

**DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
NOVEMBER 3, 2008**

The Board of the Davenport Community School District met for the Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, November 3, 2008, 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. President Zamora called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

On roll call the following board members were present: President Patt Zamora; Directors Richard Clewell, Nikki De Fauw, Ralph Johanson, Ken Krumwiede, and Larry Roberson. Director Tim Tupper joined the Board at 6:00 PM. Other people present were Superintendent Julio Almanza, administrators from the District, presenters, and people involved with the calendar survey report.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Monthly Financials: Claudia Wood and Marsha Tangen presented the monthly financial report prepared for September 2008. The report covered the general fund financial statements, investment portfolios, and the self-insurance fund financial statement. She explained the trends, expenses, revenues, and budget estimates in the report. There were graphs available for the Board to see some of the trends in finances. If board members had additional questions after reviewing the report, they can contact Mrs. Tangen.

School Budget Review Committee Application: Mrs. Tangen explained how the District can apply for additional spending authority to the SBRC to cover open enrollment students and costs for English Language Learners. There is no additional funding for these areas, but the spending authority is important to levy for cash reserve. She talked about the tax levy last year and this year and how we can balance with the normal levy so taxes won't go up. If assessed valuation or cash reserve decreases below a certain level, then we can change the levy amount. However, we should be able to balance this so no increase will be necessary. There were questions about the number of students this involves, the funding formula, spending authority, and years for ELL expenses.

Jefferson/Edison Contract: Mrs. Tangen explained administration was continuing conversations with Edison, and we have solved the language items in the contract. We are getting down to the formula and finances at this point. Mrs. Tangen will get back to the Board with more information as it is ready.

OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

Scott Martin went over the recap summary prepared for the Board showing LOSST fund amounts and projects on the schedule. He recommended the larger project estimate for William's gymnasium addition (\$2.5 million); Eisenhower HVAC geothermal project (\$2.6 million); replacement of the West High boiler (\$450,000); completion of the sprinkler system for the Central gymnasium and work on restrooms (\$200,000); and the window project at Eisenhower (\$235,000). He explained some of the projects were a larger scope from original plans and there were alternatives for the bidding. Director Roberson was concerned about the increases in costs and wondered why we didn't react fast enough to market changes. Mr. Martin explained these projects were looked at over ten years ago and some plans have been expanded which increased costs. We can't lock in construction prices unless we actually bid on a project and give an award. Director Roberson wondered when we saved money on projects, couldn't we give those schools funding for additional work they wanted and take care of other needs? Mr. Martin explained how the schools have many needs and we do try to address this. We take care of what is required before moving on with additional projects. Director Tupper arrived during this discussion at 6:00 PM.

Board members talked about equity between buildings, addressing needs, regulations, and standards. Mr. Almanza said the Board wanted the administration to use standards and guidelines for all buildings. We look at learning environment and space built into projects before bringing plans back to the Board. There were questions about geothermal units, equipment, capacity at buildings, and how long it takes to recoup

costs with these new improvements. Donna Cooper estimated it would take 13 years to recoup costs at Buffalo for the energy efficient improvements but the wells were warranted for 50 years. Director Tupper asked about the progress with the specific criteria for buildings. Information was being gathered through architects and looking at research for square footage and expanded qualitative information. Director Tupper felt this was important so the Board could compare what they were doing at all buildings. The administration was fine tuning the criteria and will bring back suggestions to the Board for final review.

Children's Village: Mr. Almanza briefly mentioned the administration was continuing to look at extension of the current contract or a more permanent location for the Children's Village West site.

Facility Projects: Director Johanson asked about the urgency for any of the projects listed in the report. Mr. Almanza explained there were commitments made to schools for use of the previous local option sale tax dollars. We need to keep those promises and we are making enhancements to buildings to help with student achievement. There was additional dialogue about some projects and how needs of students would be met with the improvements. William's gym was undersized for the student population and it was easier to make enhancements now then to come back later with additions. We also had money set aside for bonding which can be used for these projects after July 1 when bonds were paid off.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Calendar Survey Report: Ethel Reynolds introduced members from the calendar committee. Several of the teachers on the committee were in the process of getting administrative certification and wanted to be involved because of their work. Due to negotiations and contracts, the union was uncomfortable with sending other teachers to work on the committee. The Board saw a PowerPoint presentation on the community survey on calendar considerations. Rachael Mullins talked about the background of the calendars, the process the committee used, establishing criteria and considerations, and the challenges involved. The Board received a copy of the survey and looked at the content focus. AEA worked at formatting and production to allow scanning and use of software for compiling data. The Diocese of Davenport was involved in the survey process so their interests would be considered. The survey was distributed and there was a compilation of participants, data summary, and a weighting system application. Members of the committee were thanked for their participation and the leadership provided from agencies involved. Mrs. Reynolds explained the next steps would be to have direction from the Board on timelines and what can be accomplished. Matters needing to be addressed were facilities, transportation, labor management, and coming up with calendar scenarios based on priorities. The group will come together to consider putting together scenarios to go to labor management before next year that could include moving to one uniform calendar, starting before the last week in August to get the first semester done before winter break, or other areas of interest from families or employees.

