

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
Wilmette Public Schools**

July 24, 1995

TO: Members, Community Review Committee

FROM: Board of Education

SUBJECT: **RESPONSE TO THE 1994-95 CRC REPORT OF JUNE 1, 1995**

The Board thanks the Community Review Committee (CRC) for its thoughtful, well-documented, and thorough reports prepared during 1994-95. This year's CRC once again has shown the merit of involving District 39 citizens in the schools, and the expertise and energy volunteers can bring to the mutual goal of improving the quality of education for children. As is customary, your reports already have been shared by the administration with relevant staff members, and will continue to be utilized as a reference when these topics arise in the months ahead.

In particular, the Board acknowledges this year's subcommittee reports as follows:

GENDER EQUITY

The Board appreciates the sensitive research concerning gender equity. The administration will promote awareness of gender-related issues on a continuing basis among parents, administrators, staff, and students. In particular, principals have been trained in observation skills to better evaluate teacher classroom performance, "Wait time" is one area considered in these appraisals. Overall, an administrative workshop is being scheduled on the topic of gender equity this year. Recommended materials also will be purchased for the District and school resource centers as a permanent source of reference and guidance for all employees. Faculty members will be encouraged to attend workshops addressing this topic, and to share the information with colleagues. Because of budget constraints, the District will seek grants to fund projects of interest to faculty and staff. The long-term IGAP study suggested by this report is one such possible undertaking. With these and other initiatives, the CRC report will have achieved its goal of focusing greater attention on gender equity and self-esteem of all students in District 39.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

The Board is keenly interested in the area of student assessment, and thanks the CRC for its important contribution to heightening awareness of changing techniques in this field. The Administrative Council will focus on the present system of grading, testing, and reporting at a workshop this fall. As noted in the District's strategic plan update, "*A Blueprint for Success*", the topic of reporting pupil progress will be a District goal in 1996-97. The CRC recommendations, therefore, will be given to a committee expected to be formed later this year. The committee also will evaluate the impact of the greater availability of classroom computers on assessment practices, made possible through purchases included in the Technology Plan. In 1995-96, the portfolio assessment program will continue to be reviewed, revised, and piloted only at Harper

School. The turnover of staff at grades 3 and 4 at Harper as well as the arrival of its new principal requires additional time for further faculty review and study based upon suggestions received. Dialogue with parents also can be continued. Finally, the Board and administration affirm that standardized testing and grades will continue to be utilized as assessment tools for the foreseeable future. Any change in policy would require Board approval.

TECHNOLOGY [presented March 20, 1995]

The Board is particularly grateful for the timely manner in which this report was completed and the committee's consideration of current funding limitations when formulating its suggestions. Regarding staff development proposals, the Board notes that a Technology Coordinator was employed at the July 24 meeting. Unfortunately, a computer technician will not be hired at the present time; smaller repairs will continue to be done by the microcomputer teachers while more complex jobs will be handled through a repair contract with an outside vendor. Budget constraints also mean that the popular and worthwhile "coupon plan" cannot be extended for a second year. In response to other CRC recommendations, redefining responsibilities of microcomputer teachers is underway at Harper and McKenzie schools; Romona and Central are working to include staff development of faculty within the purview of the microcomputer staff. As a side note, staff listings in the 1995-96 Calendar & Handbook have been updated to "Technology" rather than "Microcomputer" faculty.

In 1995-96, funding has been earmarked for continuation of the after school faculty "Toolkit" classes, as part of the overall staff development program. This program and its goals are established by the District 39 Staff Development Committee, which submits a detailed annual plan for its work. Funding in the amount of \$75,000 is under consideration for selected technology proposals submitted by teachers for 1995-96. Two proposals from each elementary school and the middle school may be approved, along with three from WJHS. As new curriculum review committees are launched, a technology representative will be appointed, as was done with the Language Arts Curriculum Review Committee. Finally, the Technology Coordinator will be asked to consider creation of the District-wide technology portfolios, as suggested.

Regarding hardware recommendations, the Board notes that the administration has included the bulk of these suggestions in its 1995-96 technology expenditures as detailed in a July 24 memo. Specifically, the administration has requested funding for an upgraded computer lab at WJHS with equipment redistributed within the building for classroom use, grants for each school to upgrade equipment as locally decided, and funding of teacher proposals at each school as noted above. The Board acknowledges the significant assistance it is receiving from local PTA/Os in augmenting equipment purchases. The remainder of the hardware recommendations will be carried forward as continuing District 39 goals. On the software side, the administration recommends \$35,000 for 1995-96 purchases to expand and increase its investment. The Technology Coordinator will be charged with managing software selection and purchasing, among other responsibilities.

Finally, the Board thanks the CRC for its annual update of the **LOCAL PROGRAM PLAN** to ensure it corresponds to changing District 39 programming and practices.

Looking toward 1995-96, the Board would like to once again offer its suggestions for study topics. On its behalf, Superintendent Sam Mikaelian will present some thoughts to the CRC at its September meeting. The Board awaits confirmation of the final selection of subjects early this fall.

In closing, the Board thanks President Terry Chess, Vice-President Mary Jo O'Donnell, Secretary Lauren Major, and individual report chairs Deborah Burton, Eva Sorock, Mary Charles, and Mary Ann Peter for their leadership, and every member of the CRC for the talents and time contributed this year. Your efforts are particularly appreciated during this time of fiscal restraint; the District truly could not afford to commission such thorough research on such a diversity of topics. On behalf of the children and citizens of this District, thank you for the service you have rendered to this community.