

## **More on pros and cons of vouchers**

School News: Mike Walsh, The Herald-Times      November 19, 1998

Last month I wrote briefly about publicly funded vouchers for use in public or private schools.

Sandra Feldman, President of the American Federation of Teachers, gives her view of vouchers by pointing out that they do not give children better or cheaper education.

She cites Cleveland's experimental program wherein \$10 million was spent on vouchers for 3,000 children. In March it was reported that the program was 41 percent over budget and that the state had to pay an extra \$2.9 million from public school funds to bail it out. Some of the problem was transportation; children were being driven to schools in taxis.

Feldman states that vouchers don't come cheap. She mentions that per-pupil expenditure, as presented by public schools, is an average of all the services the school system offers to children at all grade levels.

Mandated programs by the federal government such as English As A Second Language, breakfast and lunch programs, transportation, and special education cost public schools a considerable amount of money and are reported as per-pupil expenditures.

Private schools are not required to accept special education students, although some do, but roughly 12 percent of the nation's student population so identified, is educated in public schools. These programs, even if offered by private schools, are not included in the cost of tuition fees usually cited in comparisons with public school per-pupil expenditures.

Feldman recommends using the \$10 million in the Cleveland situation to pay for Success for All, a proven reading program, at a cost of \$4 million throughout the Cleveland system and using the remaining \$6 million to reduce class size in the schools from which the 3,000 students were drawn.

## **Getting the bugs out**

John Carter, Director of Facility Planning for the MCCSC, reports that MCCSC has been using the Integrated Pest Management approach to pest control in all schools since August 1996.

This method uses regular monitoring to determine when treatments are needed. Multiple methods are used to solve site specific problems. Chemicals are only used when needed, and in the least toxic form.

Since 1996, pesticide use in MCCSC facilities has been reduced 90 percent. Sanitation is extremely important and the custodians and food service personnel deserve much credit for this success.

Jerry Jochim, the IPM/Custodial Coordinator, works very closely with the staffs in the buildings and decides what method of treatment is needed for a particular problem.

This is one of the little success stories that the public rarely hears about. This is just one of the many programs that are on-going throughout the school system.

#### School News

Broadview thanks the special visitors who attended Grandparents/Senior Friends day on Oct. 16 as guests of the sixth-graders. This was very special for everyone involved, and a standing invitation is extended to the participants to return.

"Respect" and "responsibility" are two clear expectations at the school. Each morning some time is spent emphasizing the skills required to achieve these two character goals.

Broadview staff and patrons are getting excited about the future with a new building in the offing as the school board begins looking at tentative sites.

Clear Creek's fall carnival was held Oct. 17 with class contests, Best Dressed Cake, and costumes that were scariest, funniest, and most original.

All Clear Creek fifth-graders traveled to Bradford Woods Nov. 2-6 and had a wonderful educational week in that nature classroom for so long an integral part of MCCSC curriculum.

Fairview participated with University Elementary and Highland Park in a Brain Quest Quiz Bowl on Oct. 10 sponsored by Barnes & Noble Bookstore. Ella Heckman won the fifth-grade contest.

Fairview children received their free books on Oct. 21 in the Reading Is Fundamental give away.

The Bloomington High School South Spanish Club members visited the first-graders on Oct. 28. First-graders also went to WonderLab on October 21. (Wasn't first grade always exciting? It still is.)

The sixth-graders got to see South's presentation of Grease on Nov. 4.

Abbie Mills won IU football tickets for effort in October. November's Lifeskills focus is sportsmanship

#### Laboratory experience

"Chemistry, It Really Matters," a convocation by Mobile Ed Inc., a Michigan-based science assembly program, is being presented to 12 MCCSC elementary schools in mid-November. Partly funded by the Foundation of MCCSC, the program will help students

develop an understanding of the foundation of all matter: solids, liquids and gases. Students will have hands-on experience and some will be used as assistants throughout the program.

Older students will have a chance to solve a mock bank robbery by exploring the uses of chromatography. The excitement and enchantment of the world of chemistry will come to life with state-of-the-art science technology.

Thanks, teachers

The Foundation of MCCSC is continuing with its popular Thank A Teacher fund-raising program.

Schoolchildren and their families can thank a teacher, coach, administrator, or staff member for a minimum contribution of \$10, the money to be used to fund teacher and school programs which benefit children.

The honoree receives a card with room for a message, and the donor receives an acknowledgment, along with a sticker for their car.

Thank A Teacher is appropriate for winter holiday time, and the end of semester or school year.

Thank A Teacher Forms will be at each school office and at the Foundation office at 315 North Drive. A check with your information can also be sent directly to Nan Stager, Executive Director of the Foundation. Call Nan for further information at 330-7700.

Mike Walsh is a member of The Foundation of MCCSC, which sponsors this column.