

DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL CALL BOARD VISION WORKSHOP
DECEMBER 1, 2008

The Board of the Davenport Community School District in the counties of Scott and Muscatine met in open session for a Special Call Board Vision Workshop on Monday, December 1, 2008, pursuant to law. The meeting was held in the upstairs conference room at THE CENTER, 1411 Brady Street, Davenport, IA, in said District. President Patt Zamora called the workshop vision session to order at 5:35 PM.

The following board members were present: President Patt Zamora; Directors Richard Clewell; Nikki DeFauw, Ralph Johanson, Ken Krumwiede, Larry Roberson, and Tim Tupper. Others in attendance were Superintendent Julio Almanza and Dr. Lloyd Kilmer, Facilitator.

Board members met for the purpose of having an initial session on the development of a new vision statement for the District. Dr. Lloyd Kilmer facilitated the session and talked about handout materials, belief statements, focus group summaries, and the vision process. He asked Director Krumwiede to report on the process of meeting with community groups. A video was shown from the Dallas Independent School District and board members heard Dalton Sherman speak about people believing in students and working as a team. They heard how believing can make a difference and the Board was challenged to consider their willingness to take the next steps to help students. Dr. Kilmer asked board members to think about quality education and they were asked to think about what quality education looked and sounded like. They were given time to picture what quality education was like and to share their thoughts with others.

Board members brainstormed and developed a list of ideas which were summarized by Dr. Kilmer and written out. He impressed upon people the words communicate a part of the vision but they needed to feel passion in the statement and have a bond together. Then board members were asked to select their top four quality indicators. The exercise gave people a chance to see patterns and consider what this tells about the direction of the focus. Major areas included having education being child focused, seeing a commitment by the Board, using a process and HLTS (higher level thinking skills) push, and building relationships. These areas should be used in developing the vision statement. There was a short break from 6:25 to 6:40 for dinner at the tables.

The next part of the session required individuals to take about seven minutes to write a paragraph with three or more sentences describing their vision for our District dealing with quality education. Individuals were teamed with a partner and asked to combine their ideas into a new statement. The pairs were combined so four people worked cooperatively to come up with a new vision paragraph using everyone's thoughts. The final product was shown with two working statements that were displayed for all board members to see. Then as a group they spent time talking about the pros and cons of wording in both statements. During the next 10 minutes they talked about similarities and had time to clarify what the best parts of each of the paragraphs were.

- All children will learn in a rigorous, nurturing, diverse environment supported by staff, parents, and community engagement.
- Education without limits that prepares students to compete in a global society, and inspires our students, parents, staff, and the community to answer the question, "What if?"

Superintendent Almanza shared his understanding about the vision paragraphs and wanted to be sure the Board provided time for staff members to review this. He talked about having to explain what was meant and the possibility of misunderstanding by members of the community if the vision wasn't clearly stated. Some board members were unsure about the meaning of "education without limits" and wanted a better definition.

Dr. Kilmer reminded the Board this was a working statement and they talked about removing barriers or limits and wanted to leave the past behind while they moved into the 21st century. Students needed to learn so they could compete in a global society and the statement has to be comprehensible to the general public. There must be a clear understanding of the terminology used. There was talk about how education without limits might affect the budget and the costs needed to be considered when moving forward with the vision. Mr. Almanza mentioned how we are celebrating 150 years and society has changed; however, education hasn't changed at the same pace. The vision statement will shake up the system and the Board has to be willing to make this commitment and get behind the priorities that will make change happen.

There were comments about how our traditional schools are structured, students aren't engaged, and tools are needed to move the process forward. Mr. Almanza noted the Board valued students having 21st century skills and this will be a big change for staff and students. Change is hard for people but if we are training for the future, we need a commitment for excellence. Board members shared different opinions on the two working statements and talked about how the current vision statement has been misinterpreted. They agreed both of the statements had merit but they will need to talk with people about what they want to convey. There was discussion about whether this should be a Board vision or community vision. There were suggestions about what groups should look at the statements including recent graduates, staff members, administrators, parents, and business leaders. They talked about having enough resources for staff to have "no limits" in what they do in class and can we meet expectations? Board members discussed creativity of teachers and getting outside people to help us. Mr. Almanza talked about how powerful the Board's value system was in this process. They talked about creating trust and communication of ideas. Dr. Kilmer emphasized these statements will be a stretch and might be interpreted differently by people unless we make it clear. You have to confront the facts and look down the way into the future to prepare our students. They talked about students having high expectations and they should define the limits. They need to be able to compete and have an equal footing or better than others in the future.

The next steps will be to plan another meeting in January to look at the vision statement again and to try to come to consensus before continuing the process and sharing with the community. Board members asked Director DeFauw to work at perfecting the words into one vision statement which they would review again. Board members agreed this was an on-going process and tonight was the preliminary start on creating a vision to drive the direction of the District.

President Zamora adjourned the meeting at 8:15 PM.

Linda Smith Kortemeyer, Board Secretary