The discussion which followed included questions about a unified calendar district wide; not changing the calendars at Jefferson/Edison of the Children's Village sites; what would the calendar look like; roadblocks with union contracts; balanced calendars; holidays; traditional calendars; student achievement; longer summer breaks; and how to meet the needs of all the children. Some board members were concerned about making changes and not having the support from the unions on the committee. Mrs. Reynolds explained the union representatives were invited to be on the committee but decided not to be a part. Vice President Roberson felt the District had talked about the balance calendar as something that would support increases in student achievement, but he wondered what happened to that concept. President Zamora said the data didn't hold up for students in balanced calendar schools making improvements in achievement. Mrs. Reynolds said they didn't have data showing the calendar was the only thing making a difference in achievement; however referrals were decreased at balanced calendar schools and staff absences were down. There were some gains made but it couldn't be attributed just to the calendar. Mr. Almanza talked about the fact the intercessions didn't continue with the balanced calendar schools because of funding. Director Roberson felt there were schools in other areas making gains and they stated it was because of more time spent with the students. If we make changes, it needs to happen because it will affect student achievement in a positive manner.

Director Tupper talked about people calling him and saying they wanted a common calendar, but the calendars were all different. Some wanted the balanced calendar and others wanted a transitional calendar for everyone. It will be difficult to persuade people to change; and if we want to end before the winter break people have to understand we start in mid August. Air conditioning at schools will be a problem to deal with and we will need to make compromises or have a blended calendar. Deb Miller said from the feedback they heard people loved the balanced calendar and they started school in mid August. Some of the hottest days actually came once the traditional calendar started in September. They did a survey about the two week break in October, and parents felt this was too long because of other holidays in the fall and early winter. They only wanted one week off in October so the semester could end before winter break.

Rachael Mullins said the District could look at what a hybrid calendar would include. Director Clewell thought it was a good idea to have the Diocese involved because our calendar impacts them. Superintendent Mary Wieser said the biggest thing for them was to know when the year would start and end. We have students bussed to the Catholic schools and we depend on your calendar to set our calendar. We don't have air conditioning at our buildings, but that was something the Diocese needed to deal with and it shouldn't be a problem for the public school district. If public and private schools have different calendars, there are problems. They would help support some type of unified calendar for everyone whether it was balanced or traditional.

Director Krumwiede said the District has talked about calendars for years and he agreed with Director Roberson about going to a balanced calendar because the Board was told it would make a difference in student achievement. For some schools the initiative was started by teachers but at other schools the idea came from parents to have a balanced calendar. We were supposed to have money to run intercessions and have busing for students, but that didn't happen. Now we have eight schools on balanced calendars but they don't have intercessions--just breaks. We don't have any data on achievement because we didn't keep the intercessions which were supposed to support achievement. Mr. Almanza explained the survey showed 78% of the people wanted some type of common calendar. Director Krumwiede wondered if the staff in the District had a chance for input or expressed an opinion on the calendar. Mrs. Reynolds said she didn't know if the union surveyed staff and they haven't shared the information with management.

Director De Fauw thanked the committee for their efforts in getting this survey done in a timely manner. The survey asked about a unified calendar and not specifically whether people wanted a transitional or balanced calendar. We need to look at alternatives with the traditional, balanced, or hybrid type of calendar. We should have the group go forward with three or four scenarios for the Board to consider. Whatever we decide, it has to be done in the best interest of the children. Director Johanson asked about air standards and to make sure we look at this as we develop a calendar. Some of the window projects being considered might affect the air standards in buildings and when we should have school opened. He talked about looking at the Iowa DE website and depending on how you look at their graphs it might take years to make a decision about what was the best calendar to use. He would like to see a unified calendar ending the first semester at winter break and having calendars that are oriented based on the level of education. Several other board members agreed on having sample calendars developed and looking at the winter break timeline. Vice President Roberson felt the decision needed to be based on the impact on student achievement and wondered if the buildings were okay to making changes. Clewell and Krumwiede agreed the impact on student achievement was critical to the decision. The common calendar could be balanced but how can we do intercessions better? Mrs. Reynolds asked about being able to have informal conversions with labor management. Mrs. McClurg mentioned mandatory topics of bargaining and how information could be shared with the unions. The superintendent hoped we could share our findings with all the groups and make sure the community was aware of limitations. Vice President Roberson was concerned if the union wasn't at the table to participate, we will miss something. Mr. Almanza said they would explore this more and do not have any predetermined answers.

