

Administration Response to Citizens' Advisory Council Recommendations - 2013/2014 School Year

#	Committee	Recommendation	Administration Response
1	Finance	Post Understanding District U-46 Finances on the U-46 website under Financial Information.	We concur and will post the updated version of Understanding U-46 Finances on the U-46 website.
2	Enrollment & Facilities	Explore working more closely with the District and using its GIS system. The current Excel spreadsheet the committee uses is cumbersome and duplicates information the District has available through its GIS system. We recommend that we use both reports for at least a year to evaluate accuracy.	We concur and will work with CAC E&F to determine if our Global Information System software could be used to generate the annual report on enrollments.
3	Enrollment & Facilities	Work collaboratively with the District and its demographer to accomplish the Tentative Timeline for Boundary Considerations which is included in the report.	We concur and look forward to working collaboratively with CAC E&F committee in the process of adjusting boundaries.
4	Curriculum	School District U-46 needs to clearly communicate the answer to the WHY question about 1:1 technology before moving forward with adopting a plan. Only by answering the WHY, can the District garner family and community support to effectively implement the plan.	We concur. At this time, District administration does not have the intention of moving forward with 1:1 technology. Should the District move towards 1:1, we concur with the committee's advice regarding providing families and community members the rationale.
5	Curriculum	Make use of the community resources available to the District through CAC, and other community advisory groups for feedback and evaluating concerns before adopting an all-encompassing plan. We further recommend that CAC promote the formation of an ad hoc technology committee to provide input and support as the District moves forward.	We concur. District administration does not have the intention of moving forward with 1:1 technology at this time. Should that change, we will utilize CAC and other advisory groups to solicit feedback, and would consider an ad hoc CAC committee at that time.
6	Curriculum	Provide answers to the questions/comments that are listed in Appendix A. Some of these questions may be answered at the original implementation of the plan; others may require more time for answers to be available. Communicate this information clearly to parents and community.	We concur. District administration does not have the intention of moving forward with 1:1 technology at this time. Should that change, we will work to provide answers to the questions/comments listed in Appendix A of the Curriculum Committee report.
7	Special Education	Special Education Website Resources: With the new District website in place and expanded offerings in the Special Education Department section, we respectfully request that the District post the automated IEP program from the 2012 Special Education University, and any subsequent recordings that the Special Education Department has created from our events, to the Special Education page by the beginning of the 2014/2015 school year. We would like to have a direct link to the Committee page on the District Special Education home page, preferably with the CAC logo, so that parents can easily find the additional information we have available to them. Likewise, we will include a link on our page to the district special education page.	We concur and will post the automated IEP program from the 2012 Special Education University before the start of the 2014/2015 school year. We will also place a direct link to the CAC Special Education Committee on the District's Special Education home page.

#	Committee	Recommendation	Administration Response
8	Special Education	The committee recommends that we again be allotted funding in the same amount as the 2013/14 school year for both of our programming initiatives in the 2014/15 school year, as both programs are anticipated to continue to grow in size. In addition, the Committee recommends that grants be solicited to provide for family engagement of special education parents in our district, which will allow us to spend funds for items that directly benefit the families of special education children while attending our events.	We concur and will again fund the Special Education Committee at the same level for the 2014-2015 school year.
9	Special Education	5th Annual Special Needs Parent Resource Fair Location: As mentioned in our Goals, we would like to move the Fair to a U-46 gymnasium or a similarly sized, centrally located facility to better accommodate our exhibitors and attendees. We would also like to explore the ability to offer WIFI service to our exhibitors; many of the current year exhibitors mentioned that high-speed internet connectivity would have allowed them to advertise the Fair on-site and would have been very useful for them.	We concur and will work with CAC Special Education to determine a site appropriate for the size of the event. We will also explore the ability to offer WIFI during the resource fair.
10	Family & Community Engagement	The committee recommends that the district look for opportunities to expand services that support the whole family. The committee agrees with our panel attendees that to truly engage with families, the district must become fully vested in the lives of students and their families – meeting them where they are at and moving forward together. This often means providing families with the education and training they need so that they can successfully support their children; for example, ESL classes for adults, parenting classes, resource centers, access to technology, tutoring at our schools.	We concur and note that U-46 has been moving toward this committee recommendation and we should increase our communication to families regarding available resources. For example, we partner with the YWCA to offer ESL classes for adults at several sites. We partner with Elgin Community College to offer adult education services. We have ongoing relationships with Hanover Township and other community organizations. We have created the African-American and Hispanic Parent Leadership Institutes. We piloted a school-based parent leadership program in 2013-2014 that will be grown at additional sites next school year.
11	Family & Community Engagement	The committee recommends that the district provide additional directional signage at schools to better welcome families in our buildings. The committee also recommends that a district-wide survey of exterior facilities be conducted to ensure that all schools' exteriors are welcoming to families. This includes adding or improving directional signage at middle and high schools as well as how welcoming the building appears from the outside to visitors. The committee recommends using the Beyond the Bake Sale's "welcoming walkthrough" survey as a guideline.	We concur that improving signage within our buildings can help to ensure visitors to our schools can easily navigate the school. As a first step, we will conduct a self-assessment by surveying principals regarding signage issues that may exist at sites, then work to address identified signage issues. Based on responses, we will prepare a plan to address directional signage.

