



The following are notes from:

**Parent Chat – Laying the Foundation—LVISD’s Future**

February 11, 2008, Viking Hall Boardroom

Hosted by District Education Improvement Council (DEIC)

*Principals reviewed and responded to the ideas from the public meeting - those are shown in italics below.*

## **Where do you want LVISD to be in 10 years?**

- **Additional facilities**

- *I am in agreement with this vision.*
- *I agree! ☺ We are full to the rim at LVES. We have several special area teachers sharing space because of limitations in available classrooms.*

- **New high school**

- *As in the above bullet, I agree. The building of a new high school is of a higher priority than the building of a new middle or elementary school.*
- *I think this is the most logical use of our current campus arrangement. If you look at other small district (e.g. – Liberty Hill), they have created a new high school and then reallocated the grades to create space for a growing district.*

- **Elementary computer teacher/program**

- *I am unsure if the elementary school is in need of a school-wide program outside of the delivery of the Technology TEKS within the existing core curriculum. However, I am aware that although the elementary school students reach us with very good application skills (power point, presentation media, etc) the students do not have adequate keyboarding skills. Without the keyboarding skills the students struggle to use the computer as a tool in construction of text based assignments. The focus of our 6th grade Technology instruction is keyboarding and word processing. It would be beneficial to the middle school if the elementary students had experience with keyboarding development prior to reaching the middle school.*
- *Laptops are available for teachers to take to their room for class instruction. Also 2 labs for same*
- *My position is and continues to be that I do not want technology to be a pull out but rather an integral part of instruction, on that note, more training for current ITRC and direction from a curriculum specialist in this area would be helpful, there are few meaningful learning opportunities in this field that show true integration of curriculum*
- *Our Technology Campus Improvement Teams (comprised of teachers from each grade level) has been working on a plan to help teacher integrate the current technology we have in with our current curriculum. As another principal so eloquently put it, you don't have a separate class for learning how to use a paper and pen. Technology should be used with the curriculum not as a separate, stand-alone curriculum.*

- **Vocational Education (nursing, cosmetology, mechanic)**

- *I agree with this vision. I believe that student performance would improve with an investment in allowing the students to identify their skills, talents, and interests and to see how these lead to meaningful careers. On the surface, and I have not explored this at all, it would appear that there exists a natural connection between the “hospitality” sector of Lago Vista and the CATE potential for our students. As with anything, how, where, and when to add this is the challenge.*
- *We offer CATE classes: agriculture courses – AG 101, AG 102, Horticulture, Landscaping, Wildlife, Entomology, Independent Study and AG Communications, computer courses, ABJ, Computer courses: BCIS, BIMM and Desktop Publishing*

- **Foreign language – start before MS (√√√)**

- *The amount of enthusiasm for this surprised me. I agree that for our students to be truly competitive in the world market, our students would benefit. However, is the sizable expenditure in this area a higher priority then reducing class size in Language Arts and Math with the addition of new staff? Is a LOTE program a higher priority then installing compensatory programs in Math and Reading? In my mind no.*
- *Has been a desire from parents for a long while and I support the concept but need help with the reality – when, where, who?*
- *I have the name and phone number of the elementary school in AISD that offers the Spanish program. I’ll know more about how they make that happen. I do worry about fitting in another program – what will we take away to make that happen? I think this is a great idea, but I wonder how we can make it happen. It will definitely take some creativity.*

- **Looking for sooner progress (2 years)**

- *Of course, but not at the expense of quality.*

- **More global education – finance/ practical life skills**

- *In theory I have no disagreement. In practice, I do not believe that this is a higher priority then lowering class size or compensatory programs.*

- **Variety of electives**

- *I very much agree with this. The heart of any school is the elective offerings and ours is limited. However, this is not a higher priority for me then lowering class size and compensatory programs.*

- **Strive for Excellence**

- *We are already doing this.*

- **Discipline matrix revised – kinder positive behavior**
  - *We do revisit and revise the Discipline Matrix every year. However, what I think this vision is intending is a school/district wide effort to install and maintain a positive behavior plan. I do agree with this and this is one area that the middle school is investing effort at both the CIP and classroom levels.*
- **Lowest drop-out rate in Central TX (continue to be zero)**
  - *Hard to get lower then zero. How about going to negative numbers by inviting outsiders in?*
- **Good sports program – competitive at all sports – girls and boys**
  - *Beat Salado*
- **LV positive on college application**
  - *Beat Eanes*
- **Year round education**
  - *I have seen districts move to this format. There are positives and negatives. I agree that we should not continue operating just because that is the way that we have always done it. However, before I would be comfortable agreeing to this, I would need to investigate and research.*
  - *I have never been in favor of this, but why are we still on an agrarian calendar when we are no longer an agrarian society? Would our attendance improve if we took longer vacations around certain holidays and did a full year? Research does not support or discredit year round school.*

## **Where do you want your child to be in 10 years?**

- **Test score enabling child to attend a top 10 college**
- **Completed college, attending graduate school**
- **Ready for college (competitive)**
- **For child to be aware of talents by being exposed to many things**
  - **Availability of scholarships for academics and sports**
    - *LVHS counselor has Lunchbox Tuesday throughout the year to provide seniors the opportunity to browse through scholarship applications. She also helps students with their college applications and signing up for any needed testing such as SAT and ACT. The counselor also schedules individual Junior and Senior level conferences for students and their parents.*

