

DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE CENTER
JIM HESTER BOARD ROOM
1606 BRADY STREET
DAVENPORT, IOWA 52803
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2018
ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The Board of the Davenport Community School District in the Counties of Scott and Muscatine, State of Iowa, met on Wednesday, January 17, 2018 for the 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 meeting to order at 5:42PM. Directors present: Johanson, DeSalvo, Hayes, Potts, Beck, Mayfield and Gosa.

1. Special Education Update

In response to several board requests related to Special Education, Dr. Tate invited Special Education Staff to provide an update to the board and also use this as an opportunity to provide more information concerning the upcoming Department of Education audit scheduled for January 30th –February 1, 2018. Dr. Tate introduced Ms. Patti Pace-Tracy, Director of Special Education, and Special Education Specialists, Amy Clayton, Susan Downs and Gus Hawbaker. The presentation included covering the following four areas: the special education process, open enrollment, Department of Education Accreditation visit and restraint and confinement definition and procedures. President Johanson noted the PowerPoint being used is available on BoardDocs with the agenda for this meeting.

Amy Clayton reviewed the eligibility standards and definition of a disability as a “physical or mental condition that adversely affects educational performance in one or more of seven domain areas of academic, behavior, physical, health, sensory, adaptive behavior and communication. A disability is suspected when there is data to suggest that 1) a child has a diagnosis of an IDEA-(Individual with Disabilities Education Act)-listed condition; 2) a child is not meeting standards and is unique when compared to peers; 3) a child is not meeting standards and has received high quality supplemental instruction. Ms. Clayton described the evaluation process and components of an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and the five types of IEP meetings. Patti Pace-Tracy explained that Iowa doesn’t provide special education services based on a diagnosis so all students are considered eligible individuals according to Iowa law. Director Hayes asked if individuals from out of state are automatically eligible if they already have an IEP and Ms. Tracy explained there has to be an IEP on file in Iowa in order to start providing services.

Ms. Clayton reviewed the Guiding Principles of an IEP and board members asked who is responsible for tracking progress being made; who makes sure the teachers are doing their job; and how gaps in learning are addressed to make sure students get the support they need. Ms. Tracy mentioned the role of the special education teacher in following the IEP in addition to the AEA (Area Education Agency) staff who provide various types of services and support. Susan Downs explained the five phases in the development of an IEP and highlighted some of the topics included in this process such as reviewing a summary of parent rights; determining specific goal areas; discussing services, activities, and supports needed and the location of services. She said this process can happen either quickly or it can take hours. She reviewed a typical IEP meeting agenda and Director Gosa suggested they set up a mock IEP meeting for educational purposes and Ms. Tracy said this idea will be considered.

Ms. Downs emphasized how the ultimate goal is a collaborative process but there are times when parents disagree and she discussed a variety of options available to parents who do disagree and shared some data on state complaints and results. Ms. Downs discussed the continuum of services and least restrictive environment. Least restrictive is 100% of time in general education setting and most restrictive is 100% of time in special education setting out of general education setting. She reviewed the statistics of Davenport students. Director Mayfield expressed his concern about students who have an IEP that are not cooperative in the classroom and how this can negatively impact other students and asked at what point are they moved to a different environment? Ms. Downs responded the situation would have to be assessed and then it would be determined whether a different placement should be made. Ms. Downs provided an overview of one of the concerns of the state related to the percentage of Davenport students with disabilities placed in restrictive settings being too high. This was based on 2016 data and the 2017 does meet the benchmark required. The state expects that 75% of special education students be in general education settings for 80% or more of the day and for 2016, Davenport did not meet that benchmark. Several board members questioned this benchmark and stated that the whole point of an IEP is individualized education and that it should be based on student need not a random percentage chosen by the state. Mayfield requested data for percentage of African American students with IEP's to ensure there is not overrepresentation in this category.

Ms. Downs explained predetermination and individualization as related to special education. Director Gosa discussed the special education committee that was formed and how he attended some of the meetings and got the impression these could be very intimidating for the parents. He suggested having meetings in a forum type of format to get input from parents. Ms. Tracy said they are currently discussing the idea of a parent conference which would offer workshops and sessions that would provide information and resources. Ms. Tracy then provided information on the next topic of reasons for the increase in expenditures and handed out a 2016-17 summary comparison sheet. She provided a detailed explanation and justification for the increase. She explained it has been extremely difficult to recruit and retain special education teachers so they are now providing a salary supplement. This has significantly reduced turnover and improved recruitment and retention efforts. Dr. Tate said the supplemental was negotiated and approved by the DEA. It was emphasized that this is not a bonus but a salary differential. Director Mayfield requested the data that reflects these improvements and Ms. Tracy said they will provide this data. The other main reason for an increase in expenditures was the need in 2016-17 to add additional special education programs which resulted in additional teachers and paraprofessionals.

Mr. Gus Hawbaker then reviewed Iowa rules regarding restraint and confinement. The definitions for physical restraint and confinements were presented and discussed. Mr. Hawbaker emphasized there is a difference between time out and confinement. He indicated that restraint or confinement should not be used for the following reasons: routine school safety measures; a routine strategy implemented to address instructional problems or inappropriate behavior; as a means of coercion or retaliation or as a convenience. He also indicated that whether force is reasonable depends on the facts of each case and the size, physical, mental, and psychological condition of the student; nature of the behavior or misconduct; instrumentality used to apply force; extent of injury to student, if any; and employee's motivation in using the force. The law also requires records and documentation be maintained for each instance of restraint or confinement. He explained their department places heavy emphasis on preventing the need for physical restraint and confinement through implementing programs such as the Davenport Way which includes PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports), Boys Town Well Managed School Strategies, and Boys Town Specialized Classroom Management Strategies.

There was a discussion about protocol to responding to fighting and the exact specifications for confinement spaces and data collection and tracking to ensure they are used appropriately. There was a question about the effectiveness of PBIS and Mr. Hawbaker explained that when everyone is on the same page in the building it works great and added that some buildings are still in the initial implementation stages. There was also a question about the effectiveness of the diversion coaches and Dr. Tate said that it has cut suspensions by 30%. Dr. Tate stated the audit is coming in a couple of weeks. Ms. Tracy said she didn't have any details yet about selection of board members or schedule of interviews. Director Beck asked if parents could submit their comments and Ms. Tracy said she will look into that and let Dr. Tate know. Ms. Tracy also indicated she had no information on the types of questions that will be asked and once she receives more information she will contact Dr. Tate.

ADJOURNMENT

By consensus President Johanson declared the meeting adjourned at 9:10PM.

Mary Correthers, Board Secretary/Treasurer