

DeBonno said Congressman Farr indicated he would support the District and that she would talk to Support Services Director Bob Riefe to see if it is possible for school needs.

Maria Buell, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) President, said it is good to hear there are two schools following an alternative program for MPUSD students. She asked whether the program will benefit the bilingual students residing in Seaside and whether it is also timely and appropriate to come up with other options that will directly impact students.

ACTION

*MSC Eggers, LeBoeuf

Approve Resolution of Support for the Implementation of America's Choice Curriculum Design in 2003-2004

Dr. Callahan said one of the tenets is the needs of all District students and making a difference for all students. He referred to the Strategic Plan's Beliefs and Mission Statement and said the basic Belief tenet is the birth right of every student to graduate from high school and to choose if they want to go to college. Dr. Callahan said if they are not prepared to choose, they are left with a lesser choice. He said he had contacts with the Community Foundation for Monterey County and Congressman Sam Farr's office who both indicated financial commitments to support America's Choice and Imagine College pending the outcome of the Board's decision. He distributed a hand delivered, unsolicited letter signed by the Presidents of California State University Monterey Bay and Monterey Institute of International Studies, Superintendent of the Naval Postgraduate School, Commandant of the Defense Language Institute, and Commanding Officer of the Fleet Numerical Meteorology and Oceanography Center expressing support for the America's Choice program. Dr. Callahan said several of the schools visited were 80%-90% English Language Learners.

Associate Superintendent John Lamb reviewed the process used by the schools to select the America's Choice curriculum design and said the annotation is seeking Board approval of support for Manzanita School and King Middle School to engage in America's Choice next year.

At this time, Board members and members of the public commented and asked questions about America's Choice.

In response to Mr. Villa's concern about the program in terms of instructional strategies, King Middle School Principal Darren Sylvia said teachers have issues with time and collaboration. If a program has a design and is effective, he said why reinvent the wheel. Mr. Sylvia said time for the teachers will be better spent for instruction rather than the development of instruction.

In response to Mr. Eggers question regarding second language learners, Manzanita teacher Erika Arquilla said part of the design addresses Spanish to English, and the program tells you which standards are essential and what it looks like when the student has met the standard. She said America's Choice gives the design and frees the teachers to teach.

In response to President Troutman's question how America's Choice compares to the Houghton Mifflin program, Ms. Arquilla said America's Choice doesn't compete; it is a design in which to use any program that has been adopted.

In response to Seaside resident Ewalker James question about what motivated Mr. Sylvia to get the teachers involved with America's Choice rather than other programs at the school, Mr. Sylvia said it took the empowerment of the classroom teacher and made them a true professional. He said he spoke to many students and teachers who were participating in the program.

In response to Mrs. Lauterbach's question regarding other programs, Mr. Sylvia said King Middle School is using the SRA direct instruction model. He said students have had tremendous growth but more is needed. Other off-the-shelf programs were considered, but America's Choice took the standards and allowed the teachers to improve and deliver instruction.

Regarding Mr. Villa's question about the consistency of trainings for teachers over the past three years and funding for America's Choice, Mr. Sylvia said a consultant was brought in for 15 days for direct instruction teaching, teachers have participated in county-sponsored workshops, and grants were written for staff development activities. Regarding funding for America's Choice, Mr. Sylvia said most monies received are federal dollars and if the program stays intact and the King population continues to diversify, additional dollars can be allocated. He said the school will look at matching grants, and funding from the Chapman Foundation and other local agencies to continue the program. Funding would be secured similar to the process used to fund the Under the Big Top after school program. Mr. Sylvia said the basis of the budget for America's Choice is based on federal monies allocated to the school over the past five years.

Dr. Callahan reiterated there will be ongoing commitment from the Monterey Foundation and Congressman Sam Farr, and that he has been invited to speak to the Chapman Foundation about America's Choice. He said funding is based on a year by year commitment and if there is no funding support, a decision will be made about continuing the program.

Manzanita School Principal Ron Allen said the school has enough carryover to fund the program the first year, and funds will be allocated for the second year. He felt the school will not have any problems getting matching grants.

Mr. Villa indicated the State said it will have budgetary concerns over the next three years and that there are a lot of promises and no solid answers in terms of the budget, and he expressed concern whether America's Choice could hedge on the General Fund.

Manzanita School Teacher Jerry Giamona said the school projects it can fund the program at least two years and will make every effort to fund the third year and future years. She said it is not the intent to encroach on the General Fund and that the school will use its own categorical funds, renewable year by year. She said by the third year, teachers will be trained on the America's Choice curriculum design and have the necessary tools to teach the students. Mrs. Giamona said the intent is to send a few people for training and that they will return and train each teacher in every grade level and assist them.

In response to President Troutman's question related to the segment from Spanish to English and whether there is another program that is similar to the type of support given by America's Choice, King Middle School Resource Teacher Liza Moe said there is no other program.

Mrs. LeBoeuf felt that the teachers should be fully trained in the model by the third year and reminded that the program is flexible and all components don't have to be implemented.

Mr. Villa hoped that the administration will find ways to implement staff development for all. He expressed concern about the monies used for staff development for the rest of the District to train other teachers.

Dr. Callahan responded that there is approximately \$200,000 in Peer and Assistance Review (PAR) funding and \$200,000 in Title II monies available for staff development for other teachers. He reminded that categorical monies are only available for instruction types of things and that the District was recipient of a \$50 million hardship grant and that some of those monies will be used to repair/replace roofs.

