Synthesis

EDU 5741/Spring 2009

Economics and school Finance

Professor: Dr. Kevin McGuire

At first, Dr. McGuire inoduced us to a rubric about the ISLLC standards. These standards were introduced as a way for each state to arrive at a common understanding of what learning is expected of all students in the United States. The goal of the national standards was to increase academic achievement of the students. In addition to the study of national standards, Dr. McGuire showed us a 20/20 special, “Stupid in America.” Moreover, Dr. McGuire displayed several slides about the nuances of how a budget is constructed in a public school. Last, Dr. McGuire introduced cohort 8 to a series of websites that may be helpful in our understanding of a budget. Specifically, <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/schoosfa.htm> and <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/gemsho.htm>.

During the course of the first weekend, Dr. McGuire shared many instances about how the budget is devised within the boundaries of the laws, commissioners Regulations, and local school policy. First, Dr. McGuire shared how the progress report card, required by education law 1716 (7), commissioner’s regulation 170.11 and chapter 57 of the laws of 2007 were to be made available to the public for the purposes of the budget vote each year. Then, a budget hearing must take place not less than 7 days and not more than 14 days prior to the vote. Each of the members of cohort 8 were expected to attend a budget hearing and we displayed our report in class, included in the learner’s page in EDU 5741. Also, during the course, Dr. McGuire shared information about how schoo finance is implemented in each of the local schools. The way in which the distribution of money was disseminated has to do with the distribution of money to each school district. Today, we know that the relationship of money to student achievement must be a positive flow of the available monies. The focus of school finance includes the phrase “Sine Quo Non.” First, equity was the standard in justifying per-pupil expenditures. However, as a result of the uneven distribution of the property tax base, a new rationale ilnfluenced the distribution of money. Productivity, or a link between the level and the use of funds with respect to student achievement. Finally, in present-day United States, Adequacy is the standard that is the most germane rationale with respect to financing local public schools. Dr. McGuire emphasized that there is no simple answer, districution of money to the people who need it the most is a subjective concept.

During the first weekend, Dr. McGuire continued with his presentation of Good to Great, by Jim Collins. The two noteworthy concepts included in the book regarding improving student academic achievement has to do with distinctive impact and lasting endurance. Then, Cohort 8 engaged in a cooperative exercise in outlining the national standards, and making presentations about our outlines.

Afterward, we engaged in another cooperative exercise about the connections between Collins’ improvement and finances; specifically concerning the equity shift, and the new equity problem. Then, we discussed the two major issued involved with school finance and educational leadership polich standards; equity and adequacy. Dr. McGuire led a discussion about the different levels of assessilng property taxes: local towship level where the size of the house, its location, and the assessment plays a role; the state level where your property and your income are compared with other property owners; and equalilzation where the state utilizes an equalization formula to designate the amount of monies distributed. The problems with these concepts were discussed at length.

Afterward, a worksheet “Buildilng capacity in low performing schools-What matters?” was discussed concerning the research based elements associated with increased student achievement.

Then Ms Cynthis Curtis-Seniuk made a presentation about her budget were she discussed the vision, mission, the district goals. Afterward, there was a discussion about the presentation.

The second weekend had to do with Dr. McGuires presentation of the worksheet he handed out with the title: The aims of the university of the state of New York (USNY).

Afterward, we were privy to two tremendous presentations by Audrey Nilsen and Rory Manning. It is a great experience to watch professionals at work in their craft. First, Audrey explained how she devised a special education budget in the Consewogue school district. Her explainations were clear and concise, she was articulate, and presented each slide in a manner consistent with her notes. Rory’s presentation about the budget of the Sachem East High School made me think about how I could possibly perform as a principal in such a tremendous place. Rory gives me confidence, similar in the way that I think about my professors, who each have made presentations of their own and continue to have that personality trait to improve the lives of students in our society. “In a nutshell.” That is what leadership is all about, to me it is about doing what needs to be done to improve the “immature” students around you in order to leave a legacy of a better tomorrow.”

Toward the end of the course, Dr. McGuire reviewed the process of how we should construct our websites. I am still in the process of doing so, but after each course I complete, I am closer to my goal of completing my goal of #1 completing my coursework, #2 completing my website, #3 writing my dissertation. I have learned a lot about how finances can affect the academic performance of a school district. I read a book, Savage Inequalities, written by Jonathan Kozol, who wrote about the comparison of destitute school districts across the country and their rich partners, close-by, the reasons for their comparisons, and the way to improve the lives of the students. My uncle Ronnie, in fact, is the Assistant Principal at Woodrow Wilson High School, near Camden NJ a destitute place where students are not promised a better tomorrow. I was interested to hear about his day at Woodrow Wilson and some of the horrors. Ironically, Cherry Hill, NJ. Is a place in comparison of Woodrow Wilson as its rich partner. My other uncle, Uncle Bill, lived there and his 4 kids went to Cherry Hill, and I thought about the ironic comparison and contrasts.