

DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE CENTER  
JIM HESTER BOARD ROOM  
1606 BRADY STREET  
DAVENPORT, IOWA 52803  
MONDAY, MAY 21, 2018  
SPECIAL 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 Monday, May 21, 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 5:30PM. Present: Director's Johanson, Hayes, DeSalvo, Beck, Potts and Mayfield. Gosa participated by phone.

**1. Does the Board support Vision 2020 as a platform for our response to the SBRC (School Budget Review Committee) in October? If not how does the board intend to go forward and respond to the SBRC?**

DeSalvo asked about the request for modified supplemental amount for 2016-17 school in the amount of \$4,056,342 and the district's requirement to be in compliance with Iowa Code to have a positive unspent balance by June 30, 2019 and show it is sustainable for five years. Tangen said the \$4,056,342 is the negative unspent balance the district had at the end of the 2016-17 school year. She clarified this is not additional funds but spending authority. The SBRC (School Budget Review Committee) asked the district to come back with a plan that makes budget reductions to achieve a positive unspent balance by June 30, 2019. This plans goes to 2023 to show the district is sustaining that positive unspent balance and does not fall back into a negative trend. Tate added the SBRC was very reluctant about the district's heavy use of the insurance holiday in the Vision 2020 plan in order to achieve an unspent balance. They requested the district conduct an actuary to review of the insurance fund and would prefer additional budget reductions be made instead. The actuary review should be ready by the end of the month. It was explained the SBRC has the plan with the specific line item reductions but the board could substitute a reduction, but Tate emphasized the substitution would have to be one that is sustainable and make sense to the SBRC. DeSalvo said the public is saying don't do this plan and wait until we get a new superintendent and asked what the repercussions would be for waiting. Tate referred to the handout listing the authority of the SBRC and a few of those consequences listed are the SBRC taking over the district budget or bringing charges against board members.

Hayes asked about the biennially special education weighting plan and Tangen explained the SBRC has the authority to change the district's weighting for special education students. Tate explained the district budget and the special education budget are two separate issues and the SBRC could deny the request for the supplemental amount in October if they don't feel our plan is substantial enough. Tangen said there were three districts making the same request when the district appeared in December and they were turned down as well and asked those districts to submit corrective action plan for getting out of a negative unspent balance. DeSalvo asked if a specific school was named in the plan that was submitted to the SBRC and Tangen said no specific school was named. Johanson emphasized that the original question was if the board supports the Vision 2020 Plan and kicking the can down the road is not acceptable. He said for years the board has tried to avoid having to cut millions of dollars from the budget. He attended the last two SBRC meetings and emphasized statements made on how the district was relying too much the insurance fund instead of making

additional budget reductions. Johanson said the consequences listed for not complying with the plan are very real and have occurred in the past. He asked board members to weigh in on whether they support the Vision 2020 plan and, if not, what the alternatives they suggest. Beck asked if the details for going to K-6 have been thought through. Johanson said the board has already approved the Vision 2020 plan and asked if she is wanting more details on something the board has already approved. Beck clarified she just wants to know, for example, if the district would be moving to K-6 in the elementary schools she wants to make sure she is doing her due diligence in confirming that someone has thought through some of these big changes before we make a final decision. Johanson said the intent of the meeting this evening was not to get into this type of detail and would pose a suggestion to the rest of the board that maybe we suggest rescinding the Vision 2020 vote at the next meeting until we can get all of this information. Beck said her understanding of the intent of this meeting was for the board to ask questions. She said she doesn't need to know what the details are regarding the K-6 arrangement, but only if the details have been worked out to avoid unintended consequences. Potts said he thinks the information requested by Beck would come up as we move to the next step where the board would be discussing schools closings and depending on that decision what proceeds from that step. Potts says he looks at the Vision 2020 as a blueprint for how we get to where we have to go because the state is requiring it. Either we will control our future and spending or someone in Des Moines may show up and say here is what we are doing. He prefers to make those decisions versus having someone in Des Moines make them. Potts said he supports the Vision 2020 plan. Hayes supports the plan but she does have questions about certain things in in future years such as closing an attendance center and privatization of services.

Dr. Tate said the plan already needs modification since a savings of \$500,000 for changing bell times was included and now the savings has been reduced to \$300,000. The board will have to vote on an adjusted plan before the SBRC meeting in October, but the dollar amounts will have to stay the same as they are currently. So if current reductions are removed from the plan there will need to be equal dollar amount alternatives replaced. Mayfield said he is not happy with the Vision 2020 because there aren't enough options. Adams is filled to capacity but that is an option to move those students and he doesn't agree with that. We will be right back at the table in 2 or 3 years and none of these options is going to solve our problem because we have not addressed the long term problem of stopping the bleeding of declining enrollment. He cannot approve the Vision 2020 Plan as it is currently. DeSalvo and Gosa support the plan with the ability to make modifications. Beck clarified she is not opposed to Vision 2020 plan, but supports the plan with the understanding that modifications can be made in the future. Potts said he is looking at the plan in a way that each year adds up to a specific amount of money and if something is pulled from the plan another piece has to be put in so the sum stays the same. Johanson asked for a timeline concerning the approval of a modified plan and Tangen said the application has to be submitted to the SBRC by September 7th so the board has to approve the application prior to this date so the end of August 2018 would be the latest.

