

Emotions High at Education Meeting

The agenda for the general education meeting February 2 revealed little of what was really on people's minds. Out of each program report arose a frank and at times emotional discussion about related concerns. The meeting climaxed with a joint statement by concerned parents and school personnel addressing the problem of "racial prejudice" in the schools.

Other concerns at the meeting, which was attended by more than 35, included the crowded buses, truancy and the use of the community liaisons.

Near the end of the meeting an unscheduled presentation was made by Adi Defender, Marie Calica and Helene Weeks. Defender read a statement citing unhealthy attitudes on the part of staff and faculty in Madras schools that are psychologically damaging to Indian students.

Calica, who is a community liaison at the junior high, supplied evidence gathered through observations and discussions with students. Indian students, she said, are nervous in class, afraid of their teachers, and reluctant to ask for extra help because of past experiences of being ignored.

Saying that she was tired of running into a brick wall, Calica said in a barely controlled voice,

"It's getting to the point where I'm going to quit because I can't accomplish anything in the face of some of these attitudes on the part of the faculty."

The liaison added quickly that she wasn't going to quit, though, because the "kids need someone in the building to identify with." She stressed the schools must provide a "nourishing environment" for Indian students.

Helene Weeks, the new counselor aide at the high school, reported the results of her many heart-to-heart conversations with Indian students. "They are trying as hard as they can," she said, but are faced with staff who do not understand their cultural and emotional needs.

"We can't be wrong all the time," one student told Weeks. Behavior problems are a way of getting attention, said Weeks, because students feel they wouldn't be noticed otherwise.

The collective statement ended with Calica noting that "We haven't sat down and listened to our students." She suggested that instead of "going to meetings and discussing what's best for them," parents and interested community members should talk to the students directly and discover their needs. She also hoped that administrators and teachers would "sit down

and talk together" with Warm Springs people.

Moderator and Education Committee Chairman Mike Clements followed up by saying that Title IV Part B funds are being sought for better orientation of teachers and staff, "and not just a bus tour of the reservation."

Tribal Education Director Charles Calica pointed to the possibility of outside groups such as the Intergroup Human Rights Commission, the State Board of Education or O.S.U. coming in to review the situation in the 509-J School District.

Marie Calica outlined her plans to remedy the problems she encounters. She is planning an Indian Studies course through O.S.U. for the staff this spring, is beginning to work on "Values Clarification Counseling" on a group level for students with behavioral problems, and will continue to invite Warm Springs professionals into junior high classrooms to share their skills and experience. Calica also plans to help parents and staff understand why there are liaisons and what may be expected from them.

Earlier in the meeting community liaisons came under the fire of parents who felt they should spend less time on attendance problems and more time getting to know the community,

and "helping parents to care."

High school vice principal John Trujillo defended liaison Anna Hurtado saying, "Anna's been spending more time with attendance because that's what we hear the Title IV Committee saying they're concerned about." If the attendance program is successful in the next few months, said Trujillo, then Anna should be more visible in the community.

In discussion about the Johnson O'Malley programs complaints arose about an enrichment trip which high school staff cancelled on the basis of low grade averages and poor attendance records. It was felt that a balance of enrichment activities and efforts to improve grades and attendance must be found.

The Title IV Part A Parent Committee reported that \$83,640 were available for school year 78-79. Their proposed budget, which was mailed last week, includes counselors at the junior high and senior high, a community liaison at the high school, tutoring in all the schools and summer tutoring.

Follow-up on last year's summer students has shown improvement in attendance and attitude, reported high school counselor Small Fire Hawk.