Following clarification of additional questions, Mr. Eggers said he supported America's Choice and commended the school sites for thoroughly researching the program. He hoped that other schools will come on Board and participate.

Ms. Foss commended Dr. Callahan, Mr. Lamb, and others for asking teachers for their input regarding America's Choice. She referred to the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) and said their philosophy in terms of what public education is is not the same as hers and that she will be watching the program if it is implemented. Ms. Foss said she didn't have a problem with the program in terms of helping children be self-motivated. She said one good thing from this process is a much better feel for what the staff in the District is looking for. She referred to Board meetings the past six months and her comments about not knowing what the budget will be. She said she was almost convinced that the schools have

contingency plans and that it was hard for her to step out of her teacher role. Ms. Foss said she wasn't sure if the schools were given enough choices, and expressed concern about hiring people from out-of-state to implement the program. She said paying a private company is not high on her list. She wished the schools had an opportunity to investigate other local programs, but if America's Choice is implemented she will give her support. Ms. Foss said until the Board gets clarification from the federal and state, she was reluctant to vote in support of anything and said she errs on the side of caution. She said if the program isn't supported by the Board she guaranteed that she will do anything she can to plug the holes for getting the schools what they need.

Mrs. Lauterbach concurred with Ms. Foss and said the biggest problem is the budget. She understood the teachers want a program that will help student learning, but expressed concern about America's Choice and she referred to a letter from Mark Tucker to Hillary Clinton. Mrs. Lauterbach said she went to a Fairfield school to observe the America's Choice program and said she didn't see excitement in learning. Mrs. Lauterbach said she did not support the program and referred to a comment made by a teacher using the America's Choice model who said although she felt the scores are good, there is so much work.

Mrs. LeBoeuf said she understood what Ms. Foss and Mrs. Lauterbach were saying about funding and the budget. She said what is favorable is that the principals said there is money in place now and that they want to try something that will work for them. Mrs. LeBoeuf said what is important is the Board needs to realize that the teachers and the schools have chosen a program that will work for them and that the Board needs to respect that; and that they should also allow other schools that didn't choose America's Choice to look at what will work for their school. Mrs. LeBoeuf reported on her observations at a Fairfield school and commented on the issues that were discussed, monthly report cards, staff development, and flexibility. She said she found students were well behaved, accepted the challenge, and were serious about their task. Mrs. LeBoeuf said she also wanted to see the students have fun in the classroom. She said a negative to the program is that it generates a lot of paper, but she said she was encouraged and supportive. Mrs. LeBoeuf said she was excited for the two schools and hoped that other schools will consider America's Choice as they see the program modeled.

Mr. Villa said he wanted to be supportive, but he expressed concern that he would like to see more stability in the District. He said there is more work in the District that demands time and resources, and that there is probably room for America's Choice in the future. Mr. Villa felt that a lot of good could come out of the strategies, but it is also available in other sources. He said if the Board supports the program, the schools should get everything they can out of the program.

Mr. Noriega expressed support for America's Choice and said there are principals and faculty who strongly support the program. He said it is the finest reflection of the democratic process and commended the people who did the research. He referred to the Strategic Plan and said whatever the outcome, it will be that of the community. He said this is an opportunity to have a pilot program to see if it works and hoped it will be contagious for MPUSD to step up, take some chances, and shine. He said the Cabinet, Superintendent, principals, and teachers want the program to work, and felt it will work and help shape the future of students.

President Troutman said she had heard and seen strong and enthusiastic approval of America's Choice, but she expressed several reservations. She spoke about her visitation to a Fairfield school and said she did not see the advertised strong elements in the program and didn't see enthusiastic students. She said she came home with a feeling that MPUSD students are doing at least as well. She referred to new plans and the approval of the Strategic Action Plan and other programs, and said to throw another element as America's Choice at this time is not advisable, and that if it were supported by the Board there should be firm contingency plans. She said MPUSD has good programs in the schools and that they should be expanded. President Troutman said there is a need to focus on MPUSD's youngsters to succeed.

RESOLVED that the Board approve a resolution of support for the America's Choice Design to be implemented at Manzanita Elementary School and King Middle School.

AYES: 3 (Eggers, LeBoeuf, Noriega)
NOES: 4 (Foss, Lauterbach, Troutman, Villa)

President Troutman thanked all for attending the meeting.

Mr. Sylvia said the Board did not hear the comments from teachers and the community who are ready to move forward and support the America's Choice program. He said the use of categorical funds are site-based decisions and that he was discouraged by the process. Mr. Sylvia said the Board did not have the faith of the staff, site administrators and the community who supported the program, and did not trust their professional input.

Mrs. Buell said she was disappointed to hear the Board's results and that this type of situation has come up again and again. She said America's Choice is not an overnight plan and that parents, teachers, and administrators have diligently researched the program. Mrs. Buell said the Board has heard a group of administrators whose interest is for the advancement of students, and that she was saddened to hear that the Board is not supporting their efforts. She said the Board is non-progressive and shows no sign of vision, and what needs to be done is to support what you have and envision something better. She encouraged the Board to allow the schools to pilot the program and let them be the ones to see if it is successful or not.

Mr. Allen reiterated that the two schools have the funds allocated for the America's Choice program and that the schools will lose a lot of that money due to a huge carryover. He said the schools can look for an alternative program to put together, but it will not be the quality of what Manzanita School and King Middle School were hoping to achieve.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Callahan
Executive Secretary

DC/jif
*MSC-Motion/Second/Carried