

**DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
JUNE 2, 2008**

The Board of the Davenport Community School District met in open session for the Committee of the Whole Monday, June 2, 2008, pursuant to law. The meeting was held in the Jim Hester Board Room at the Administration Service Center, 1606 Brady Street, Davenport, Iowa, in said District. It was noted that President Zamora would be attending the meeting via a telephone connection due to reasons where she could not be physically present. President Zamora called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

On roll call the following board members were present: President Patt Zamora; Directors Richard Clewell, Nikki De Fauw, Ralph Johanson, Ken Krumwiede, and Tim Tupper. Vice President Larry Roberson arrived at 5:35 PM. Superintendent Almanza attended as well other administrators. Other notes: President Zamora signed off from the conference call at 6:15 PM because of a poor connection. Director Clewell left at 6:15 PM and Director Johanson left at 6:10 PM due to prior commitments they had for other meetings this evening. There remained a quorum so the committee meeting continued and Vice President Roberson chaired the meeting when he arrived.

It was announced by President Zamora that due to scheduling conflicts the agenda outline was revised to have the home schooling report moved to be first as a discussion item so Directors Clewell and Johanson would be able to hear the report.

SPECIAL REPORTS

HOME SCHOOLING: Ethel Reynolds talked about families who home school and how partnership development efforts were growing. There have been meetings with the superintendent. Bill Long was asked in October 2006 to develop a Home School Assistance Program (HSAP) for the Davenport Schools. He reviewed the literature, visited other district programs, and met with home school parent groups in developing a home school assistance program model that fits our district objectives. Mr. Cliff Coussens was then hired as a supervising teacher and worked with Mr. Long in further program development. The Board learned about the 1991 legislative which dealt with allowing districts to provide home school assistance programs. Mr. Long informed the Board Iowa City and Davenport were the last Urban Network schools to begin a HSAP. They heard about the importance of winning the trust of home school parents and set up meetings to talk with them. We learned the need to develop trust and some parents were not happy with services they had received. Parents were the primary teachers according to the law, but school districts may assist them. Districts who had programs informed us that winning the parents' trust may be difficult and take time. However, we have made rapid growth in our efforts. Another thing learned from other districts was not to do anything unless you do a good job. Therefore, we moved slowly and put a lot of thought and planning in our development. Our goal was to provide a quality program for our home school parents and students. Board members looked at a brochure and received an updated report. We have grown in numbers to 67 HSAP students as of May 30, 2008. There were a total of 185 home school students currently; therefore over half were not in our HSAP. There was still room for growth, although parents were not required to be involved with us except to complete necessary paper work and meet the student assessment requirement.

The Board talked about age levels of home schooled children, achievement, testing and following state guidelines. Other supervising teachers for us were Patty Flaherty and Paula Lane-Jones stationed at the HSAP office in Buffalo. The administration answered questions from the Board and talked about associations available to help home school parents. We can assist them with general curriculum and parents sometimes add a religious part to their instruction. Parents will often home school at the elementary level and then enroll their children in the intermediate and high schools level. There were some organizations who don't want anything to do with the public school system but there was interest in partnering by some parents. Some parents had questions about why we want to assist them and we were working at building trust. We were not dictating to them but they were afraid we wanted to control instruction. We meet with parents on a regular basis and are very open to assist them.

Mr. Coussens talked about being a supervising teacher and his role in providing assistance to parents. Ms. Flaherty talked about her role and providing reference and curriculum materials for parents at no cost. We were building a good curriculum library for their use. There were additional notes about special education and other needs being met for students. Materials were being ordered to assist parents, the AEA could be involved if asked, and parents have a right to home school children. We have to make sure the adequate yearly progress was being made for students and requirements by the State were followed. Mr. Coussens talked generally about helping parents and finding ways to fill their needs to home school their children. If children were tested and were behind certain levels, we worked at building trust with the parents and finding ways to assist them in increasing performance. The parents have to submit their education plans to the State on a yearly basis. Some of the reasons for home schooling vary such as a person being upset with a teacher or building administrator or curriculum or religious reasons, while most just want to educate their children themselves..

Mrs. Reynolds said HSAP was based out of Buffalo and there was a resource center available for parents and students. Feedback from parents showed they appreciated not having the District overly pushy. The District was helpful and didn't put pressure on them to return to the district. The staff was respectful of the parents' efforts. We were not being secretive and we don't have a special agenda for them. Mr. Almanza said there were a variety of reasons for parents to educate at home and we needed to ask how we can help. Helping the child was the answer and we were not there to sell the district to the parents. It was the parent's choice if they wanted assistance. Mr. Coussens talked about communicating with parents and explaining the required testing by the State. The Board talked about legal requirements, contacting parents, and informing them. Mr. Coussens talked about requirements from the State and regular contact visits with families.

Director Johanson left the meeting at 6:10 PM during this part of the discussion. There were questions about the role of the AEA and the importance of developing trust with parents. Mr. Almanza spoke about funding, dual enrollment, and how over the years funding had decreased. Director Clewell talked about bringing the funding concerns to the Legislative Advocacy Committee. Director Clewell had to leave the meeting at 6:15 PM and President Zamora also signed off at that time because it was too difficult to hear the conversations via the telephone connection. The remaining quorum of board members (Roberson, Tupper, De Fauw, and Krumwiede) continued to listen to reports.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

MONTHLY FINANCIALS FOR APRIL: Mrs. Claudia Wood reviewed the financial report board members received for April 2008. She presented information on financial statements, grants, revenues, expenditures, self-insurance, and investments. Board members heard we have not received some title funding and they are checking on this with the State. Mrs. Wood went through each section of the report and answered questions as needed about trends, teacher quality dollars, categorical areas, and revenues. The transportation fund was up because of fuel costs, there was a review of areas from special education, and there were adjustments being made. Mrs. Wood explained areas dealing with self-insurance costs, revenues, claims, and monitoring items. She also went through comparables available for food and nutrition funds. Director Tupper expressed concerns about staffing level expenses and hiring. Mrs. Wood responded by noting we hire many hourly workers because of grants and funding allowed. She will do more checking and try to answer some of his questions. Vice President asked about transportation costs and the impact because of fuel costs. Mrs. Wood talked about First Student expenditures, rising fuel costs, and reimbursements that will show up later.

