

**DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE CENTER
JIM HESTER BOARD ROOM
1606 BRADY STREET
DAVENPORT, IOWA**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
July 2, 2012**

The Board of the Davenport Community School District in the Counties of Scott and Muscatine, State of Iowa, met for the Committee of the Whole Meeting on Monday, July 2, 2012 pursuant to law. The meeting was held in the Jim Hester Board Room, Achievement Service Center, 1606 Brady Street Davenport, Iowa, in said District. President Johanson called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

On roll call the following board members were present: Directors: Ralph Johanson, Ken Krumwiede, Rich Clewell, Bill Sherwood and Larry Roberson. Nikki De Fauw and Patt Zamora were absent. Superintendent Art Tate and other administrators were present.

Dropout Prevention Action Plan

Dr. Tate noted that preparation and research for creating the action plans has been taking place throughout the school year. This effort involved many meetings and hundreds of hours of time and thought to create the final products. He likened the district to a huge ocean liner and how much effort it requires for the rudder to change direction. He said this year has been the rudder change for us at the district. These plans have provided a new direction based on where the board wanted to go combined with our vision and he reassured the board these plans are not going on the shelf and in every case actions will be taken and his job is to make sure this is accomplished. He will bring the board periodic updates on the progress being made. He stated that about 75% these action plans are operational but much will also need to be brought back to the board for their consideration related to policy, boundaries, or repositioning funds. Dr. Tate then started with the presentation of the Dropout Prevention Action Plan.

The Dropout Prevention Taskforce met twice a month since October doing much research, looking at best practices and visiting many places and brought this feedback to the district summit. Major challenges and the projects that would address the challenges were identified at the summit and the end result was the action plan. Dr. Tate reviewed the major challenges listed on the action plan and some of the projects to address the individual challenges. The challenges included a) provide alternatives to out of school suspensions; b) enhancing adult-to-student relationships; c) assure district-level procedures to encourage students and parents to support school attendance and graduation; d) monitor attendance and dropout situation; e) involve parents in the solution; f) improve district success with relating to diverse groups of students; g) system of discipline and respect; h) community involvement and participation in

the dropout prevention effort; i) devise alternate ways to educate, teach and learn to prevent dropouts and encourage reentry; j) provide reentry options for student who have dropped out; k) identification of at risk students; l) hire more minority teachers and administrators;.

Dr. Tate noted the high correlation between out of school suspensions and dropping out of school and explained the benefits of establishing both a school within a school and a district wide alternative to out of school suspension at a central facility. He also emphasized the importance of adult relationships and having formal mentor/advisor programs at every intermediate and high school building for at risk students. They want to create hiring procedures and practices which include a requirement that new teachers and administrators have strong records of excellent relationship skills and attitudes. They want to establish a district attendance goal for schools and individual students. The task force was adamant about creating full time attendance positions at each intermediate and high school as a minimum. This will involve both redefining positions and repositioning funds. He described the ninth grade first-45-days initiative. He explained the parent portal will also be improved and expanded. Participants of the summit indicated there needs to be one discipline management tool that is used in all the schools and they will be investigating which management tool would be the best approach and the board will have to approve it. Another project is to replicate a successful marketing campaign for dropout prevention that has been done in Des Moines. He summarized some of the other efforts being proposed and asked for questions.

Director Sherwood asked how this proposal will vary from the SWS (School Within a School) program that was in the district 20 years ago and how it came to a dead end. Dr. Tate said the two things they are proposing are in-school suspension and having a separate building. Director Sherwood stated there will have to be something different about this proposal in order for it to be successful and how important it will be to have staff support. He likes the option of an out of school center because this could also be used for truancy as well. He encouraged Dr. Tate to include mediation noting there should be a strong presence of mediation in every building and also added the importance of an assigned staff member to follow up with students who drop out. He asked if the district wide disciplinary committee was moving forward and Dr. Tate stated it would be August 2012. Director Sherwood asked why elementary students were not included in the actions to address item I (devise alternative ways to educate, teach, and learn to prevent dropouts and encourage reentry). There was some discussion regarding this point and Director Sherwood also noted that research has indicated early identification is possible and discussed some possibilities with special interventions and social services. Dr. Tate said when defining the non-negotiable actions this aspect could be included.

