

Fran Prebish

From: ibgroff <ibgroff@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2014 9:04 PM
To: Fran Prebish
Subject: Financial Literacy

I am responding to your recent letter proposing a financial literacy requirement for all students. I am a 15-year member and past president of the Conestoga Valley School District in Lancaster, as well as a Regional Director and Governing Board member of PSBA. Additionally, I sit on the IU 13 board and am president of the Lancaster County Academy Joint Operating Committee, a unique multi-district alternative school.

Our district currently has a required financial literacy course for our students of which we are very proud. Although it is half of the Family and Consumer Science course, it is highly respected by our local business community and our district Business Roundtable. The course is rigorous and our students consistently score at the highest level even again schools who have full year courses. Feedback from our graduates is sterling often citing the advantage it provided as they dealt with their newfound independence and accompanying financial responsibilities in the real world. Mr. Thomas Hillen, who developed and teaches the course, is devoted and passionate about this topic.

While we recognize the necessity of financial literacy, the requirement you propose has an inherent concern. I am including the response from our superintendent, Dr. Gerald G. Huesken:

"I would discourage any additional mandates on public schools at this time until we get our own financial house in order. This kind of requirement will not necessarily impact us, but there are many school districts just barely getting their budgets through that may need to address yet another unfunded mandate. It is a good idea, but perhaps not yet the time. If we can get a true handle on pension and charter school reform, that would lessen the stress on our budgets and allow for more flexibility for new programs."

I, too, worry about districts absorbing additional curriculum when so many are functioning with minimal staff as well as the ability to fit a new course into their schedule if they are already focused on remedial requirements. Even our own course might be impacted as specific curricular and reporting requirements are included.

I applaud your awareness of the importance of financial astuteness for our youth. These are skills and knowledge they need before going out on their own that they too often don't get elsewhere. Thank your for your interest in the well-being of our students.

Idette Groff