

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

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2013**

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, March 4, 2013 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 5:45 PM.

On roll call the following board members were present: Directors: Ralph Johanson, Ken Krumwiede, Rich Clewell, Bill Sherwood, Larry Roberson, Nikki De Fauw and Patt Zamora. Superintendent Art Tate and other administrators were present. President Johanson announced that the March 11, 2013 Regular Board Meeting has been re-scheduled to March 18, 2013. He also announced that Director Clewell has been appointed to the Early Childhood Iowa State Board.

1. Budget

Dr. Tate referred to a handout on the budget and reviewed the reduction estimates for 2013-14 and explained these are based on a 2% allowable growth rate for 2014 which would require a reductions of \$3.25 million dollars. If the allowable growth is set at 0% for 2014 it will require reductions to increase to \$4 million dollars and if allowable growth is set at 4% for 2014, reductions will only need to be \$2.1 million dollars. Since there is no way of knowing for sure at this time what the legislature will do with allowable growth, so all options need to be considered. He reviewed the RAC (Resource Allocation Committee) recommendations budget reductions for 2013-14 and the revised savings estimate is \$3,335,284 million dollars. He highlighted the areas of studying for outsourcing recommended by the RAC from 2013-14 which include nursing, marketing, custodial and tech support. The RAC made recommendations of additional items/areas for review in 2013-14 which includes high school scheduling, contract with Edison, paid conditional busing, insurance holiday and outsourcing, all of which would be for the following year. Tate referred to the sheet that lists the budget recommendations made for 2012-13 and noted the items that had been implemented. Tate asked for feedback from the board.

Director Zamora noted an error on the sheet concerning the totals for across the board reductions and Marsha Tangen stated she would make that correction. Director De Fauw asked Marsha to provide information on reductions of site budgets for the last 5 years. Director Roberson asked if the figure for early retirement is for one year. Marsha said that is correct and provided further explanation. Director Zamora said she does not understand why we are so desperate if we have 15 million in our insurance fund which is adequate for a good stop loss, and 15 million in our fund balance. Marsha responded that it is because of spending authority and Zamora noted that the public needs to realize it is spending authority not the money that is the issue. Director Sherwood mentioned that at the present time it appears that the Republicans are looking at setting a 2% allowable growth and the Democrats are at 4%,

and he encouraged citizens to contact their representatives to say we need allowable growth set at 4%. There was discussion about what would happen if the legislature did not make a decision by April 20th and how this requires setting allowable growth at 0% and the implications. Director Clewell asked about the impact of sequestration on the budget and Dr. Tate said it was approximately \$400,000 affecting only Title I and special education. Director De Fauw noted the budget recommendation items that were left on the table from last year, and said she would like the board to have another conversation about the elimination of paid conditional busing while preserving walk zones and safety busing, and to look at the option of reducing the retiree sub rate. In terms of long term planning, the board needs to re-consider the high school schedule. Director Zamora mentioned that the board was told in the past that going to a block schedule would save money and now we are being told we will save money by not being on the block schedule and asked for clarification. Director De Fauw mentioned the need to keep in mind what is in the best educational interests of the students throughout budget discussions.

Director Sherwood asked why we hired strength trainers and that these positions should be on the table. Dr. Tate said this was the recommendation of the athletic committee and they found the funds to provide the positions that this was identified as very important for sports. Director Krumwiede noted the need for communication if changes are made in the areas of transportation and walk zones and agreed the board should revisit class size. He also mentioned curriculum positions and noted there could be ways to better utilize our services working with the AEA. Director De Fauw clarified she would preserve walk zones and spoke to the safety benefits of having a professional strength trainers. Director Sherwood agreed the board should look at class size, but not at the intermediate level. Director De Fauw agreed, but she noted the need to be firm regarding class size and Krumwiede agreed. Director Roberson emphasized the need to get feedback from principals and teachers regarding changes in class size and to never forget what is in best educational interests of students. Director Sherwood said the research on class size is very nebulous and all these cuts impact kids. Director Roberson stated as a board member, he has the right to his opinion, and that statements he makes are not personal in nature and he hopes that this is recognized as such.