Out of School Time: John Border indicated this was the third board report on out-of-school time programs. Jennifer Best from the Scott County Extension Office of Iowa State University was present to report on the measurement and evaluation aspects of the programs and share her expertise. The Board requested an update on Stepping Stones and Pathways and challenged them to demonstrate what they were doing was making a difference. The report covered the programs, professional development, and

evaluation components for out-of-school time programs. Mr. Border presented information about how the programs had expanded to Lincoln, Smart, Williams, Wood, Young, Buchanan and Washington. There is a grant pending to explore a high school program and have a pilot program started at that level. We are looking at student growth in these programs and we realize we can't do this alone. Mr. Border talked about the city parks and recreation department, capacity building, utilization of schools and staff from buildings. He thanked Marsha Tangen and the Human Resources Department for providing assistance in working out a plan for staff. Americorp has four members working in after-school programs and additional opportunities were available for students through volunteer office personnel. We offer quality programs and focus on academic achievement. These students received 150 additional hours of support and we believe it was making a difference. We are meeting the needs of staff with professional development opportunities. The access to the program was discussed and the fee based sliding scale outlined. The fee structure was flexible and they hope to build up a scholarship fund through United Way. They were working with ESL and expanding access to these families at Williams and Buchanan.

The evaluation part was reported by Jennifer Best who worked with the District for ten years. She explained how Davenport was one of the top five school districts in the country known for their after-school programs. We have a quality program and are envied by many other districts. In evaluating we focus on the 40 developmental assets and a framework of best practices. She talked about the evaluation components of social behavioral competencies and the use of statistical instruments. In the assessment process they look at high frequency words and fluency. We focus on homework completion looking at time on task and how students should grow. We have control groups and then those who participated in the Stepping Stones program. Pathways used a DE grant and we looked at demographics, activities, and outcomes. They look at support and role models, resilience, and academics. How can students get extra support and how can we track homework assignments to provide academic interventions? We work on curriculum alignment and support the school day work. We are doing the same things with science as we are with reading. We are excited about the growth we are seeing. Mr. Border commented everyone could feel the passion Jennifer and others had for their work and in helping students.

Director Krumwiede appreciated hearing about these efforts and Vice President Roberson thought it sounded like the programs were making a difference for students. Jennifer answered questions about homework and being proactive with students. If students are behind, they have to grow more and have the pace increased. If done correctly, it works well. Director Clewell said during the vision meetings, people in the community indicated they wanted more out-of-school programs for students.

Announcement: President Zamora informed Board members the superintendent received a letter from the Department of Education announcing our District was receiving the "Breaking Barriers to Learning and Teaching Award" to honor us for significant improvements in reducing the achievement gaps among key groups of students. There would be an award given on November 20 in Des Moines at 11:00 AM. They hoped to have someone from the District there to accept the award. This is at the same time as the IASB convention so a number of board members would be in the area that day.

Early Retirement Incentive: Marsha Tangen provided board members with an outline for the early retirement incentive package. It was a three tiered offer starting with 25 years of service and age 55; not offering an incentive for the next two years; and deadline for application of January 5, 2009. The Board saw the eligibility of employee groups, and a list of teachers by subject area who would be eligible for retirement. The following applicant would be considered for participation: the first 100 teachers; the first 10 administrators; the first 50 classified/non-bargaining employees. The administration needed to know the numbers to figure the money needed to cover the incentive and the funds payable over five years. There was discussion about not having an incentive for the next two years and the importance of sticking to that because of cost savings. This will give people an opportunity to make their decision and it will help with staff turnover in the years ahead.

Mrs. Tangen talked about previous years and in the summer there was a big turnover in staff which made it difficult to hire all the qualified people in a short period of time. They talked about the difficulty of filling positions of experienced staff, addressing administrative vacancies, and not offering an incentive the next two years. The Board felt if this was the package it was imperative that the administration followed through and not offer an incentive as stated later. Mr. Almanza noted it was to the advantage of the administration to know in advance the number of people retiring so they can start recruiting earlier. We can go two years without another incentive and there is always a concern about loss of good staff with early retirement incentives. We are working at our recruiting efforts and this would help knowing the number of staff positions that would have to be filled early. Mrs. Tangen mentioned at one point they offered an incentive for 15 years of service but only had 15 people apply, so they set the minimum service years at 25 this time.

Special Call Board Workshop:

President Zamora asked the board members about two dates to hold a workshop on vision or evaluations to see what the preference was for meeting. Board members looked at November 17, December 15, or possibly using the Committee of the Whole on December 1 as the date. The November 17 date was not going to work for several members and the preference was going toward December 1. However, it was felt that all the board members needed to be present for the vision workshop. President Zamora said her preference was to wait until after the first of the year, but others wanted to meet earlier. The board members should think about this and be ready to discuss at the next meeting to set a date.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was announced that the dinner meeting for November 6 for "Effective Black Parent Training" was canceled and would be rescheduled.

There were a number of dates set up in November for community meetings so people could learn about the "Davenport Promise" effort. Everyone was encouraged to attend one of the sessions being conducted by the City the end of this week.

ADJOURNMENT

President Zamora adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM

Linda Smith Kortemeyer, Board Secretary