Director Roberson stated he is extremely encouraged by this document and is looking forward to hearing about the outcomes. He asked Dr. Tate to pass on his hearty thanks to everyone who worked on this document. He wants to stay away from it and let the people who are involved work out the plan and then bring it back to the board. This is a huge step in the right direction. Director Krumwiede stated he applauds all the effort that went into creating the action plan and expressed appreciation on behalf of the entire board. This board has hired people in the past to act on dropout prevention but we have never had a plan. He appreciates Director Sherwood's comment about elementary students and stated we can identify situations in the elementary schools that we need to take more action on right away. Director Krumwiede asked for clarification on the dates and deadlines indicated on the

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handout and asked for more explanation of the district summit and who was involved. The dates on the action plan are beginning dates. The District Summit consisted of the drop out task force, all the high school principals and counselors, the equity department staff, and the executive director and this action plan came from the District Summit.

Director Clewell stated we have talked about attendance in the past and hopes there will be some feedback to the board in terms of policy. He mentioned efforts toward this goal have been attempted in the past but expressed that hopefully with these committees we will start to make some turns we had intended to do in the past. He is pleased with to see that students indicated they want more adult advocates. He asked Dr. Tate to expand on the policies they think have a negative impact on students remaining in school. One example is the practice that in order to be called a 10th grader you must have a certain amount of credits. This practice results in students dropping out because they do not want to be a 9th grader for a second time and Dr. Tate described some conversations that are taking place that would allow this to change.

Director Clewell asked about the possibility of expanding the ninth-grade initiative to all students and emphasized the correlation between relationships and attendance. Dr. Tate said the attendance officer would have this responsibility but explained how they need to identify who is supposed be in school. They get a list from the 8th grade but don't know if they have gone to another high school, left our system, or are they hanging around the neighborhood. Director Roberson added there was much discussion surrounding this issue on the task force and how there should be a list of those leaving middle school and going into high school for all our schools to make sure kids show up. There was more discussion regarding the option to create a district wide system for discipline. Director Clewell asked if there could be a system that coordinated attendance and behavior issues together that could catch students before they become at risk. Dr. Tate said they do have indicators and some of this is being addressed with the current at risk system. Director Krumwiede referred back to the first 45 days initiative and commented he thought the district had hired liaisons for this purpose. Dr. Tate explained this position would do this exclusively where the liaisons do other things as well.

President Johanson asked about the parent portal and Dr. Tate explained that it does exist, however it is not utilized very much because of the lack of relevant information being available. They need to add information such as attendance records, test scores and daily assignments. President Johanson commented he was impressed with the people on the committee noting that four were from the Kimberly Center and asked about their participation. Their participation was about 50% and they provided very useful feedback. He asked if the ultimate goal is zero dropouts and Dr. Tate responded yes. President Johanson asked if correlations would be made between the projects implemented and the change in the dropout rate. Dr. Tate said they will develop correlations as they go along with the project and explained some of the metrics they need to look at in the future. President Johanson said he is glad we are moving ahead.

Close the Gap Action Plan

Dr. Tate explained that Dawn Anderson-Rascher has been primary on this project and explained there is overlap with the other plans. Dr. Tate challenged Dr. Goldstone to take this work and put it into an action plan that specifics projects, the staff responsible and the timing involved for each similar to the other action plans.

Ms. Anderson-Rascher explained the purpose of equity committee and that it is required by the Department of Education. The committee is comprised of community members, parents, and staff. She provided an overview of projects undertaken by the committee and highlighted each of the objectives. She said we have a quality preschool program but still have challenges in getting all children to school every day. She discussed the need for some shifts in thinking for staff, students, and parents that recognize the skills required for college readiness are the same as career readiness. They also need to look at support services in relation to closing the achievement gap and expanded learning opportunities such as before and after-school programs and summer school. She also emphasized the importance of family and community involvement. Director Clewell asked her to discuss more about the shift in thinking she mentioned. She stated preparation for college and preparation for work require the same skills, but in the past the thinking was these skills were very different. Some students think if they are not going to college they don't need these preparation skills but this is not correct and requires a shift in thinking on the parts of students, staff, and parents. She highlighted the importance of culturally supportive practices and the importance of professional development to prepare staff. The committee reported the need to have a district professional development plan, so they are recommending an external consultant that would help develop the plan. She discussed the importance of preparing and recruiting a diverse staff so every student has positive role models and advocates. There are too many stereotypes and described how important it is to involve students in finding the solution. She highlighted the remaining objectives and asked for questions.