RECESS: There was a brief recess from 6:25 until 6:30 PM. The remaining board members (Roberson, De Fauw, Krumwiede, and Tupper) returned to the table to hear the reports.

OPERATIONS REPORT

TRANSPORTATION SURVEY, SUMMER PROJECTS, B.G. PROPERTY: Mr. Martin started his report talking about the transportation survey sent out to parents asking why they do or not use provided transportation for their children. We plan to collect the data, review the information, and make some decisions looking at safety and needs. Mr. Martin next reviewed a list of summer projects and dates. He provided information on the Blue Grass property donation and Missman Stanley will do a Phase 1 environmental evaluation of the land which will cost around \$2,100. Soil sampling will be done dependent on the results of the evaluation. There are also some back taxes owed and our attorney is investigating these amounts. A list of spring and summer projects was provided for the board members to review with start and completion dates shown.

KIMBERLY CENTER PROJECT: Mr. Martin went over details about renovations at Kimberly Center and looking at the needs of students. A list of the proposed costs were included totaling \$309,500 for new doors for safety/security needs, restrooms work, skylights, nurse and assistant principal offices relocated, tile floors, ceiling tiles, and lights for hallways. He talked about equity being addressed and providing students with what they want for their building. The board members also listened to comments about hallway space, security staff, green space, scaling back the entrance area, and appeal of the building. To get the work done this summer, we have to move forward now so we can get bids. We should be able to finish by the first day of school. Director Tupper expressed his concerns for a lack of a long-term plan for the building and a better alternative school for the students. The Superintendent said things have not yet been determined but we need to discuss whether this is a program or a high school. However, this construction and remodeling is not a part of the KC renovation work at this time. Director Tupper asked when there would be discussion about long-term plans. Mr. Almanza said there were issues to be discussed such as program needs that must be addressed for alternative education but he hoped to have that conversation this summer with the Board.

Director De Fauw supported the Board's plans for moving forward with the renovations proposed. We have heard from the students and staff this is what they would like. Board members would like to make sure we offer competitive education for the students, but at the present time we need to move forward with this proposal or make it more modern. This is a good interim step and would enhance the value of the building down the way. Director Krumwiede concurred with these comments. He attended the Kimberly Center graduation this year and it was the largest class ever. He had concerns with having adequate space over the next few years as this school is growing. He wanted more discussion on the space issues at Kimberly Center and future needs. If there is anticipated enrollment in this program, will we be able to handle the needs of our students? In his observation, it is overcrowded and there are concerns for students. Another issue was spending \$85,000 for lights in this building and more discussion is needed on whether this is the best use of our money.

Vice President Roberson was support of the Kimberly Center and supported the new plans. We need to finalize this now as they have waited for a long time to get something done. However, why spent the money if we are not staying in this building was his question. Mr. Almanza responded that given the short time we have and the enrollment will be the same as last year, we are trying to keep the needs of students in mind. The Board has been involved in the process and discussions. Kimberly Center is a good idea and it serves students in a unique space. We are not where we should be but the district is providing alternative education. We need to discuss what more we can do. Director Tupper reminded people this building used to be an old ware-house and we also have an early childhood center located there. Our graduation rate is going up and we are having 40 to 50 per year graduating. If 100% successful we should have 150 students graduating and this is too crowded. We have so much potential and we don't want to wait any longer to have a long-range plan discussion. Director De Fauw agreed but even if we anticipated a new building, it would be at least two years down the road using local option tax dollars. In the meantime the renovations will enhance the facility and serve some of the immediate needs.

OPEN ENROLLMENT: Mr. Almanza said there were some open enrollment matters coming up that would involve the Board dealing with some denials and appeals. We have three families who want an avenue for further consideration. Our attorney is looking at suggestions for the Board to consider. We may want to discuss this at the second meeting in June and consider having a review. There will be information in the Friday packet from the parent showing a request for an appeal. If there is anything else board members need, they should let him know. We need to review the appeal process and how it will be handled. We are reviewing the process now and checking to make sure there were no errors in the open enrollment decisions. Director Tupper asked about the superintendent and administration reviewing the parent's request and how they will extend that request further. Would the next step be to have review by the Board of the decision and process used and what is the scope of the Board's authority? Mr. Almanza noted the Board needs to stay within the scope and not go outside their authority because of the impact that will have on open enrollment. Director Tupper asked if the Board upholds the decision to deny an open enrollment, what can be the next step for parents? Mr. Almanza said they can go to the district court at that point for a decision. There were questions about the time line to be followed for an appeal. Mr. Almanza said they have left it open at this time but will fix a specific time frame for next year to handle appeals. There will be a time frame for adjustments around March 1 for next year but not now.

IASB DUES: There was no further discussion about the IASB membership dues for 2008-09 amounting to \$9,967. This will come forward for board action on June 9.

BOARD MEETING CALENDAR: Board members received a draft of calendar dates for meetings in 2008-2009 to review. If there were any adjustments or suggestions, they should bring them back for discussion on June 9.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Roberson adjourned the meeting at 6:58 PM.

Linda Smith Kortemeyer, Board Secretary