

Committee on Teacher Education (COTE)

September 4, 2003

Thursday, September 4, 2003

University Library, Room 1116

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Meeting Summary:

1. Trudy Banta opened the meeting with introductions and a brief history of COTE, which was convened for the first time in 2000. Our work will take place in general meetings that focus on broad issues, working groups that address specific topics, and symposia that involve a broader cross-section of stakeholders in teacher preparation.
2. Charles Little, executive director of the Indiana Urban Superintendents Association, provided an overview of the federal **No Child Left Behind Act** and discussed current developments in Indiana.

By 2013 all sub-groups of public school students, including racial/ethnic groups, students on free lunch, students whose first language is not English, and students with special needs, must have reached a defined standard of learning. In the meantime, all of these groups must be making annual yearly progress (AYP) toward that standard, as defined by the state of Indiana. AYP for all sub-groups is required, and if not achieved, a school is labeled failing. Failing schools will, after two years with that designation, be obligated to spend money to send students to other - - presumably successful - - schools if the parents of these students wish to enroll them elsewhere. It will be almost impossible for any school enrolling more than 30 (the threshold number for including a sub-group in the statistics) special education students to escape the failing designation.

As a result of the 2002 ISTEP testing, many public schools in Indiana have been labeled failing. But virtually all of these schools have filed appeals with the Indiana Department of Education. Thus the situation is uncertain. Given all the rules that have been put in place, however, it is apparent that eventually ALL public schools will fail.

Little told us that the NCLB Act will be revised in four years as it comes up for reauthorization. The only avenue for lobbying for change is through U.S. senators and representatives.

Annjo Glenn and Larry Hurt reported that as a result of the implementation of NCLB, many teachers are retiring as soon as they are eligible. The average age of teachers is dropping rapidly and some new teachers are not able to acquire appropriate mentoring from experienced colleagues because the number of such colleagues is dwindling.

Everyone who spoke applauded the intent of NCLB. But the ways in which the law is being implemented are creating problems.

Marcia Capuano emphasized that teachers have not been prepared to help every child succeed. For instance, reading skills are fundamental to success in almost every subject, but not all teachers know how to teach reading. Capuano urged members of COTE to work on preparing every teacher to understand the developmental needs of all students and to adopt the teaching strategies that will help every student succeed.

3. Education Dean Gerardo Gonzalez praised the intent of NCLB to prepare every student to go to college and become a contributor to an economy that demands more education and more advanced skills than ever before. Then he described **Indiana University's P-16 Plan**, which was drafted by a committee he chairs.

The plan calls for rigorous preparation of future teachers, first in a content area, but also in pedagogy. The IU 21st Century Teacher Project has brought teams of college professors and public school teachers together to propose and try new ways of providing this preparation.

The P-16 plan also calls for improving professional development for P-12 educators, expanding and strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, and facilitating students' transition from high school to college.

4. Khaula Murtadha, executive associate dean of education for the Indianapolis campus, observed that public schools are part of communities and educators must work to ensure that the **entire community is aware of NCLB and its implications**. Parents, for instance, need to understand the importance of the achievement testing and the consequences of a school's failing to make AYP. Murtadha called for community meetings designed to achieve these goals.

Beth Berghoff focused her comments on the inadequacy of the tests we are using. These instruments cover only a portion of what students know and can do and thus they tend to narrow the curriculum. Art, music, physical education, and even science are being squeezed out of the school day as drill on math and language arts is expanded. COTE members expressed strong support for initiatives that would lead to **improved assessment instruments**.

5. Chuck Little said that several state organizations are working on plans to **improve NCLB**. In the meantime, the following actions could be taken to improve student performance:
 - Strengthen pre-school experiences
 - Fund all-day kindergarten
 - Require students to start school at age 6 rather than 7

Marcia Capuano called for more differentiated instruction and better tests. She also described extensive community partnerships underway in Lawrence in which school personnel provide assistance with education programs at Community Hospitals, mental health agencies, apartment complexes, while employees of the agencies and residents assist the schools by tutoring and helping to teach reading, among other activities. The entire community is beginning to work together to improve the health and education of residents.

6. **Future COTE activities** were suggested by members as follows:
 - a. New 21st Century Teacher projects - \$50,000 available now
 - b. Discussion of ways to turn reports on some COTE –related activities into publishable manuscripts so as to attract junior scholars to this work
 - c. Exploration of ways to improve assessment of knowledge and skills
 - d. Listserv for all IUPUI faculty involved in teacher preparation – Berghoff is implementing this

FUTURE MEETINGS

Thursday, October 30 – Working meeting focused on general education and the Unit Assessment Plan. Please attend and bring colleagues interested in these topics

Thursday, November 12 – Workshop with Dr. Lowell Rose on NCLB. Please attend and suggest others who would like to learn more about how educators at all levels can respond to NCLB.