Director Roberson asked if they have asked graduates of our high schools such as former football or basketball players to serve as mentors or peers to students. He thinks their input would be more relevant to students. She said looking at student mentors is critical. Director Krumwiede thanked the administration for compiling this plan. He appreciates the committee's concern with pre-school and emphasized how importance it is for us to have assessable preschool for all and noted the issue of transportation. He discussed the need to collaborate with community agencies and organizations in making preschool assessable to all kids. This was the advantage of having the preschools in the schools and stated that getting to the centers is difficult. Director Sherwood mentioned Bright Beginnings and asked why we would want to start another program when we already have a research based and highly regarded program. He said it is important that we support structures that are already in place and remarked that there is nothing new on this list so he will be real interested in seeing how they will get real results district-wide but how this is a nice beginning.

Director Clewell asked how many people serve on the Equity Committee. There are 13 regular members and 5 are community members. Director Clewell discussed collaborating with Scott County Kids and how funding is available there. He offered his assistance in a coordinated effort with Scott County Kids since he is on the board. He also asked about the idea of meeting parents on their turf and what the trend is for going out into the community. She responded that the family support liaisons and the learning support specialists do go out into the community and homes. He asked her to keep the board informed of what resources will be needed to accomplish the goal of meeting parents on their turf. Director Roberson applauds what they are doing and how important it is to get the kids in the system early. He commented that teachers can make more of a difference than parents at the stage. He said he is hopeful that everyone has the attitude that kids coming to our schools are not who they are going to be for the rest of their lives and that staff has the opportunity to shape, change, and have a positive impact on kids. He also hopes we get out of the business of helping the state build more prisons by thinking kids can't learn or change. The staff must believe

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that all students can learn and have a responsibility to make a difference in their lives. He appreciates all they are doing and if they need anything do not hesitate to call him.

President Johanson remarked on the history of the district with early childhood programming and that we been way ahead of the curve. He believes strongly in legislative advocacy and believes there are things that can be done legislatively to assist in these efforts. Dr. Tate stated that we need to have a city wide early childhood summit to help determine who the children are, how many are not getting served and why, and what can we do about it. Director Sherwood suggested they look into the requirements of the day care providers also because there are many providers with very little skills and emphasized there are ways to address this situation. Director Roberson recommended contacting Matt McDonald for assistance in compiling the list. Dr. Tate stated that the district would lead the early childhood summit. Director Clewell suggested the agenda committee consider including this as a motion. Director Krumwiede liked this idea and mentioned how a group of private preschool providers went to Des Moines to push certain legislation and these are the kind of people we need.

Athletic Competitiveness Action Plan

Dr. Tate introduced Mr. Brad Oates and he explained the process they used to identify barriers and challenges to become competitive and how the group had in depth discussions on what it actually means to be competitive. He provided an overview of the major challenges and actions to be taken. One of the barriers is that 8th graders can choose among the three high schools and stated how this impacts expectations for the coaches. They need to establish firm attendance boundaries for the three high schools. Director Clewell asked for more explanation on why the feeder system is so important. Mr. Oates responded the committee decided that by the time a student reaches high school in whatever sports programs they are involved in, coaches say they should not be spending a lot of time talking about terminology, offensive or defensive plays, and basics such as this. This type of knowledge should already be ingrained. A feeder system is also important to buy in and identifying yourself with a team. He used the example of how was a product of the Moline public school system and from first grade on it was about being a Maroon and how our school district would benefit from strong identification such as this. Dr. Tate said the committee discussed losing a lot of students between intermediate and high school and many attributed this to students not feeling identified with or loyal to a particular school.

Director Sherwood noted that we also have a lot of athletes transferring out of the district and how is this project not going to exasperate the problem. He also brought up the idea of a specific high school being a specific sports center and thinks this would make us more competitive with more talent concentration and asked why this was not considered. Mr. Oates responded this idea was not brought up in the committee. He did share his own conversations with the state and expressed some of the association's concerns with this idea. Director Roberson mentioned some efforts made by Central to improve identification but stated there is much more we need to do in order to be successful.

