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Notes from
CGB
Superintendent
Phil
Grant



I've been following an important issue in Minnesota education recently, dealing with "College in The Schools" (CIS) programs, also called concurrent enrollment. CIS programs offer high school students the opportunity to earn college credit at the same time that they're earning high school credit.

At Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley High School, these dual credit opportunities exist for advanced math and English courses. Day to day instruction comes from two of our teachers, Scott Manning and Paulette Jibben, but those teachers follow the curriculum standards and assessment practices established by our college partner for CIS, Southwest State at Marshall. As Dr. Robert Wedl, senior associate of Education Evolving and former Minnesota Commissioner of Education, puts it, "These key elements are developed by college pros who then train, coach and mentor the high school teachers. While the high school teachers must be highly competent for students to excel, the partnership with the college prof is key to assuring quality."

All in all, CIS has been a success for many years at CGB—15 years in Mr. Manning's case, and eight years in Mrs. Jibben's case. During those years, many of our CGB students have earned dual credit, had a taste of college, saved tuition money, and gotten a head start on college after they graduated from CGB. It's worked very well.

Beyond CGB, College in the Schools has been a success for thirty years throughout Minnesota. Our state has been a leader in developing college-oriented opportunities for high school students for 30 years.

So why is CIS an issue now, you might ask?

It's become an issue recently, be-

cause the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), which accredits colleges and universities in Minnesota, recently announced a new proposal which requires that high school teachers in CIS programs have a master's degree in their subject. If they have a master's in another subject, then they need 18 credits specifically in the subject they're teaching for CIS courses.

I'm not sure why HLC proposed this new requirement, as there have been no reports of problems with CIS here at CGB or elsewhere in the state.

If the proposal stands, however, our students stand to lose a great opportunity. Our teachers' track record is one of success, but they do not have the precise academic credentials required by the HLC proposal.

I'm pleased that there's strong, bipartisan, widespread opposition to the HLC proposal. Legislators from both major parties, along with many university and high school faculty, are working together to address the situation. There's also considerable leadership from the Minnesota Rural Education Association (MREA) and the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) on this issue. Recently, our legislature scheduled hearings on the topic for October 8.

I don't know what's going to happen as this controversy unfolds, but I wanted to call it to your attention. I welcome your questions and comments on it. It's important for our students, so I'd like to know what you think. I'll be sure to pass your thoughts on to MREA, MASA, and others working on this issue.

If you have questions about what's happening in our school district, I'm happy to answer them. Please call or email me at the district office. Keep in mind that I normally work only three or four days a week at CGB, so it may be a few days before I respond. Thanks, and have a great week!

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