## **2. Does the Board want to continue to include a high school as one the closure options?**

Director's Hayes, DeSalvo, Beck and Gosa stated they oppose closing a high school as one of the options. Potts is will to keep this option on the table. Mayfield said he does not want to close a high school, but high schools are undermined by the schools that we close that feed into them. If you close all the elementary and junior high schools that feed into a certain high school it is going to affect that high school. He said if we are just looking at the next 2 or 5 years it may not be affected that much, but it will affect the high schools in the long run. He said when I say I don't want to close a high school, I would like to see those underlying schools be preserved in order to feed into the high schools. Potts said he is willing to keep this option on the table because it is the biggest savings. Students could be redistributed. We also have lots of seats in the elementary schools that if we re-structured to K-6 elementary schools no elementary schools would have to close and the elementary

school neighborhoods would be preserved. We could redistribute 9th graders to the Intermediate schools which could have a positive impact for reducing the transition from 8th to 9th grade and it may improve our athletic teams. Beck said she can appreciate Potts comments, but given the fact that we have set up the high schools as a District of Distinction it would involve changing the philosophy of the district and agreed with Mayfield comments that if you close elementary schools it does affect the high schools eventually. Johanson said he supports leaving this option on the table for the superintendent's consideration. In response to this feedback from the board, Tate said he would remove this option.

**3. Does the board want to include other options in their deliberations?**

DeSalvo said she is looking at current capacities of buildings and Bluegrass is at 51.9% capacity; Buffalo is at 54.4% capacity and Walcott is at 50% capacity so there are three schools that are barely at 50% capacity. She proposed closing Bluegrass Elementary and re-distributing those students evenly to Buffalo and Walcott schools. She mentioned the West Scott proposals and this could empty a building for them if they move forward with their plan. Hayes said in light of the West Scott proposal to pull out of the district, that the district could close Bluegrass, Buffalo and Walcott and let them work it out. Beck said she was also interested in consolidating the three schools given the geographic proximity and the West Scott proposal she would like to see that option considered. Gosa said he would also like to see this option explored. Mayfield says he would not oppose this proposal and members of that community have expressed wanting to explore this option.

Potts said he has to think about this proposal. Beck said if the West Scott proposal came to fruition we would lose all the money that comes with those students, but it is still an option to explore. Mayfield said to keep in mind this has been talked about for years and to make this a reality is a different matter. Potts said there is irony here that we talk about declining enrollment but on the other hand the board is saying they are willing to consider losing 1100 students and this seems to be the exact opposite of what would solve our problem. Hayes said she clearly understands what is being said, however, the petitions clearly state the desire for these individuals to leave the district and she would be in favor of allowing them to go now rather than to have them suddenly be taken away, so it is like a pre-planning. DeSalvo said if we have buildings that are half full this requires lots of money to continue to operate and if those students can be moved to another building that is also half empty this makes sense to her. From a money and cost perspective her proposal is to close one school and distribute those students evenly to the other two schools. She requested information about the savings if Bluegrass was closed. Johanson said he thought about what the superintendent said in the beginning about excluding Bluegrass, Walcott, and Buffalo schools from consideration because of their importance to the community but has decided no school should get special dispensation, so he supports putting those three schools in the mix for consideration in future discussion concerning closing schools. Tate said he has heard for several years the idea of those three schools being their own district. Factors to consider here are how will they buy the buildings or how could they run their own district and this would take years to accomplish, so this cannot be a viable option in our reductions at this point. He said he has heard a consensus to include Bluegrass, Walcott and Buffalo in future school closing options.

**4. What additional types of information does the board want to see as they discuss and debate the options?**

Dr. Tate asked what additional information the board requires in order to move forward with the four options. Beck asked to see information from the city council or the chamber of commerce on where development may be happening and more details about the movement of staff and students within all the plans presented, including special education students. She thinks the special education students

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move around more than other students and she would like to minimize this as much as possible. Hayes and DeSalvo asked for additional information concerning bell times and Hayes would like to know how the rural schools would feel about consolidation. Mayfield said one of the plans include closing Smart and he expressed a concern about the distance students will have to walk to school. Another concern is about the sports and made the point that it seems the same students are being affected by school closings repeatedly which is not equitable. He would like information on where students will be distributed when schools are closed. Hayes and Mayfield would like information concerning the behavioral programs at the schools and if they would be transferred to other schools. Johanson mentioned the importance of remembering academics and Tate reminded the board the school closing policy includes this as one of the factors that is required to be considered. Beck said if there are special programs at the schools being considered for closing then she would like to know if those would be shifted and/or continued. Dr. Tate recommended the board meet again to discuss again the revised school closing options.

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Johanson declared the meeting adjourned at 7:00PM.

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Mary Correthers, Board Secretary/Treasurer