Geneva Smith presented the Head Start-Day Care report and

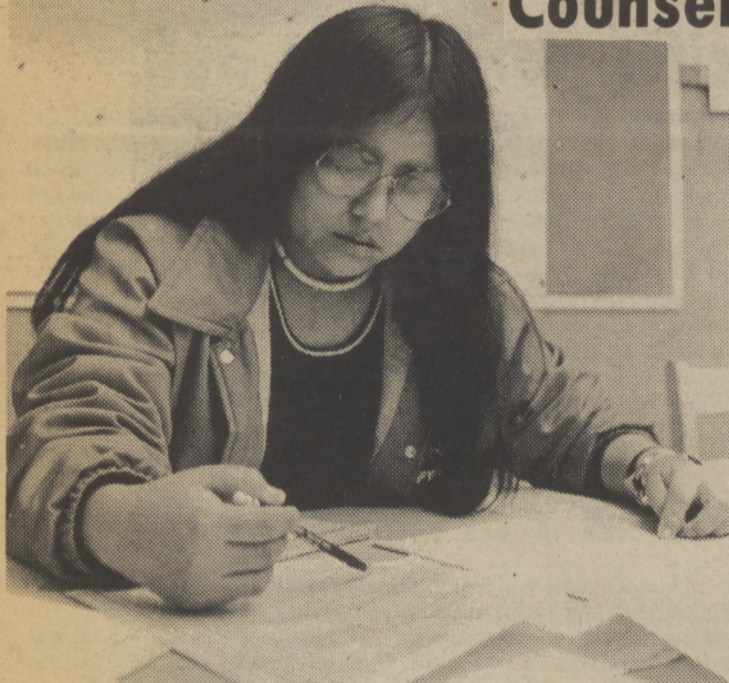
pointed to the critical space problem. Clements informed the group of tentative plans to build a Community learning center to house all education programs. Construction could begin in the spring of 1979, added Charles Calica.

Representatives of the Oregon Indian Educators Association explained their organization and made an appeal for members. OIEA plans to act as a funnel for Indian concerns statewide and respond to individual student problems on a local basis, said secretary Pat Woodside. There are also plans to prepare a booklet listing employable Indians in the state. Woodside noted that none of this can be done without memberships, which cost \$5 per year. Anyone can be a member, not only Indians in education.

Woodside announced the election of two new officers: Charles Calica (Vice President) and Mike Clements (Treasurer).

General education meetings are held by the Tribal Education Committee after each nine week school session. They are open to all concerned members of the community and school staff. At each meeting reports are made on the progress or problems faced by the various programs offering services to Indian students and open discussion is encouraged.

Counselor Aides Enjoy Other Side of Fence



Helene Weeks spends some of her time as a counselor aide at the high school reviewing attendance lists and referring potential problems to the proper authorities. CDS Photo

Helene Weeks and Relda Barney have just recently been hired on at the Madras High School and Madras Junior High, respectively, as counselor-aides, funded by Johnson-O'Malley.

As counselor-aides, their job is to: assist counselor in management of the counseling center; work with students in basic skills instruction and course work completion (under supervision of tutor); prepare materials and equipment for instructional activities; perform clerical duties for special programs staff; and assist individual students in the school setting as directed by the counselor.

"It's really nice working here, I'm finally not being asked if I was a student," said Helene Weeks. "Once a teacher asked me if I had a pass to be in the

hallway," added the former Madras High School student. Helene started work in mid-December.

Helene enjoys working with high school students and the people. "It's kind of neat talking to teachers as one of them and not like a student," stated Helene, "It seems funny being on the other side of the fence."

The new counselor-aide noted that it's quite different from when she was there - more classes are offered now, there are quite a few new teachers, and Indian students have better opportunities. She said that when she was there, there was no Indian counselor or community liaison.

Relda Barney started work January 23, the first day of the new semester. Being the first day of the new semester Relda

found herself busy straightening out schedules for those students who were scheduled wrong. Doyle Whipple, counselor at MJHS said, "I don't know what we would've done without her during her first week of work."

One thing that Relda noticed while helping in the classroom is that the students are rowdy and energetic. Another observation she made was that the Indian students seem to hang back; they sit in the back row and give teachers a bad time. She also made note that it is only a few students, not all that do this.

The 19-year old wants to gain experience in working with people and hopes to use her experience to become a counselor within school district 509-J in the future. She said she would like to attend Southern Oregon College in Ashland.



New counselor aide Relda Barney shared a laugh with junior high students Darrin Tewee (right) and Roscoe Greene during a recent spelling lesson. When Relda is not in the classroom she helps out with clerical work. CDS Photo

Spilyay Tymoo

Coyote News

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