#	Committee	Recommendation	Administration Response
12	Family & Community Engagement	The committee recommends that the district provide focused staff development on ways to improve communication and build meaningful relationships with students/families at the secondary level.	We concur. Administration will explore this recommendation further to determine what staff development should be offered that would align to the work of our School and Community Relations Department. We note that training on the Communication Guidelines for Parents/Guardians was provided to all school secretaries.
13	Family & Community Engagement	The committee recommends that the district consider expanding the number of counselors at the high school and middle school with respect to other competing funding priorities. Guidance Counselors provide the best whole-child support of a student at the secondary level and serve as one of the best personal connection points between the family and the schools. At the middle school level, this would provide a much needed bridge for students as they move to high school and would provide another resource for parents as they learn to support their students through this transition.	We concur and will explore how to address providing support as we develop our staffing standards and develop our budget for the 2015-2016 school year. Decisions regarding staffing for middle and high schools have already been made for 2014-2015.
14	Legislative	Continue developing the capacity to provide information to CAC representatives when timely action could change potentially negative legislative outcomes. This includes working with the U-46 Board and administration to develop and distribute materials in response to legislative challenges.	We concur and will continue to build our list of individuals (CAC or otherwise) who would like information on legislation that would affect School District U-46.
15	Legislative	Partner with other interested groups to conduct a forum for General Assembly candidates in October 2014 and a forum for U-46 School Board candidates in Spring 2015 (the CAC has previously participated in similar events).	We concur and will support CAC Legislative Committee in organizing a forum.
16	Legislative	Develop an understanding of the U-46 Board's legislative goals and objectives in order to better coordinate legislative communications and activities between the CAC and the U-46 Board and administration.	This is a recommendation for the Board of Education to consider. Administration notes, though, that the Board of Education reviews position statements developed by the members of the Illinois Association of School Boards and the Board participates in the IASB Delegate Assembly where legislative priorities are debated and determined. This is the manner in which the Board historically has used to inform and guide administration regarding bills legislative goals and objectives. Administration will defer to the Board of Education on whether this practice should be changed.

#	Committee	Recommendation	Administration Response
17	Legislative	<p>Discuss additional outreach opportunities between U-46 legislators and CAC members. Explore feasibility of conducting a joint U-46 / CAC trip to Springfield to discuss U-46 legislative issues with legislative leadership and area legislators.</p>	<p>We concur that organizing outreach opportunities between U-46 legislators and other advisory groups is a good idea and we will examine how that could be accomplished within opportunities that currently exist (school visits by legislators, periodic legislative forums, etc.).</p> <p>Should a bill arise during 2014-2015 that would have a significant impact on U-46, we would explore the feasibility of conducting a joint U-46/CAC trip to Springfield to advocate on behalf of/or against that specific bill; however, we do not believe it would be beneficial to explore the feasibility absent a specific legislative goal.</p>