

School-to-work program becomes local responsibility

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After five years of receiving federal funding, the "school-to-work" program will now rely on dollars contributed locally if it is to continue. Like many programs that have come and gone at the schools, the school-to-work program was a program started with federal "seed" dollars. The seed dollars get the program up and going for a limited amount of years at which point federal dollars cease and the school is left to decide if the program is one worthy of continuance, and if so, what opportunities are there to fund it on a local level.

This program specifically was designed to help students explore their opportunities in regards to career opportuni-

ties and real world situations. One of the most well-known components of the school-to-work program has been the Junior Achievement program in which local business people have devoted their time to visit with students at Riverside and Pleasantview Elementary schools about the real life working experience. The program typically lasts for five to six weeks and its objective is to "educate and inspire young people to value free enterprise, business and economics in order to improve the quality of their lives."

In addition to the Junior Achievement program, the seed dollars have also helped to fund other experiences such as bringing in public speakers.

The program according to Principal Jim Hirman,

was based on the mid-'90s push for applied skills in today's students. In its first year, federal dollars came out somewhere between \$10,000 and \$11,000, and as the program progressed those dollars were gradually lessened to \$3,837, which was the amount of JCC's year five entitlement.

Now that the federal dollars are no longer available, if the school-to-work program is to continue it will need to be locally funded, unless there are changes made in allocated dollars. "The federal government didn't reallocate money for this, but legislature may still convene and decide to do so," said Hirman, noting that although the program was met with success, "we can only support so many programs based on the revenue we have."