Director Clewell explained the reason the board has to make budget reductions and talk about cutting the budget all the time is due to the fact that the district is losing students and that the funding formula is based on the number of students. This also means we do not even receive the full allowable growth rate and this presents a very difficult situation and feels the budget situation is quite urgent. He explained that the Department of Education has indicated that at our current rate of revenue and costs the district will eventually have a negative unspent balance. President Johanson asked about the block vs. traditional schedule and thinks there may be another option available and then asked the process of re-visiting class size. Dr. Tate recommended getting feedback from teachers and principals, but he would not want to see this happen for next year. Johanson asked board members what timeline they had in mind regarding a change in class size, and Krumwiede clarified he was not indicating this for next year and that it would take some time. Director Roberson emphasized that principals and teachers can provide valuable feedback regarding class size since they are on the front lines. Director Sherwood explained he thinks it should be a building decision how to distribute students throughout the building, but the ratio of students to teachers has to be a district decision. President Johanson referred back to Clewell's comments concerning having a sense of urgency and asked Marsha and Dr. Tate to address this. Marsha stated if we do nothing as far as reductions, we will be out of spending authority by the end of the year and

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also noted that the board gave them a directive to have an unspent balance of \$8 million dollars at the end of 2017. For two years in a row the State has sent a letter saying that if we don't do something we will be in a negative unspent balance and reiterated that the situation is urgent. Dr. Tate noted it is urgent from the standpoint that we need to see a future and that is why we are planning ahead. He stated that for the next meeting on March 18th, he would like to work with the board for creating scenarios for receiving 0%, 2%, and 3% allowable growth and then the board start identifying reductions within each scenario. Marsha explained the budget timeline and there was a discussion about these requirements. Director Sherwood requested additional transportation information.

2. Increase in Breakfast and Lunch Prices

Dr. Tate said this item will come before the board for approval on March 18th. Micki Carrington explained the new price equity clause which is federally mandated and how this affects meal prices. She noted the meal prices will be increased approximately 10 cents for every category except the Pre-K level. There was a discussion about who is affected by the increase. Sherwood also inquired about portion size and said he has received phone calls from parents concerned that some students have the money to buy extra food, but for those who do not they only have what is served. He asked if students ever go away hungry from meals. Micki explained the five components they are required by law to provide with each meal, and if students walk away hungry, they are doing that by choice by not eating all five items provided. Sherwood asked about the option of running a supper program and there was a discussion about this option. Director De Fauw asked if this will impact the a la carte prices and Micki explained that they usually price these so it is a better deal to get a meal. De Fauw asked if the student declines the fruit or vegetable if they are charged a la carte vs. the meal price. Micki said they are not and that as long as students have 3 items and a fruit or vegetable they are charged the meal price. If a student chooses to take pizza and a milk, for example, then they will be charged the ala carte price since federal law requires that in order to be considered a meal you have to have ½ cup of fruit or vegetable. Micki said many buildings designate a place for students to place food items they do not want so it is made available to other students so less food is wasted and many students do take advantage of this option.

