

DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE CENTER
JIM HESTER BOARD ROOM
1606 BRADY STREET
DAVENPORT, IOWA 52803
MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2015
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
5:30 PM

The Board of the Davenport Community School District in the Counties of Scott and Muscatine, State of Iowa, met on Monday, October 5, 2015 for their Committee of the Whole Meeting. The meeting was held at the Achievement Service Center, 1606 Brady St., Davenport, Iowa, in said District. President Johanson called the Committee of the Whole Meeting to order at 5:30.PM. Present: Director's Johanson, Clewell, Hayes, Dickmann, Gosa and DeSalvo. Director Snyder was absent.

1.01 Traffic Safety

Mr. Mike Maloney introduced Detective Curtiss Carter, a liaison officer who works with Andy Neyrinck; Gary Statz, the City's Traffic Engineer who is responsible for traffic safety, and Officer Cliff Anderson with traffic enforcement command. Maloney stated this group meets quarterly to discuss traffic safety and/or any issues or problems with traffic safety across the district. He indicated the crossing guards are city employees and the District pays half the cost for the 19 crossing guards the district currently has. Maloney also mentioned the photo radar enforcement van can be requested. Detective Carter's full time position is serving as the school resource officer at West High and he has been there for eight years. Mr. Neyrinck is his immediate supervisor and he fills when Neyrinck is out. Mr. Statz is traffic engineer for the city and Chairman of the Crossing Guard Committee. He explained how their studies determine where crossing guards are needed and that he handles any problems that arise regarding crossing guards.

Next, Cliff Anderson from the Traffic Bureau works with Statz on school crossing guards, automated speed enforcement and he supervises the automated enforcement which includes the speed van that is staff by two civilians. The van is in school zones in the morning and afternoon. President Johanson asked some question from Director Snyder since he was unable to attend the meeting. Director Snyder is concerned about safety in the parking lots and around the schools and would like to know what can be done to make it safer. He also wanted to know if the District has any authority regarding fines in school zones. Maloney discussed the traffic safety projects completed at Madison, Adams and West High School. Maloney said the principals of these schools have reported a remarkable improvement in traffic and pedestrian safety due to the physical improvements in driveway layout and entries. Detective Carter agreed that driving behavior has changed for the better at West High School. Mr. Anderson addressed the question on fines. He said that very little can be enforced on a parking lot and that fines are set by state legislation. Carter agreed that fines should be higher in a school zone much like a work zone. Johanson suggested that the Legislative Advocacy Committee take on this issue and Maloney noted that in other states where he has worked their school board/legislative advocacy committee went to their state legislators and advocated for an increase in fines in school zones. DeSalvo

asked about safety during construction around the schools and Maloney discussed the automated notification system for work zone permits and how Mr. Statz's and his staff work very hard to notify us. They also coordinate with the principals to make plans and prepare for construction projects. Director Gosa asked about the process for getting the speeding van and they explained that the principals make the request by calling him or Mr. Neyrinck. Clewell asked how the civilian staff in the van deals with the public when they are speeding. He said the ordinance that governs the speed van makes this a civil violation which is the same as a parking ticket. Clewell said the solar warning panels have been very effective in helping people slow down. Dickmann encouraged reminders at the very beginning of the year for students to use the crosswalks.

1.02 Update from AEA

Mr. Bill Decker, Chief Administrator at the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency provided an update from his agency. He stated the agency provides many services and is probably one of the treasures of our state because it is a combination of equity, excellence and efficiency. The Iowa Department of Education is smaller in Iowa than in most states and the AEA's are placed in between the Department of Education and local districts. There are nine AEA's across state and we are the 4th largest in state. They are probably most well-known for equity because they provide special education services. No matter what district in the State of Iowa you live in you will receive highly specialized services such as speech, hearing, and physical therapy. The idea of excellence is becoming increasingly more important as the state moves toward differentiated accountability.

