

EDUCATION REPORT by Walt Thomas 8/12/92

1. The goal of the ISP in this Educational endeavor is primarily to find out what we might do to assist the school systems since the Governor has cut the budgets so heavily. The ISP is particularly concerned about keeping the 7th hour open - we need more education in this high tec world, not less. What can we do to reduce the cost of the system?

2 I called Superinendent Pledger Sullivan, Okaloosa County, and Superintendent Zane Sunday, Walton County, and briefly explained the purpose of my call. Pledger referred me to Dr. Mable Jean Morrison, Assistant Superintendent, and Zane referred me to Joyce Kelly, Professional Development Center. Both Pledger and Zane expressed a sincere interest and willingness to help us. I gave them each a copy of the ISP Directory.

3. I called Dr. Morrison and Mrs. Kelly and explained our goal. I also sent them each a letter as a follow-up requesting them to notify me what we might do.

4. Dr. Morrison asked to have a meeting with me which I held on August 4. I wrote her a letter confirming what we discussed. At that meeting I was introduced to the FOCUS Center which is located at the West end of Brooks in Ft. Walton. The purpose is to excite students about Science.

I explained that although many of us are interested in this facility, the Center does not reduce school costs and thus is not part of our goal.

Pat Martin suggested, however, that this group would benefit from seeing the Center and requested we consider holding a meeting their in October or November. Her number is 664 1261.

5. Dr. Morrison then arranged another meeting for me with the Director of the Volunteer Program which includes the Mentor Program. I have arranged through Jim Chitwood to have Patti Boyles, District Volunteer Coordinator, to be the guest speaker at the ISP meeting on September 15. At that time she will explain in detail the many opportunities for members of the ISP and their spouses to assist the school system.

6. Briefly, a Mentor program means that the volunteer mentor serves as a listener, role model and tutor working with her/his student partner one-on-one for a specified period of time per week for at least 12 weeks. This program provides positive reinforcement, raises self-esteem, promotes the value of education and demonstrates a lot of TLC to students "at-risk".

7. Marie Marshall then explained the needs for volunteers for the Language Arts Program. Language Arts was defined as the "whole of English" - the language, speech, forensics, publications, history, etc. The current problem is the lack of understanding for the need for volunteers. She stated that most of those listed in the Directory could be of help as a volunteer occasionally

8. Dr. Morrison stated they also needed some Bus Supervisors at the Schools to help unload and load students before and after school.

9. I called Joyce Kelly, from Walton County, since I had not heard from her. She stated the Walton schools also have a very successful Volunteer program similar to the Okaloosa County system. She pointed out that several of their schools receive a Golden School Award that signifies that the Volunteer hours are more than twice the enrollment. They do not have a Mentor program.

She also stated they use several Volunteers for their Math Superstar Contest. The 1st and 2nd place winners go on to the District Contest.

CONCLUSIONS

- a) The ISP can contribute directly to the reduction of school costs by:
 1. Volunteering to assist where needed,
 2. Volunteering to be a Mentor,
 3. Volunteering to help load and unload students on buses,
 4. Volunteering to give "Guest Lectures" on your profession,
 5. Volunteering to help with the "Math Superstar" program,
 6. volunteering to assist in the "Language Arts Program".
 7. Learning more details at the September meeting when Patti Boyles will make her presentation on the Volunteer and Mentor Program.

- b) The ISP can contribute indirectly to the reduction of school costs by attempt to entice many other retired people to volunteer by embarking on an Educational Campaign on the needs and requirements for volunteers.

- c) You do not have to have a degree to assist. A volunteer is evaluated on their interests, capabilities and background - not on credentials.

- d) We may want to meet at the FOCUS CENTER. If you decide not to, an alternative is to have a "special meeting" for those interested in going.

- e) We should provide about 50 copies fo our Directory to the Okaloosa Superintendent and about 30 copies to the Walton Superintendent so that they will have a handy list of potential volunteers.

One additional point that the ISP should consider is President Richburg's suggestion to generate an ISP "Mission for Public Education" document.

For the record, I asked both Superintendents if they felt we would be out of order in doing what the President suggested. They both enthusiastically responded that they would encourage such an austere group to provide them with such a document.

Please ask President Richburg to elucidate.