3. Reading Structure and Professional Development

Dr. Tate explained the benefits of the LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training and how important it has been to the student achievement. He noted it is very expensive and takes 16 days out of the classroom but it has proven to be worth the money and time teachers have to take away from the classroom. Julie Staszewski highlighted the positive testimonials provided by teachers on their evaluations of the training. She introduced Beth Evans and two principals, TJ Schneckloth from Monroe, and Steve Mielenhausen, from Eisenhower to share their experience with the LETRS training. TJ and Steve stated the training has made a huge difference and that it is showing in their DIBELS scores. They introduced the teachers attending the meeting and they shared positive comments about the training such as how the training has helped them pinpoint what the problem is; how the DIBELS scores have gone up and that the training has helped them be more explicit and go in depth in their teaching; the training provides more tools and has created enthusiasm for reading among students; and that the training has helped with phonemic awareness. Director Sherwood asked the more seasoned teachers if they have been able to share with the younger faculty how to fill any of the deficits of the training. They responded they help each other and that it is very comprehensive and supports lesson planning as a team. Director Krumwiede asked how LETRS and DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy) connect with each other and Julie referred to the handout and explained how the two trainings plus the 95% Group all work together. She also explained that all teachers have been trained in DIBELS and that the number one priority for the LETRS training were the red schools first and 1st grade. Next year, all of the teachers that are new to the district or those in K-2 classroom will go through LETRS as well as the teachers for yellow schools. By winter break next year all K-2 and special education teachers will be trained in LETRS. Director Zamora asked how this program is different from others in past

that has promised to be so different and effective. Juli responded that this is the first time that teachers have agreed that the training is so helpful and making comments such as “it is improving my craft.” Many of the teachers commented how this is scientifically based, measureable, and provide solid results. Director Roberson commented how he heard one of the teachers stated it has helped them close the gap and how important this is. TJ shared that this is one of the biggest surprises about the program is how much it has helped close the gap. Director Zamora asked how the DIBELS assessments compare with the standardized tests and TJ responded it is almost perfect and very closely aligned. Director Sherwood expressed concern about summer learning loss, and asked if there will be anything available in the summer. TJ said they are putting a program together and Julie stated there are additional efforts at Buchanan, Hayes, Jefferson, Monroe and Washington and a satellite site at Madison and she provided more details. Dr. O’Melia shared that she hasn’t seen such a ground swell of support like she has from the teachers for the LETRS training and she supports everything that Julie has said and she applauds this system. She also explained how they are saving money by providing train the trainer’s sessions and this way district personnel with eventually provide the training. Director Clewell stated he is glad this training has been provided and this contingent of programs really contribute to the artistry of being a teacher. There was a discussion about the train-the-trainer aspect of the program and also the involvement with the AEA. Julie provided an overview of the literacy personal changes. She explained the district will no longer utilize Reading Recovery and that all Reading Specialists will become Literacy Interventionists. She explained that each elementary building will have a full-time Literacy Interventionist and highlighted the duties and responsibilities of this position. Each building will also have a half-time Literacy Coach and explained their responsibilities. There was discussion and clarification on how the position will be utilized and implemented at each of the schools.

4. Model Classroom Project

Alissa Hansel introduced Nichole Speidel, mathematics teacher at Smart Intermediate, and a Linda Mannhardt, representative from the Area Education Association (AEA). Linda explained they were charged by their directors at the AEA to start a program creating teacher leadership in the area of mathematics. They based their work on a program from Portland Oregon and using their expertise in developing studio classrooms. They chose six middle school math teachers to represent the four sectors of AEA9. Nicole Speidel was chosen to represent Sector 4. The goal of the project is to build a collaborative team across AEA9 of math teachers; to utilize student data in making instructional decisions; engage in side-by-side coaching with the ultimate goal being that these classrooms will become learning opportunities for groups of teachers and administrators in best practice for math instruction. Nichole thanked everyone involved for providing this opportunity and described the training she has received and the benefits of being able to collaborate with teachers across the AEA. She explained the benefits and value in being able work through mathematical tasks to address learning challenges and then implementing this knowledge in her classroom. Director Zamora asked what this program does to get students more excited about math. Nicole said she is creating tasks that require the students to preserve and explained one task in particular that helps to address this challenge. Linda spoke to the benefit of shifting from an attitude of “just finding the answer” to best practices and teaching multiple paths to answers. Director Clewell stated this is an example of 21st century teaching which helps to stimulate creativity. There were discussions about teaching soft skills and using planning tools. Several board members and President Johanson thanked everyone for the presentation.

President Johanson asked if there were any objections to adjourning the meeting and there was none. The meeting was adjourned by President Johanson at 7:45 p.m.

Mary Correthers, Recording Secretary