For the last 20 years the state has operated on an accountability measure determined by a 5 year site visit. If a district passes then you get credited for the next 5 years. Next year the state is transitioning to where student achievement will be the determinant for accountability and he explained how his agency is working very hard to get prepared to help districts with student achievement based on the data and this will become an annual event. Decker discussed efficiency and explained how the AEA funding works. The AEA flow-through is a line item on the Aid and Levy worksheet that school districts cannot impact because it is part of the funding formula. There is a real misperception about this because it shows as district revenue and then expenditure to the AEA. However, the reality is this is a funding tool and the AEA funding is determined by student count of our 21 school districts. DeSalvo asked how student achievement will be measured under this new system and he said the type of assessment they will use has not been decided and explained how there are conversations for both Smarter Balance and Iowa Assessment. He explained it takes a super majority in the House and Senate to change from Iowa Assessments. Board members asked additional questions about how the AEA has been affected by budget cuts, some specifics concerning special education identification, and whether our district is making the best use of AEA resources. Decker elaborated on their efforts to work together so the District and the AEA can maximize resources. He also indicated that the AEA's gets the same amount per student from every school district. Johanson noted that this means that every student is worth the same amount to the AEA but that's not the case for the district and how he finds that very interesting. Johanson thanked Mr. Decker for his presentation.

1.03 Alternative Grading System

Former graduates of Central High School, Aubrey and Adam Kall, participated in a discussion through Skype concerning their idea for an alternative grading system. Aubrey and Adam made a presentation on this idea to the board a few weeks ago at a Regular Meeting and Director Dickmann submitted a board request for a board discussion on the topic. Julie Staszewski, Rob Scott and Bill Schneden were also available for questions. Ms. Staszewski complimented the students on their idea and initiative. She asked them if they were aware of any colleges that would accept students that did not have grades. They explained their system involves “experience points” and how it would change how grades are entered into the system and this approach would give students more incentive and help prevent students from getting stuck without a way out if they have bad grades on tests or papers. There was discussion about the how the current system is entrenched with the concept of grades and the pros and cons of changing the system was discussed.

Johanson asked if the board should even be involved in this type of discussion and asked if the board was interfering with the work of administration. Board members expressed differences of opinion concerning whether this was in the board’s purview. Mr. Scott remarked that administration has been working very hard lately to develop consistency in grading. Also, Scott expressed concern that GPA determines the amount of money students receive for scholarships and how many of our students rely on these scholarships to make college affordable. Ms. Staszewski also mentioned that Iowa Assessments are getting more involved with competency based learning around the standards which is a good thing. Johanson expressed his confidence in administration and suggested there may be a way to experiment with this new idea.

1.04 Energy Conservation

Dr. Tate discussed how energy conservation is a priority in the District. The Energy Conservation Committee meets monthly and has established energy standards that were distributed district-wide. They have added students to the committee and they are reviewing the standards. Mr. Maloney reported that a group of energy committee volunteers audit each building quarterly to assist with identifying energy saving opportunities. A copy of the audit is reviewed by the energy committee and sent to the building principal and head custodian. He presented graphs comparing gas and electricity consumption current year to date and past fiscal year and this data demonstrates that the district’s energy consumption is trending downward.

Maloney reviewed projected annual savings of the solar electric arrays at Wood and Fillmore schools and also highlighted that that district will eventually receive a grand total of almost 2 million dollars from incentives from Mid-American Energy. Board members asked about energy star appliances, whether they have considered solar panels at the stadium, and that it is very important that insulation is installed properly. Clewell said that bar chart illustrations are more user friendly and asked Maloney to consider using those instead of graphs. There was a question about buses using propane and Maloney said that he and Ms. Tangen have been discussing this possibility since market conditions are very favorable for using propane.

Also Maloney informed the board that Mid-American doesn't accommodate net metering but they are currently discussing this since the district is large enough to have an account representative. Johanson expressed the board's appreciation for administration's efforts in energy conservation.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50PM.

Mary Correthers, Board Secretary/Treasurer