



NORTH COOK INTERMEDIATE SERVICE CENTER

March 15, 2011

Dr. Sarah Jerome
Superintendent
Arlington Heights School District 25
1200 S. Dunton Avenue
Arlington Hts, IL 60005

Dear Dr. Jerome,

The North Cook ISC is authorized by the Illinois State Board of Education to conduct Compliance Visits of the school districts located within its boundaries every four years. During November 30 – December 2, 2010 the NCISC Compliance Team consisting of Richard Duran, Shirley Bloom, Rick Ewanio, and Virginia Clark inspected facilities, records, policies, programs, credentials, curriculum, and test scores to determine the Arlington Heights District 25 Recognition Status as outlined in the ISBE 2010-11 School Evaluation Form. This is a summary of the findings of that visit.

The NCISC Visiting team would like to thank the Arlington Heights District 25 host team consisting of Superintendent Dr. Sarah Jerome, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Dr. Renee Zoladz, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning Dale Truding, Administrative Assistant Debbie Williams, Curriculum Coordinator Ellie Chin, Director of Student Services & Special Education Dennis Joyce, and Building & Grounds Director Mike Brown for their courtesy, cooperation, and candor. The preparation for our visit was so complete and organized so well that we were able to spend more time touring schools, observing classrooms, and interviewing teachers and administrators. We left believing that we truly understood your vision of education and sharing thoughts with many of your team members. Thanks to all who assisted in this effort.

Commendations:

The Compliance Team wishes to commend the School District on the following:

1. Living up to your vision: *“Within a framework of learning for the 21st Century, AHSD 25 creates a nurturing environment and provides a world class education for all”*. It was evident in all schools that these are not mere words on paper, but a part of the regular routine.
2. The School Board has exhibited outstanding fiscal responsibility and foresight with a “cost neutral” approach to budgeting as they seek funds to implement newer programs. The Board and Staff have very aggressively sought grants to fund many of the 21st Century skills discussed later in this summary. Of special note is the FLAP Grant of \$1.2 million which has funded many of the programs

mentioned later. The current three year collective bargaining contract tied to the CPI is another example the Board's fiscal responsibility.

3. Incorporating all the elements of "**WIRED** for Success and Understanding" philosophy into the daily activities in each classroom. (World Focus -- Connecting to the world around us close and far; **I**ntegrate:-- Connecting Knowledge, skills, and habits of mind; **R**eflect – Pooling together thoughts and ideas to create something better; **E**ngage – Being the Change you want to see in the world; **D**iscovery – A sense of Wonder; all wrapped in **Green** – focusing on Energy, Ecology, and Environment.)
4. We were privileged to witness examples of the Citizenship of the World partnership with Township HS District 214 that includes a Sister School District in China, Exchange Students from China, and the teaching of six foreign languages including Mandarin.
5. The district does an outstanding job of keeping students safe using the locally developed by first responders "Standardized School Crisis Plan" including a Flip Chart that provides easy to follow instructions that even a new substitute could follow.
6. The school district's websites are a wealth of information including curriculum grade level goals online for all parents.
7. The school district has invested heavily on extensive professional development for all grades and across all areas of curriculum and the result is apparent.
8. Building & Grounds staff provide clean, well-maintained, facilities that welcome students, teachers, parents, and community members to schools that exemplify pride.
9. All schools abound with displays of student work and artwork throughout the hallways and classroom. Yet, each building displays a special uniqueness that gives expression to the students and staff that reside there.
10. Food Service Staff make health and wellness part of their mission by providing healthy choices to all students.
11. The science labs at South Middle School provide 6th, 7th, & 8th grade students with a facility that would make many high schools envious.
12. Student service programs such as Super Socializers that match regular education 6th grade students with special education students present both students with life changing daily experiences that provide greater understanding of the diversity of our society.
13. Staff members in every building commented about the positive changes that have been occurring in student behavior and habits as a result of PBIS. In particular, the Student Advisory Panel at the Middle School was mentioned as having a major impact on adolescents becoming more mature.
14. We witnessed teachers using central questions to drive learning and help students establish patterns of critical thinking that will serve them throughout life.
15. We encountered a team of 5th grade students researching a group project in the Media Center at Ivy Hill School and were impressed by the clarity that the team leader was able to summarize their purpose and what they had learned so far about the central question directing their research.

16. We encountered teachers who helped students beginning in kindergarten to think of themselves as “authors” rather than just a student completing a writing assignment.
17. We witnessed the pilot class of 2nd graders at Ivy Hill School complete their journal entries on their I-Pads and then engage in a Mandarin Chinese language discussion with their language tutor.
18. We commend the school district on their commitment to the Fine Arts and the outstanding teachers providing instruction in Art, Music, and Drama.
19. Partnerships between the school district and the community such as “Artist in Residence” and the Downtown Theatre Group help students learn from professionals and stimulate new creativity.
20. Every place we went, the staff (administrative, teaching, & support) echoed the belief that they felt supported by central office in their decisions and especially in the area of curriculum.
21. The commendations could go on for many additional pages with specific remarks about a particular school, administrator, student, staff member, display, program, etc., but can be best summarized as: *Everyone in AHSD 25 works as a team to educate and involve students in the real world of today and the world they can help shape in the future.* The residents should be proud of the team from the School Board and every employee on down to the students who comprise the Arlington Heights School District 25; they are all working with a common purpose.

Areas of Noncompliance

The NCISC Team found none.

Areas of Concern:

The NCISC Team found no areas of concern.

Recommendations or Suggestions for the Future:

Because the members of our team view many different school districts as part this process, we believe we can provide some insight into areas that each district might consider in their planning for the future. With that in mind, we offer the following observation. As you review your operations and physical plant needs, we suggest you look at the kitchen situation of your food service. Establishing a modern kitchen in each of the middle schools seems like a more efficient way to prepare and distribute hot, fresh food to all the other buildings.

Final District Recognition Status:

Attached you will find the completed “2010-11 School Evaluation Form” that delineates the other specific items reviewed by the NCISC Team. All items are in compliance with state rules and statutes. Therefore, Arlington Heights District 25 is determined to be in “FULL COMPLIANCE” and this recommendation will be forwarded on to the ISBE.

Once again, the NCISC Compliance Team would to thank everyone at Arlington Heights District 25 for your thoughtfulness and assistance in completing this process. Congratulations, you are doing an outstanding job.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert Ingrassia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Robert Ingrassia
Executive Director
North Cook Intermediate Service Center