

HJR 25 2006

Science, Math, and Technology Education in the Commonwealth at the Elementary, Secondary, and Undergraduate Levels

10/25/06 Meeting Summary

The third meeting of the HJR 25 Joint Subcommittee took place at the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) in Fairfax, Virginia. The joint subcommittee received a 40 minute tour of the school from TJHSST faculty and had the opportunity to walk through several classrooms and labs.

After the tour the joint subcommittee met in the TJHSST auditorium for the public portion of the meeting. Dr. Evan Glazer, Principal of TJHSST, gave a presentation to the joint subcommittee reviewing the school's history and curriculum. Following Dr. Glazer's presentation the joint subcommittee began a question and answer period with a panel of students and faculty. Below is a list of questions and answers from the joint subcommittee and student/faculty panel:

Q- Joint Subcommittee

- Why do only half of TJHSST students pursue a college major in the hard sciences?

A- Panel

- TJHSST attracts a wide variety of students who attend not just for the science and math program but for the academic rigor and reputation of the school as well.

Q- Joint Subcommittee

- At what age do students who attend TJHSST develop an interest in math and science or interest in attending the school?

A- Panel

- Students take an admissions test in eighth grade but many students begin to think about attending the school as early as sixth grade.

Q- Joint Subcommittee

- How does TJHSST develop its curriculum?

A- Panel

- TJHSST acts as a laboratory for curriculum and many schools adopt classes, labs, and lesson plans from TJHSST because they do not have the resources to develop innovative curriculum for advanced subjects.

Q- Joint Subcommittee

- How does TJHSST attract qualified teachers?

A- Panel

- TJHSST constantly receives applications but the school also performs a national search for qualified teachers. Additionally, national press coverage helps to attract top candidates to the school.

Q- Joint Subcommittee

- Private businesses were involved in the creation of TJHSST, but are they still involved?

A- Panel

- Yes, but private businesses are not as involved as they could be. The recently created fund to help support the school does receive support from private businesses.

Q- Panel

- Are there any plans to build a new facility for TJHSST?

A- Joint Subcommittee

- Yes, but construction is still many years away.

Q- Panel

- How does the joint subcommittee envision arts and humanities education integrated into a math and science curriculum?

A- Joint Subcommittee

- The arts and humanities are integral to any education and help create a well rounded and balanced society. Many members of Virginia's General Assembly have math and science backgrounds that positively contribute to their performance as an elected official.

Q- Panel

- How is science and technology education promoted throughout the state?

A- Joint Subcommittee

- Specialized science and technology education is promoted mainly through Governor's Schools but many high schools across the state have specialized curriculum in the sciences.

Q- Panel

- Are there any plans for magnet elementary schools?

A- Joint Subcommittee

- The joint subcommittee is currently studying the feasibility of magnet schools at the elementary level, as well as other programs that would generate interest in the sciences at a young age.

Q- Panel

- Does the state have any plans to build zero-energy schools?

A- Joint Subcommittee

- The construction of schools is a local responsibility so the state has very little control over school design, but there were several bills introduced during the 2006 Session that would address sustainable energy design for state buildings.

Following the question and answer segment the joint subcommittee concluded the public meeting and thanked TJHSST for their time and hospitality.