

Appendix B

Application for New Initiative Fund Proposal

New Initiative Proposal Summary 1999-2000

New Initiative: Interdisciplinary Program in Agriculture

Name of Proposer(s): Wm. D. Abbey (Head of Science/Area Support Staff)

Location: Delhi District Secondary School

Superintendent: Ms. J. DeLong

Date of Submission: May 27, 1999

Description of Proposal:

People involved in farming in our global economy are faced with many unique challenges that require the development of new knowledge and problem solving skills unique to each region of our country. Delhi, with its economy connected to the tobacco and ginseng industries, is a perfect location for developing an interdisciplinary studies program that focuses on agriculture and farming. Delhi is a rural community with most of our students either living on farms or having family members employed in the agricultural industry. A strong connection between the school and community exists long past harvest season and creates a great opportunity for connected learning from the perspectives of science, business and geography.

The potential for course that connects with agriculture is immense; DDSS's interdisciplinary courses in Agribusiness will commence in the fall of 1999. Topics covered in the course will include Business concepts such as marketing principles, budgets, accounting, finance, computer literacy and careers within the context of our region's farms. Agricultural Issues would include the study of relevant topics like land renewal, soil science, plant and animal reproduction, environmental resource management, and new technology in agriculture.

These multi credit programs will use science and technology along with social constructivist theory to explore the nature of agriculture communities. Technology is an important aspect of secondary education, and current educational theory emphasizes a holistic approach to subject disciplines. The combination of these two philosophies works well in an interdisciplinary course with agriculture at its center. These courses would provide authentic learning to students who will leave DDSS with general understanding and specific skills that will both be applicable in the field.

Teachers at our school will develop these courses through an action research epistemology. Part of the course development will be to produce MET approved curriculum documents and improve the high school's facilities. While already approved by program council in the spring of 1999 for running in the fall of 1999 the long-term

establishment of this potential magnet program will require an increase in resources for Delhi District Secondary School.

Rationale:

The students and families of Delhi the surrounding area are strongly connected with the agricultural ventures. Many of our students graduate from high school with plans to work on family or other farms in our area. While some of these students take agriculture-related courses at university or college, many graduate directly to the world of work. An interdisciplinary course in agriculture related studies would be a benefit to students with each of these goals. Those who go directly to farm employment would have a degree of theoretical and practical knowledge to take to the field; students whose plans include post secondary training in agriculture would have the advantage of familiarity with the theories and applications of agriculture-related studies prior to enrolment at university or college.

Benefits, If Approved:

Students will develop problem-solving skills to cope better with issues and problems that face farmers in a global economy. The Grand Erie District School Board can pilot, through action research methodology, an interdisciplinary course that truly connects the real world to the curriculum. There is potential to form many partnerships within the community at large: students can become involved with local horticultural and agricultural associations; the public will recognize our commitment to farming as an important field; there is great potential to tap local resources and personalities who could act as guest speakers, sponsors, co-op placements, and mentors. Already Fanshawe College has expressed an interest in Delhi District Secondary as a future satellite campus for a two year college program. This would involve a rental agreement between the college and the board, which would help in the usable space formula for the school, and board. Guelph University and its Agrifood and Agriculture colleges has ensured that students who complete this interdisciplinary course would receive exemptions from certain core courses in their program. This should attract students from in an around the Grand Erie District School Board to further support the magnet program concept being established through this program. Furthermore, the blending of theory and practice, in a secondary school course in agriculture-related studies may develop a more academic interest in farming for our students and their community.

Negative Implications, If Not Approved:

Our school will have lost the opportunity to forge even stronger ties to local business and its community. Students will not have the opportunity to learn science, business and geographical topics framed by meaningful context which our students can appreciate, something which may diminish their potential to further their formal education in agriculture. Lack of connection to college program and thus withdrawal of

post-secondary satellite campus proposal. Loss of rental income for used space. Teachers will not have an opportunity to develop their practice as professionals engaged in action research. Failure to establish an agricultural magnet in the board.

Timelines Suggested:

Spring 1999

- strike committee of teachers from science, business to develop general curriculum and get approval from MET for course syllabus. (*Already underway*)
- approach local service clubs, Ontario Flue Cured Tobacco Marketing Board, local businesses, colleges and universities for support for greenhouse construction. (*Already underway*)
- commence writing curriculum for the course. (*Already underway*)

Summer / Fall 1999

- establish community links, speaker, and field trips for course
- complete course curriculum and commence development of course profile

Fall 1999/spring 2000

- start piloting Agribusiness course and action research
- timetabling will determine time class runs

Spring 2000

- report, evaluate, and refine courses.
- establish development and refinement of further courses and program connections.

Cost of Developing Proposal:

- program council has allocated funds towards the initial development of the program which included copying expense release time, and basic resource acquisition and development so no money is needed for initial development
- further costs will entail teacher release time for development of course curriculum and profiles, equipment/supplies, paper and other consumables as well as busses for field trips. See projected Costs of Proposal.

NEW INITIATIVES

Projected Costs of Proposal

1999 2000

Resources: Interdisciplinary Program in Agriculture

| | First Year | Second Year | Third Year |
|---|---|--|--|
| Supplies and Services | - Science/Business Capital Equipment (GPS*, Soil test Equip, plan biotech Manuals etc.) Accounting materials and Simulations, site licences - Textbooks - paper, binders, other stat. (\$5000.00) | - Science/Business Consumables - paper, binders, other stat. (\$1250.00) | - Science/Business Consumables - paper, binders, other stat. (\$1250.00) |
| Staff Development (include # of people) | - 3 staff members x 3 days release (\$1350.00) | - 5 release days (\$750.00) | - 5 release days (\$750.00) |
| Staffing (Full-time Equivalent) | | | |
| TOTAL COSTS | (\$6350.00) | (\$2000.00) | (\$2000.00) |

* the GPS can be used in geography as part of grade 9 curriculum