

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Eight Goals Continue to Guide District

Strategic Planning To Focus on Future

The eight goals described on the following pages were set in 1988 to guide the District for three to five years. As the Board of Education prepares this fall to set goals for the balance of the 90's, it has decided to adopt a method of goal setting called Strategic Planning.

"Madison Schools 2000—A Shared Vision for Our Children" is the title for the strategic planning process which began this fall. This planning process is different from those used previously because it asks community leaders, representatives and parents to help establish the District's beliefs, visions and strategic goals for the future. Symbolic of the strengthening partnership that exists between Madison business and the schools, the planning process is fully funded with grants from foundations and corporate donors. Major contributors include the Madison Gas and Electric Company, Wisconsin Bell, the Strang Corporation, Physicians Plus, the Bassett Foundation, CUNA Mutual Insurance, McDonald's/Renway Enterprises, Hill Electric and Wood, Bauer & Raether Builders.

A 30-member Planning Team has been invited to participate in the planning. Neighborhood Intervention Project Director Stephen Blue, United Way Director Leslie Howard, Madison Teachers, Inc. Executive Director John Matthews, County Executive Rick Phelps, UW Chancellor Donna Shalala, MATC Director Beverly Simone, Mayor Paul Soglin, representatives from community businesses and organizations, two school board members, Superintendent Jim Travis, central office administrators, principals, teachers, parents and other citizens will make up the team.

The Planning Team will retire to an intensive three-day work session in late November. There they will re-examine the District's beliefs, write a mission statement which articulates what is distinctive and unique about the Madison Metropolitan School District, and then get down to the business of setting approximately ten to fifteen major strategic goals for the District.



Computers are instructional tools which help students learn skills needed for academic achievement.

The goals set by the Planning Team will be turned into Action Plans by a series of committees, one for each major goal. Recruiting for Action teams, all of which will be comprised of community members and district employees, has been underway for several weeks. Interested persons may volunteer up to December 1st by calling Mark Fredisdorf at 267-1625.

The committees will work from January to April and then the Planning Committees will re-convene to review and summarize the work. The action plans will be presented to the Board of Education in May. While the Board may accept all, parts or none of the proposed Plan, they cannot change the Plan itself. They may send it back to the Planning Team for revision.

GOAL

#1

To improve student achievement as demonstrated by, but not limited to, standardized achievement test scores, organized

by ethnicity and gender, with an emphasis on those students who have below average achievement.

During the 1989-90 school year, the Madison Metropolitan School District began a five year program designed to improve the achievement level of all students and minimize the gap between the achievement levels of minority and non-minority students. The program is based on the report and recommendations of the Elementary Minority Student Achievement (MSA) Committee and the Secondary MSA Committee, two groups of teachers, administrators, parents and other citizens led by school psychologist Virginia Henderson.

These recommendations for Goal #1 are tied to two instructional priorities that are incorporated into every Madison school's School Improvement Plan. The first requires that learning objectives which promote achievement for low achieving students be included in the curriculum. The second calls for multicultural education in all schools.

The MSA recommendations were to be introduced to all Madison schools following a timetable that began three years ago and called for a year of planning before introduction into the curriculum. In a phased-in approach, a local committee at each school has the opportunity to study the appropriate MSA reports and decide how to best adapt it to the school's individual needs. All Madison elementary schools, four middle and two high schools now have their MSA plans incorporated into their curriculum and school operating plan. The remaining secondary schools entered into the planning phase this fall.

Recommendations Cover Six Areas

Local and national research helped the MSA committee define six areas for consideration: Staff Development, Parental Involvement, Academic Achievement, Responsive Curriculum and Instructional Strategies, School Climate, and at the secondary level, Opportunities Beyond High School

