

**Madison Metropolitan School District
2010-2011 Budget Development
Amendments**

Amendment Number: **AA-50**

Topic: Funding for Task Force Implementation

Submitted by: Lucy Mathiak

Date: 5/27/10

Proposed Amendment:

I recommend that we place a moratorium on all funding for implementation of task force recommendations, with two exceptions:

- 1) Funding for middle school teachers to take UW-Madison courses designed to provide algebraic concepts, reasoning, and other content for middle school math teachers who are not proficient in upper level mathematics content. (up to \$67,000)
- 2) Funding for fine arts teachers to work over the summer to develop a curriculum guide that is aligned to the recommendations of the Fine Arts Task Force and with state standards. (up to \$20,000)

Administrative discussion items affected: N/A

Tier (if applicable):

Discussion Item (if applicable):

Rationale:

In the past five years, the Board of Education has created several Task Forces composed of district staff and citizens with high levels of relevant experience and training. The task forces were established to review the quality and content of district programs and/or to address ongoing problems within the district.

Those Task Forces produced reports that were reviewed and approved, at times with revisions, for implementation.

In the cases of Fine Arts and Mathematics, the board was told, and agreed, that it would be helpful to have seed money to help underwrite expenses associated with implementing task force recommendations. The board voted to approve such spending in good faith, and with the expectation that the funds would help to implement changes designed to strengthen academic offerings.

Based on the recent update on the two task forces mentioned above, the use of funds to date has not been aligned with task force recommendations in either area. For example, according to the recent update on the math task force, it would appear that the lion's share of resources in mathematics have been geared toward improving teaching practice and using 'culturally relevant' methods. Neither of these areas were addressed as significant concerns or recommendations by the math task force.

The #1 concern for that body, was the training and proficiency of middle school math teachers in fields that would help them to prepare students for high school math. The task force never asserted or

expressed concern that our teachers were deficient in their teaching methods. The issue of content proficiency was addressed and the task force recommendations affirmed in a very long meeting in April 2009, and in subsequent board meetings and discussions, leading to the requirement that staff produce regular updates on their activities. And yet the focus appears to have gone back to teaching methods rather than content.

This is just one example. The recent correspondence from teachers and community members regarding the difficulties in producing a quality fine arts curriculum guide point to similar issues in that curricular area. It is impossible to produce change in an organization that is not willing to change. As such, it is hard to rationalize continued funding for initiatives with little or no relationship to the task forces' findings and recommendations at a time when resources are scarce.

FTE: None

Savings:

Impact: