

Spotlight on the Board

Notes from the District 15 School Board Meetings

April 25th, 2007

This was a Committee of the Whole meeting.
Board Vice President Linda Silverman entered the meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Superintendent's Reports

Introduction of New Administrators

www.ccsd15.net/WhatsNew/NewsReleases/HTML/Archive2006_2007/CCSD1504_26_2007.html

Emergency Preparedness

Jim Garwood gave an overview of the District's emergency preparedness plans. Stated that a committee meets yearly to go over fire drills, lock down drills, etc. Garwood works with the local police departments, currently have devised plans but won't go into details of the plans for police intervention in case there are incidents that require that. Currently working with all of the District's buildings to practice lock down procedures.

Dr. McKanna stated that at the recent Parent Advisory Committee meeting, parents had asked if the District would have school on Election Days in the future. The next Presidential Election is in November 2008 and the District will recommend to the Board to make that a Teacher Institute Day. The intent is to not have children in the building with all of the voters. The District is challenged because there is a primary election in February 2008 – that is a school day. McKanna further stated that Emergency Preparedness is a high priority and it will be talked about tomorrow at the twice weekly Principals' meeting.

Transportation Status Report

McKanna commented that two months ago, the District said it would come back to the Board about the length of time on the school buses – the Board didn't want children on buses beyond a certain timeframe. McKanna indicated that much has been going on with that but does not have final numbers to give the Board. There is a committee of Transportation staff that has been meeting and another meeting is planned for May 8th.

Kevin Noehlty gave information on additional findings that the committee arrived at over the past couple of weeks. Stated that there was a meeting with the Virginia Lake (VL) community that involved Village officials, VL parents and VL staff. Pedestrian time studies and traffic counts were put together and it was determined that a 15 minute dismissal time prior to Palatine HS is just not enough time. It is believed that by adding an additional 10 minutes for a total of 25 minutes prior the high school dismissal time will provide enough time for the students to exit the area and safely get home. Asking for a slight change to that arrival time as well as dismissal time. Thinks that is best for everyone.

McKanna said that the District should have the bus routes in the very near future.

Kelly Keenan asked for confirmation that there will be no shuttle buses for all private/parochial schools. **McKanna** confirmed.

Citizens Address the Board

There were no requests to address the Board.

Board Discussion/Reports

2007-08 Budget Discussion - Department of Instruction & Student Services

Noehly indicated that this was the last presentation of the 2007-08 department budgets. He will bring forward to the Board the complete 2007-08 tentative budget at the May 9th BOE meeting. **Mary Zarr**, Exec. Director for Curriculum, **Dr. Cheryl Wolfel**, Dir. Of Second Language Programs and **Deb Zech**, Dir. Of Student Services went over a PowerPoint presentation of the proposed budget.

www.fcwpta.org/pdf/D150425DeptofInstandStudentServicesTentBudget.pdf

Zarr announced that the department has a theme for next year – “The Amazing Race – **Reaching All Children Everyday**”

Questions/comments after the presentation –

Keenan commented that supplies increased 31%.

Zarr explained that items were moved between different categories and wherever the department felt it could handle the most flexibility, they moved some money into that area. The Dept. of Instruction budget, minus the salaries and benefits piece, is exactly the same as it was at the beginning of last year. Explained that some physical education expenses were coming up (supplies) and that bumped that category up.

Keenan asked if there was a more detailed budget anywhere to support these numbers.

Noehly said that there will be a document supplied to the Board with the upcoming tentative budget on May 9th. He further stated that some funds were reallocated back to the site-based budgets so there will be a slight increase to the building budgets. That shows up in supplies so that there are adequate supplies for the buildings. Trying to slowly reach the levels of per student dollars in the buildings that there was for the 2002 school year.

First Reading-Board of Education Policy

Dr. Sophie presented new and/or revised policies for a first reading.

Policy 2.90 – Board Self-Evaluation

Deleted, provisions added to Policy 2.120 – Board Member Development to better condense the policies. Go to 2.120; this policy was rewritten to reflect current practices and also amended to include the Board Self-evaluation piece that had been talked about earlier.

Boucher – thought the policy language was too light. “Encouraged” is too light, thinks that Board member training is virtually “required”. Said “expected” would be fine, but something a little stronger than “encouraged”. Thinks a Board member would be lacking in their responsibilities if they did not attend. Thinks it should be put in the policy because it is our Board. Have to set a minimum standard for people coming on to the Board.

Keenan Not in favor of that, would like to discuss. Agrees that Board members should be expected to go, she has gone to training. Doesn’t feel she is in a position to tell another elected official what they should or shouldn’t do, completely up to them. Thinks they should reconsider their commitment if they don’t do it but it is up to them to make up their mind.

Mikula – Thinks the word “required” would be too strong but doesn’t have a problem with the word “expected”. It is an expectation not a requirement. Also said that it could be a mute point because she knows the state legislature is looking into requirements for school boards. **Sophie** – Confirmed that the Board settled on the word “expected”.

Policy 2.260 - Uniform Compliant Procedure

Minor edits, deadlines extended. “School days” were edited to “school business days”. Avoids confusion for holidays and summer break.

Policy 4.90 – Student Activity Fund Management

Superintendent and/or designee was made responsible for managing the student activity fund. Superintendent ultimately responsible, listed first.

Policy 5.150 – Personnel Records, Maintenance & Access

Would like to remove tonight and bring forward at a later date. Sophie has a legal question that she would like to get an answer to.

