

**McLean County Unit District No. 5
Citizens Advisory Council
Study Topics ~ 2007-2008**

Alternative Educational Structures In-Depth - Attendance Centers

Project Summary

In its March 2006 CAC report, the *Alternative Educational Structures* committee identified the attendance center concept as a topic in need of additional, detailed study. Often noted as a means of centralizing materials and personnel specific to particular grade levels, maximizing educator collaboration, ensuring district-wide consistency of access to resources, and balancing class sizes within grade levels, the adoption of an attendance center system is a significant adjustment to the traditional full grade level (i.e.: PK-5, 6-8, 9-12) school concept that is currently utilized. Members of the *Alternative Educational Structures In-Depth - Attendance Centers* committee will advance existing CAC studies by providing a research-driven analysis of the potential implementation of an attendance center system in the Unit 5 community. The committee shall focus upon the manner in which an attendance center system would best be organized and implemented in Unit 5. As detailed below, the committee shall address issues including, but not limited to: grade level organization, assignment of grade levels to facilities, and anticipated logistical and academic benefits and challenges of the proposed attendance center system.

Critical components of this study topic include:

- Examining the foundational research pertaining to attendance centers provided in the CAC's March 2006 *Alternative Educational Structures* report
- Utilizing *Alternative Educational Structures* report data and recommendations to guide further consideration of the following topics:
 - The extent to which identified advantages and challenges apply to the Unit 5 community
 - The manner in which attendance centers could be organized, including consideration of: which facilities are best suited to house particular grade levels; how many grade levels could be placed in each facility; and the process by which students would be assigned to specific grade level attendance centers
 - If the attendance center concept would be best introduced district-wide or as a pilot program
 - Identification of an optimal attendance center model based upon analysis of multiple factors including academic and logistical needs
- Gathering personal feedback from districts that have implemented the attendance center system
- Collaborating with Unit 5 principals to obtain information regarding the school-level impacts of the adoption of an attendance center system
- Determining how the adoption of an attendance center system may compare, both academically and logistically, to the process of traditional redistricting
- Acquiring a sense of how to best address the Unit 5 community's questions and concerns about the implementation of an attendance center system
- Authoring a formal report that includes recommendations for the manner in which the identified attendance center system could be implemented in Unit 5

Citizens Advisory Council Information Sharing – Organizational Dynamics

Project Summary

As a continuation of the March 2007 *Citizens Advisory Council Information Sharing* report, the 2007-2008 *Citizens Advisory Council Information Sharing - Organizational Dynamics* committee will explore, pilot, and recommend techniques that support the organization's ongoing efforts to engage in optimally effective internal and external communication. Additionally, this committee is encouraged to engage in study of the CAC's organizational structure and to subsequently recommend alterations to current practices that will result in increased member engagement, program effectiveness, and community-wide awareness of the organization and its activities. Members of the *Citizens Advisory Council Information Sharing – Organizational Dynamics* committee will also be involved in the preliminary review of the CAC portion of the redesigned Unit 5 website and may collaborate with the *Current and Future Technology Analysis* committee for this task.

Critical components of this study topic include:

- Reviewing the content of the March 2007 *Citizens Advisory Council Information Sharing* report
- Implementing the initiatives recommended in the March 2007 *Citizens Advisory Council Information Sharing* report during the 2007-2008 CAC session
- Researching and assessing effective methods of information sharing, with consideration of the management of both incoming and outgoing information
- Drawing upon the expertise of building principals to gather feedback regarding current and proposed efforts to actively engage in two-way information sharing between CAC members and school communities
- Testing proposed information sharing methods and establishing processes by which the relative success of these ventures may be evaluated
- Analyzing the CAC's organizational structure by reviewing: the content of the CAC Constitution, the format and content of general membership meetings, and the role of district staff in CAC activities and projects
- Developing proposals for modifications to the CAC's policies (Constitution) and procedures that will garner optimal member participation and engagement in CAC initiatives
- Authoring a formal report that includes recommendations regarding: "best practices" for additional information sharing activities that complement existing initiatives, and potential alterations to the CAC's organizational structure

