Active Citizens for Education
Working Together in Our Community

DATE: January 19, 2011
TO: Sally Schultz, Coordinator, Innovation & Alternative Programs
FROM: Don Severson, President, Active Citizens for Education
             Member, MMSD I & A Program Committee
RE: Questions and Recommended Suggestions re Background Information

As a result of the presentations and discussion at the first Committee meeting I have some questions and suggestions I want to share with you.

1. Regarding the "Charge" for the Committee: Is the identification and planning for expansion limited to "programs and educational options"?
    Recommended suggestions: Think beyond programs, services and projects for processes to affect 'systemic' changes
1. to create a culture change throughout the district and community that will foster
   a. heightened student and staff expectations for student growth and development
   b. accountability for teaching and learning
   c. a paradigm shift toward individual responsibility/decision-making
2. to integrate community and county-wide resources
3. for increased accessibility for students and staff
4. where resources (money, staff, etc.) follows the student
5. to contractually engage parents/guardians/etc. for support and accountability with their children

2. Will additional data be made available regarding existing programs?
    Recommended suggestions: Data that would be helpful in the examination/ evaluation of the efficacy, viability, results and cost-benefit analyses of existing programs should include:
1. What are the specific criteria for evaluating the 'eligibility' of a student's acceptance/placement in an existing program?
2. What are the determinants for enrollment 'capacity'?
3. What are the criteria and benchmarks for determining student continuation, transition and completion in a program?
4. What have been the student year-to-year 'termination' rates of the programs?

    5. What are the most recent annual TOTAL costs for the operation of each program?

3. Will additional data be made available regarding students' needs for innovative and alternative academic, career and personal growth and development experiences throughout the k-12 system?

    Recommended suggestions: Data that would be helpful includes

      1. What criteria are used to determine 'at-risk' or 'in-need' students in such areas as

        a. Academic and career development progress for transition to post secondary options?

        b. Transitions to grade level(s)?

        c. Discipline and behavior?

        d. Reading?

        e. Math?

        f. Language arts?

        g. Social studies?

        h. Talented and Gifted

        i. Consumer and Financial literacy

      2. Is there more complete information from the surveys regarding open enrollment and school district leavers?

        a. Make the entire surveys and response data available

        b. Provide a summary of what recommendations have been made and what actions have been taken by the administration and the Board of Education with the results of the surveys

I believe the above is an initial attempt to obtain additional information thought to be significant and helpful in the deliberations of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these questions and suggestions with you and for your consideration of them. I appreciate that I can be a part of this effort and look forward to working with you and the others in making a difference for the development and improvement of experiences for the students, staff, parents and community as a whole.