- **More opportunities for kids (experiencing vocational programs, classical education, variety of classes expanded)**
  - *LVISD has a wider selection of enrichment opportunities than most other districts of similar size, but we do plan even more.*
- **Bilingual opportunities for all children**
- **Global learning**
- **A tactile experience of other cultures**
  - *LVES currently holds a Culture Day, where students are exposed to cultures from all around the world.*
- **Preparation for independent living**

## **What do we do now to get there?**

- **Be recognized/exemplary at all 3 campuses**
- **What action do we take to get there?**
  - *The number of low SES has doubled in ten years. We need to be aware that we have more and more elementary age students who are alone for a large part of their day when they are not at school. Basic needs of good nutrition, medical support, and vision/hearing support are not met. Our staff is not prepared to meet these needs and academic needs. Professional development and collaboration with other entities to support these families is needed.*
  - *From my perspective, it takes a lot of early intervention for educationally disadvantaged students. I think we do a great job of identifying and intervening for students who are below grade level in reading. The challenge now is doing the same early intervention for students who struggle in math. A math specialist in grades 3- 5 is a good start, but I really feel we need to intervene earlier and have someone to work with our struggling mathematicians before grade 3.*
- **Access to most current technology available**
  - *Professional development on best practice is crucial here. Integration of technology as a vital tool in the classroom is my goal. Being critical thinkers of the overwhelming access to information is also important. I would like to see us fund some pilot projects but as we see from our lack of response to tech grant idea, our staff need some support to even know where to begin.*
  - *I feel like we do have a lot of technology available to teachers that goes untapped. Training teachers how to integrate the technology we do have is the first step I think we should take.*

- **Instructional technologists at all campuses**
  - *Currently have 2 teachers at elementary w/part-time responsibilities, planning 2 for each of the other campuses*
  - *We have 2 ITRTs at the elementary campus that help train teachers in technology and aid them with technology issues they encounter.*
- **Every child has a computer – access/wireless mobile lab**
  - *We have mobile labs at each campus for teacher use with classes, plus 2 labs at Elem, 1 at each HS & MS*
  - *We have 2 laptop mobile labs at LVES. Once again, it is not consistently checked out, so it's a matter of training teachers to integrate what we do have into what they are teaching.*
- **Functioning complaint system**
  - *Please see LVISD policy FNG (Legal), FNG (Local), STEPS*
- **Encourage/Accept positive challenges**
- **Math Instructional Specialists**
  - *Yes!!!*
  - *We have one at grades 3-5, but I feel strongly that we need one beginning at Kindergarten. Math is such a cumulative subject, that every concept lost quickly snowballs into a child with little understanding of math.*
- **Emphasize academics over athletics**
- **Mandatory tutorials for students who are failing**
  - *The high school offers tutoring before and after school. Time is also available during homerooms. We provide extra tutorial time throughout the day to provide for our students' educational needs. Examples: ELA and Social Studies teachers are using homeroom time for intense tutorials. Our Math and Science departments have extra help from two former LVHS honor graduates (and recent college graduates from MIT and Texas A&M) throughout the day to provide extra instructional support for our students.*
  - *Teachers offer after-school tutorials for students identified at-risk.*
- **Bi-monthly school board meetings**
  - *Small-size district staff is already stretched with night & weekend duties. What useful function would more meetings accomplish?*
- **Recruit good/experienced teachers & pay to keep them**
  - *Our average years of experience and average years with LVISD of our teachers is above the state average. We have only 1 first year teacher and she came with years of experience serving as a special education aide working with students very similar to those she works with now.*

- **Broaden the range of offerings**
  - **More choices**
  - **Fine Arts – all grades**
    - *Agree & support*
    - *Fine arts are available at all grade levels but are not always selected by students.*
- **GT Classes broadening – leadership – creativity**
- **Tracking graduates – college vs career**
  - **SAT scores**
- **Improve technology in elementary (emphasis.)**
  - *Offering local grant for innovative integration*
  - *(see above - ... a lot of technology available to teachers that goes untapped)*
- **Foreign languages /multiple languages before 8<sup>th</sup> grade**
  - *(see above... elementary school in AISD that offers the Spanish)*
- **IB program**
  - *Support concept – requires extensive teacher training that might interfere with planned staff development.*
- **Vocational programs**
- **Involve parents & teachers/staff evaluations**
  - *I do not want to see parents evaluating teachers.*
- **Study & apply best practices globally**
  - *How do we do this as a district? What are other campuses doing to stay abreast of best practices?*
  - *Most large-scale decisions are research-based. TEA maintains a best practices archive which is utilized by LVISD.*
- **Build new facilities & Now**
  - *Yes!!!*
- **Mandatory “Pathway to Graduation” class for exploring future options**
  - *Support concept – addition of mandatory course means removing something else.*
- **Focus on individual strengths & creativity & foster at early age**

- **Outreach to ESL parents & mentoring program**

- *We are doing this fairly successfully, but we really need to explore avenues for consistent written and oral communication – i.e. district documents in Spanish, persons on each campus who can translate.*
- *We currently meet with our parents of ESL students once a month. This has really helped make them feel more comfortable in the school setting. In addition, our Pre-K teacher has her parents sign up for a time to come in and help each week. I think we do a wonderful job of encouraging our ESL parents to get involved in their child's education*

- **General Comment**

- *All of the bullet points have varying degrees of priority. Beyond the vision of “building new facilities and now,” my number one from this list is “Tracking graduates – college vs career.” I do not believe that we can say we are providing our students with the skills they need without knowing how the skills we are providing has equipped them. This is a very difficult task to accomplish. However, right now, we can only say (and even this is subject to data quality issues from the colleges and universities) how our students have done in their first year of college or university. This is a very limited view of what our graduates do one, three, and five years after graduation*