Current and Future Technology Analysis

Project Summary

The March 2005 CAC *Technology* report effectively identified numerous topics that warrant ongoing consideration in the scope of the district's long-term technology enhancement and planning processes. In the context of the *Current and Future Technology Analysis* study topic project, committee members will perform a gap analysis to assess the current status of technology in Unit 5. Data and results gathered from the gap analysis process will be used to create a vision of the future of instructional technology in Unit 5. *Current and Future Technology Analysis* committee members will help to identify technology priorities for the period of the next three to five years and beyond. Additionally, during the fall of 2007, the *Current and Future Technology Analysis* committee will be actively involved in preliminary review of the redesigned Unit 5 website.

Critical components of this study topic include:

- Reviewing the content of the March 2005 *Technology* CAC report
- Conducting a gap analysis of the current status of instructional technology in Unit 5 by:
 - Studying the Unit 5 Technology Plan
 - Drawing upon the expertise of internal and external technology professionals
 - Researching “best practices” in instructional technology
- Utilizing information obtained from the gap analysis process to create a long-term instructional technology vision for the district
- Considering all aspects of technology needs and planning including, but not limited to: hardware, software, personnel, facilities, and instructional resources
- Collaborating with other study topic committees, especially the *Citizens Advisory Council Information Sharing – Organizational Dynamics* and *School Safety and Security* committees to ensure the development of well-aligned recommendations
- Authoring a formal report that:
 - Summarizes the results of the instructional technology gap analysis process
 - Provides a detailed description of technology improvements that are anticipated to reflect instructional technology “best practices” for the next three to five years
 - Describes a long-term vision (2012 and beyond) of district-wide instructional technology

School Safety and Security

Project Summary

Unit 5 is committed to providing a safe, secure educational environment for all community members. To this end, the CAC *School Safety and Security* committee will examine the current status of the district's safety and security equipment and procedures while proactively seeking to anticipate the district's future safety and security needs. By studying multiple components of the district's safety and security programs and systems, including, but not limited to: infrastructure, technology, personnel, planning, and established procedures, the members of the *School Safety and Security* committee will ultimately recommend steps that may be taken to ensure a high level of safety and security throughout the district while maintaining a welcoming educational environment.

Critical components of this study topic include:

- Gathering information pertaining to current safety and security measures (both reactive and proactive) that includes, but is not limited to:
 - The use of various forms of technology and existing infrastructure (from security cameras to identification badges) to monitor and ensure safety and security
 - Roles of internal and external staff in monitoring and addressing safety and security
 - Established procedures for preventing and reacting to safety and security issues
- Researching safety and security “best practices”, with particular focus upon effective preventative measures that may be utilized district-wide
- Assessing community values in relation to safety and security issues and determining the impact these values may have upon the implementation of proposed safety and security enhancements
- Collaborating with the *Current and Future Technology Analysis* committee to identify areas in which current and proposed technology may support safety and security programs
- Providing short-term recommendations for enhancements to safety and security infrastructure and procedures
- Presenting a long-term vision of optimally beneficial safety and security measures
- Developing a research-driven, comprehensive report that includes recommendations pertaining to the district's future efforts to address safety and security

Reporting Time Line and Format

All Citizens Advisory Council studies will conclude with the presentation of reports at the March 19, 2008 general membership meeting.

A standard reporting format for Citizens Advisory Council reports is not prescribed or appropriate. Committees are encouraged to adapt their reports to the topic of study and to the talents and preferences of the members. However, each report should include an executive summary, overview of the topic or subject of study, a presentation of data and resources, and recommendations for Board of Education consideration. Samples of a wide variety of reports and formats are available for any committee to use as reference material.

Due to the inter-relationship of study topics, it is anticipated that communication among the committees may prove to be necessary and valuable. Opportunities for inter-committee collaboration will be provided at each general membership meeting and joint committee meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of committee chairs.