

**DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MARCH 2, 2009**

The Board of the Davenport Community School District met for the Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, March 2, 2009, pursuant to law. The meeting was in the Jim Hester Board Room at the Administration Service Center, 1606 Brady Street, Davenport, Iowa, in said District. Vice President Larry Roberson, acting as chair, called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM following the closed sessions in the Executive Conference Room.

On roll call the following board members were present for the Committee of the Whole: Vice President Larry Roberson (chair); Directors Richard Clewell, Nikki De Fauw, Ralph Johanson, Ken Krumwiede, and Tim Tupper. Absent: President Patt Zamora. Other people present were Superintendent Julio Almanza; members of the administration including Dr. Leslie O'Melia, Ethel Reynolds, Marsha Tangen, Claudia Wood, Scott Martin, Kathy Schulte, and other staff members.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Monthly Financials: Claudia Wood and Marsha Tangen reported on the monthly financial report prepared for January 2009. Mrs. Wood started talking about the revenue, expenditures and changes in the general fund balances and explained the trends on graphs included. Mrs. Tangen continued with information on the budget to actual comparisons for revenues and expenditures. She talked about the special education financial statement. There were concerns with how the State was asking to have funds reported and not adjusting our revenues for the reductions from the State so revenues will show higher than actual numbers. The State said we aren't to adjust revenues because it will inflate the district's deficit and then we could ask the SBRC for the deficit amount and then levy for the deficit which passes the burden to the taxpayers. Director Tupper expressed concerns about being in compliance with the statute and we might need to have our attorney check into this formula requirement regardless of what the Department of Education is saying. Mrs. Tangen will be getting more input at a State Association meeting regarding the special education deficit and reporting. There was additional discussion about the special education financial areas and responses from the superintendent.

Mrs. Wood continued talking about the self-insurance fund statement figures and graphing. There were questions about the renewal rates for reinsurance and the administration shared we have a number of expensive claims which affect the rates. We have a number that will meet the stop loss and they are using this in figuring reinsurance. The next area reviewed dealt with food service analysis and changes being implemented. Board members asked questions about a number of parts in the report and the administration addressed the concerns. Betty Long was able to provide some information about the AEA criteria for special education and the restrictions they have. Vice President Roberson asked about the changes in special education and how previously the State wanted us to reduce our numbers because we had too many students in special education. Mrs. Long agreed and talked about complaints we had with the Office of Civil Rights five years ago when this was an issue. It was noted at that time they said we were disproportionate and overrepresented by minority students. Now we have a drop of 124 students who receive services from special education because of new criteria. Director Johanson wondered where all these students had gone and if they were receiving the services needed.

OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

Initial President of Central High Restroom Additions: Mr. Scott Martin did a presentation on the renovation work at Central High for restrooms near the small gym. The Board looked at the location, mechanicals, proposed changes, various views of the restroom areas, and entrances. They learned about safety and security with the enhancements and how this work would meet ADA. The final plans will be brought to the Board for approval and a public hearing on March 9.

Initial Presentation of Walcott Restroom Renovations: Scott Martin next presented the design plans for Walcott renovations for restrooms. There were a number of drawings shorting the east wing, northwest and southwest areas, photos of existing facilities, and proposed new designs. These would meet ADA standards, have improved air quality, visibility for safety and security, and meet the needs at the building. There were questions about walls, ceramic tile, colors, demolition work, and surfaces. They talked about drywall, replacing old tile, quality of the work, and design plans. This will come back to the Board for final approval of the plans and a public hearing on March 9.

SPECIAL REPORT ON LONG-RANGE PLANS

Long-Range Facility Plans: The Board was presented with a long-range plan update by Scott Martin, Ethel Reynolds, and Leslie O'Melia. The report included information on essential functions of school facilities and explained the process used for collecting input from the community. There were a number of meetings held so people could hear about current and past projects using the local option sales tax dollars. Participants at the meetings selected top priorities from the list of future work. The Board saw the categories and how people voted for each of the priorities listed. There were four pages of comments from the community dealing with facility needs. Then the Board heard about building priorities and saw how the top items were listed at each building. The high schools had much longer lists shown and there was also a list of priorities for early childhood centers and Kimberly Center requested a new building.

The report showed survey results from the Executive Council, District and Operational priorities, and funding sources using Local Option Sales & Services Tax; PPEL Physical Plant and Equipment Levy; and the General Fund. Following the outline, the administration talked about questions for the Board's direction for ADA, GIS, air conditioning, and early childhood learning centers. The remainder of the discussion time dealt with the next steps for March through May input; completing building essentials and a functions analysis; and in May or June the administration would present the plans showing a 10-year long-range plan with cost estimates.