Mr. Oates discussed the need to hire strength and conditioning supervisors for each high school and how to accomplish this. Director Sherwood stated he has a philosophical issue with this and explained this kind of a structure in the high schools could push kids to professional levels of training. He mentioned time commitments and issues of using performance enhancing drugs and how all this could come into play and expressed his concern about increasing the levels of training for athletes. Mr. Oates reviewed the remaining objectives and highlighted some of the projects identified to address major challenges. He emphasized the issue of space for school athletic teams, youth feeder programs, and community needs. He stated they need clear guidelines for sharing facilities and who should have priority. He discussed connecting teaching and coaching positions to increase the number of coaches who teach. He shared that we are currently to 8 in the district. Director Sherwood commented the limits were set because we were ending up with poor teachers

that were coaching and he would like to see a policy that would guarantee this would not happen again. Mr. Oates continued stating they have already moved ahead on creating a consistent and easily understood and enforced academic eligibility for intermediate athletics. This was presented to the intermediate principals in June and received a very positive response. Next, he discussed the no cut guidelines for intermediate athletic programs and the possibility of creating tryout guidelines for intermediate athletic teams. He talked about the lack of skill development with large groups and limited space. If this is implemented, however, he feels very strongly that a well-developed and viable alternative intramural program must be organized. This wouldn't cost the district anything to implement as they already have staff available. Director Sherwood said he would want to see a reasonable balance between excluding kids and managing the issue of too many kids. .

Director Krumwiede thanked Mr. Oates for his presentation and asked if there was representation from YMCA or Dad's Club on his committee. Mr. Oates stated there was not. Director Krumwiede mentioned that the district had a very strong intermural program at the elementary level years ago, but it faded because of the competition with the YMCA and the Dad's Club because the kids had to start choosing between all of them. Director Krumwiede stated that in order to accomplish what is being suggested we need to look at boundaries and create a true feeder system\

Director Roberson commented that he coached at the grade school level where there were 45 kids who came out for basketball and no one was cut but nothing much was accomplished. Dad's Club has some good features but we need to make sure that all kids have access. He also mentioned that you do not see kids of color on little league baseball.

Director Clewell asked why we can't expect that our intermediate schools would develop a common language regarding terminology. Mr. Oates said this would be extremely difficult because each high school coach and program would have to agree that it would be common and the philosophy behind different plays has such a wide variation it would not be possible. Director Clewell commented on covert activity and referred to other high school teams and their success and asked Mr. Oates if he is aware of what is going in their training programs at other high schools. Mr. Oates responded they don't know this, but he does know that we are behind in certain areas. Dr. Tate referenced the question brought up in the committee of "why can't we be state champions" and the responses included that we have three high schools and students can go where they want, there is no feeder system and they don't know the plays. Director Roberson said they are headed in the right direction and he is hoping that it will get better.

President Johanson mentioned boundaries and noted that the completion deadline is in December. He noted will be other considerations regarding boundaries at the board table beside how it affects athletics and to keep this in mind. President Johanson emphasized that all board members have the same understanding that all three action plans are completed and being implemented and asked Dr. Tate is this is correct. Dr. Tate stated this is correct, but also with the understanding that about 25% will require coming to the board for their approval on certain items.

Achievement Matrix

President Johanson stated that the Superintendent has suggested that the board consider moving this item to the July 9th meeting and noted that Director Sherwood would not be in attendance at that meeting. Dr. Tate stated it would require approximately 45 minutes. He asked Dr. Tate to provide the board with a brief synopsis of this agenda item. Dr. Tate stated we have taken the Iowa Assessments and looked at the scores and the improvement of each school based on national norms and these have been placed in quadrants to indicate increases/decreased in each. They assigned different colors to tiers indicating non-negotiable action items. He will be explaining how they arrived at this and why he thinks this will be effective.

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President Johanson recommended postponing this item to either the next Committee of the Whole or Regular meeting based on all board members being in attendance and there were no objections to this. Director Roberson stated he is pleased as he has ever been being a board member in what we are trying to accomplish and stated to keep up the good work and thanked Dr. Tate for his leadership. Director Krumwiede said he would like to reiterate those points as well and expressed how beneficial it is to be able to discuss the plan and have the ability to see where we are going. Director Clewell offered his appreciation as well. Director Sherwood stated there is a lot of good stuff in the plans even though he may have sounded critical in his comments. He stated the Athletic Plan is solid but reiterated his concerns about professionalizing high school athletics. Developing a good feeder system is also important. He also cautioned that they do not want to overwhelm the district with change.

President Johanson asked if there were any objections to adjourning the meeting and there was none. The meeting was adjourned by President Johanson at 7:30 p.m.

Mary Correthers, Recording Secretary