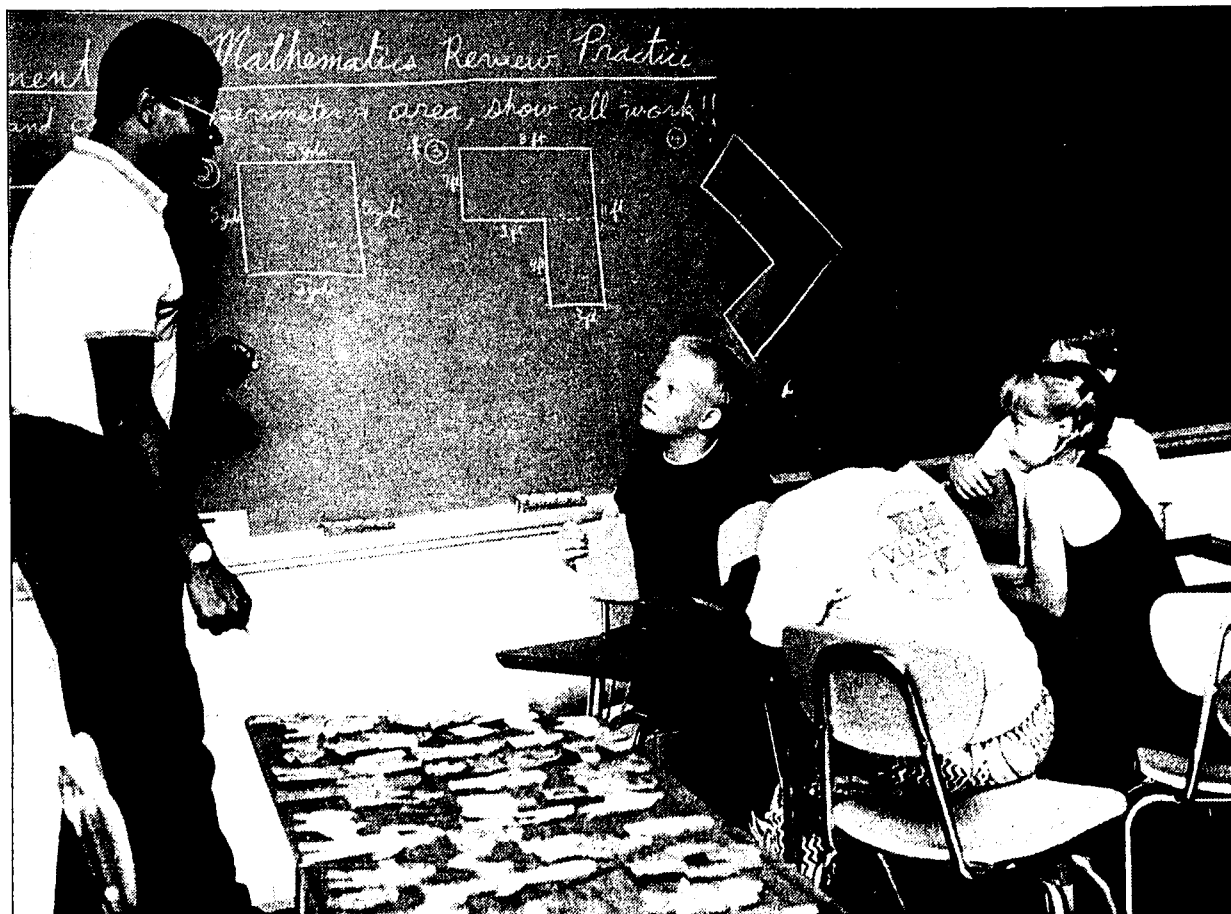
Staff Development

Staff Development specialists are working with teachers to help them understand the importance of the MSA effort. District sponsored classes and workshops continued to be a part of the plan.

During the second semester, many teachers attended a six part series of lectures titled "Understanding the Challenges of Improving Minority Student Achievement." The presentation ranged from "Safe School Environments: Essential to Improving School Climate" to "Working with Students from Multicultural/Interracial Families."

Another series of classes of teachers looked at "test-wisness," showing how to assist students wanting to perform up to their ability on achievement tests like the California Achievement Test (CAT) and the State of Wisconsin Third Grade Reading Test. Test-wisness does not deal with the content of tests, but with process and procedures for taking standardized tests.

In August, more than 500 teachers participated in a full day workshop titled "Culture, Language, and Learning Styles of Asian and Hispanic Students" which featured nationally known experts speaking on "The Role of Culture in Learning" and "Educating the 21st Century Multi-Cultural Person."



Small group instruction is one way in which teachers vary lessons to account for diverse learning styles.