A number of the questions from the Board revolved around legal requirements for ADA, the need for air conditioning all buildings, indoor air quality, flexibility of new construction, refining essential functions and having a gap analysis, equity at all buildings, how technology fits into the plan and utilization. There were comments about training development and pilot programs used. They talked about performance spaces, growth areas, and regional centers for ADA compliance. They discussed the geographic mapping for identifying preschool population and the need in our community for early childhood centers. There were questions about how the choices would be made to help the children perform at their best and taking care of smaller or larger needs based on funding. Board members asked about how construction and priorities affected student achievement and the importance of preschool opportunity for all children. Why do students leave our district and what can we do to improve our schools to make them stay here?

There was a lengthy discussion about whether to focus dollars on early childhood learning or looking at other needs in our building facilities. The Superintendent went over the process for the coming months and explained how the administration would bring back recommendations for the Board's review. They will continue to look at safety as a priority and realize not all the things listed will be done. They talked about accountability and how new stimulus programs might impact the district.

Comprehensive Approach to Early Childhood & Facility Needs: Ethel Reynolds started the conversation dealing with early childhood needs from site-based and center based approaches. The Board learned about sites which had existing programs, those sites without programs, and saw a chart with classrooms and slots available at various buildings. She went over the history of our programs, listed pros and cons of both the center-based and site-based programs, and talked about home schools. The Board looked at a chart showing distribution of enrollment and they talked about services provided in quadrants in the district. The recommendation of the administration was a comprehensive approach to early childhood programs using both site-based and center-based learning opportunities. They are trying to develop costs for construction and site preparation so the Board might consider options in the future planning for the needs of the district.

Board members asked about the use of current facilities and classrooms available. They learned about site and funding issues and balancing the needs of families in these decisions. Directors expressed their thoughts and ideas about preferences for early childhood opportunities, transitions, and models. Kathy Schulte was able to provide specifics about the existing programs and how funding streams affected enrollment. There were different funding plans used for delivery of services based on requirements for Head Start, Title grants, Shared Vision, and tuition or scholarship students. Betty Long was able to add information about special education and how transportation fit into the picture for early childhood.

Director Clewell talked about not doing this alone and being collaborative in our approach. The legislature felt cooperation between sources was a good option and something they recommended that communities do together. They want innovative programs and to know the money they distribute is being used well. The Board offered opinions in general support of a comprehensive approach and understood that parents wanted to have a number of opportunities available for early childhood care. Director Tupper expressed concerns with the waiting period for some people to get children into programs and how a three-year wait was too long for families. Kathy Schulte explained how they work with other providers in the community to get accommodations for children when there are no openings in our sites. Director Tupper worried about families in transition and at risk and not having enough slots available for them to use. Mrs. Schulte explained how they also work with the homeless shelters and deal with emergency needs as soon as possible. Funding for transportation was a huge part of the mix and YMCA and Palmer helps with some of the transporting of children through scholarships and having busses available. Mrs. Schulte said they will start registering in March and April for openings in August. Administrators agreed it was very difficult for them when the needs of the families can't be met and they struggle with this continually.

Superintendent Almanza also brought up concerns with mental health for the families and how there will be a cut in funding to the Vera French Mental Health Centers due to the economy and State budget problems. Mrs. Reynolds talked about transition for students and how they were working on a better model for transitioning children from one school to another. She acknowledged the work Kathy Schulte does for our District and what an outstanding leader Kathy was for early childhood. Director De Fauw talked about families having connections with the elementary school and would like to see ways that families will be engaged with the buildings as they move from preschool to elementary school. Building relationships was crucial and would help with our enrollment in our own schools. She talked about how the Board had seen that parents locate their children in sites based on family convenience, and a comprehensive approach to early childhood centers probably was the best option. Vice President Roberson noted how the family unit had changed and many families move around a lot. There are less two-parent families and groups are living together because of financial needs. We need to care about what the families think they need and what the children really want. The Superintendent complimented the Board on providing many good suggestions and perspectives on long-range planning. He felt the Board had a clear and honest dialog about a variety of issues that would help the administration.

EXTRA COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Vice President Roberson brought up the possibility of having an extra meeting on March 16 to provide an opportunity for budget discussions. Mrs. Tangen said she would have information on the budget amendments and estimated budget for 2009-2010 to present at that time. The Board will be asked to approve these documents and conduct a public hearing on April 6 in order to meet State guidelines. Director Clewell indicated he would not be available but everyone else would be able to attend the extra committee of the whole meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Roberson adjourned the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Linda Smith Kortemeyer, Board Secretary