Elementary - Press 2
Dallas Elementary - Press 3
Westmoreland Elementary - Press 4

Maintenance Office - Press 5
Administration Office - Press 6
Individuals calling 675-5201 may immediately press any number 1 through 7 to get their desired office without waiting for the automated attendant to complete the entire message.

Each of the above menu numbers will present a Sub-Menu for that individual building or office. If you have a touch tone phone and know the extension of the party you are calling, you can reach that extension directly by dialing the (#) sign and the three digit extension of the party you are calling when prompted by the attendant. A listing of extension numbers is provided here for your convenience.

DALLAS SCHOOL PHONE NUMBERS

Superintendent's Office	221
Asst. Superintendent's Office	263
Business Manager's Office	225
Transportation Office	229
Maintenance Office	255
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	
Mr. High Office or Principal	208
Athletic Office	257
Guidance Office	218
Nurse's Office	220
Mr. High Locker Room	235
MIDDLE SCHOOL	
Middle School Office or Principal	205
Guidance Office	245
Nurse's Office	247
DALLAS ELEMENTARY	
Dallas Elem. Office or Principal	271
Home & School Visitor	275
Nurse's Office	276
WESTMORELAND ELEMENTARY	
Westmoreland Office or Principal	283
Nurse's Office	213

If you do not have a touch tone phone, you may dial the desired number directly. The direct dialing information is listed below.

Superintendent's Office - 674-7221
Asst. Superintendent's Office - 674-7263
Business Office - 674-7225
Transportation Office - 674-7229
Mr. High School Office - 674-7208
Middle School Office - 674-7205
Dallas Elementary Office - 674-7271
Westmoreland Elementary Office - 674-7283
Maintenance Office - 674-7255
Mr. High Locker Room - 674-7235

As we work through the process of orienting community members with the new telephone system, we ask for your cooperation and patience.