Discussion ensued concerning maintaining the integrity of records; paper vs. electronic records and developing a policy for maintaining the integrity of electronic records. Sophie indicated that there is an urgency to have the District's records scanned and stored electronically. The warehouse is full of paper documents. Sophie stated that as the business and personnel departments move forward, they will start putting information on electronic storage.

Policy 5.160 – Release of Credit Information – Deleted, will be covered in the Personnel Records policy.

Policy 5.170 – Copyright for Publication or Sale of Instructional Materials and Computer Programs Developed by employees or non-employees

Renamed. Dealing with copyrights, the District's rights and the employee's rights. Need to keep updated. Will align with the Web site policy.

Sophie stated that Jim Garwood's office has procedures for new employees who already have a copyright in progress to be grandfathered in. Will be working on this with Garwood and the new committee to stay on top of changes in copyright laws.

Policy 5.300 – Schedules and Employment Year

Rewritten to align the policy to good governance. The old policy listed out differences between 10 and 12 month employees. The new language specifies that the supervisor will help to determine the schedules and really it is dictated by negotiated agreement or the supervisor anyway. Sophie stated that there are 350 non-union staff that are covered under this policy.

Policy 3.20 – Evaluations

Refers to two negotiated agreements for ESP and SEIU. Basically says that for all non-union staff, their evaluation should consider quality, promptness, attendance, reliability, conduct, judgment and cooperation. Committee thought it was important to state that in the policy because that is how the other staff are evaluated.

Policy 6.30 – Organization of Instruction

Deals with the superintendent being required to annually present to the Board a plan for organizing instructional levels and assigning school facilities. This supports things such as moving programs for instance if the District had to move the gifted program, it needs to be discussed, it needs to support the District's educational program. Maximize the facility usage and provide substantial comparable instructional programs across the District.

Policy 6.80 – Teaching about Controversial issues

Sophie said that there was lots of discussion on this policy since there was not a policy in place before. With current national culture, thinks this particular policy will come in handy. Basically it says that if there are any school sponsored presentations or speakers, they have to follow the following guidelines. Have to be age-appropriate, consider the student's ages when bringing in speakers or programs, consistent with the curriculum and serving an educational purpose, respectful of the rights and opinions of everyone. Emotional criticisms and hurtful sarcasm should be avoided. District does not tolerate profanity or slander and

disruptive conduct is prohibited. Bottom line – District could stop the program if these items are not followed/abused.

Millar – Thought that parents should have option to opt out, get notification on the subject matter. Says the most calls he gets as a Board member is parent’s concern but it is usually after the fact that the parent wasn’t notified as to what the topic would be either for the speaker or on the instruction side. **Sophie** – Thinks that a notification form is covered in the procedures for this policy. There was a rubric if the topic is controversial. It defines controversy and errs on the side of being safe. **Boucher** – Thinks the Board should look at that rubric and give input. Thought it should be reviewed/analyzed by the Board yearly.

Policy 6.210 – Instructional materials

Discussion ensued regarding the Board receiving an updated list every year of textbooks being used in the District and the ability to get a list of the major supplemental materials used in different schools. **Carlson** expressed concerned that every student in the District should receive the exact same education because there is one standard for the District.

Keenan stated that it varies widely from classroom to classroom, teacher to teacher.

Rowden said that the District’s Learner Statements are the goals and the tools/methodology are unique to the classroom teacher and need to remain flexible.

Carlson agreed with Rowden, just wants to make sure the integrity of the instructional program remains the same throughout the District. **Sophie** indicated that most schools, if not all, have a list of all books/materials used. She can provide that to the Board yearly.

Boucher indicated that the Board should see the major supplemental materials that are heavily used.

Policy 6.220 – Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption

Deleted. All provisions put in the last policy.

Policy 6.230 – Library Resource Center

Superintendent or designee required to manage the District’s library resource program in compliance with the standards. The ISAB is trying to align all of its policies with good business practices and good governance.

Policy 6.280 – Grading and Promotion

Had to change a few things because testing is being changed.

Questions were asked about what happens if a child is not ready to advance to the next grade level. Currently staff works with children from kindergarten through eighth grade to help them catch up. No formal policy/plan currently in place. District does articulate with high school District 211 so that some students may have to attend summer school before entering high school. District 15 does not offer summer school – six years ago there was a summer program. Hopes to have a plan by the end of next year.

Policy 6.290 – Homework

Aligned to good governance principles. Details what homework is supposed to be for, to enforce and apply previously covered concepts, is not assigned for disciplinary purposes, serves as a communication link between schools and parents/guardians, encourages independent thought, self-direction and self-discipline and is an appropriate frequency and length and does not become excessive according to the teacher’s best professional judgment.

District Administrators Working With Legislators

Rowden would like a legislation committee formed of Board members, administrators, teachers and community members. The committee would look at legislation on a regular

basis and determine if it is good for our District and our community. If the legislation is something our District/community would benefit from, then the District can make efforts to educate the community. Wants to work together as a District to represent the District. Wants to have discussions regarding legislation and make a decision as a Board. Concerned that when an employee represents the District down in Springfield, that the Board agrees with the position the employee is stating. Believes this is important because the District is spending the community's resources to do that. Thinks it should be a committee, not one person on the Board.

Carlson says that people have been called to testify, but are not registered lobbyists. Concerned that the state has mandates that the District can't afford. Thinks it is important that NW Cook County voice is heard. Says that the District has unfunded mandates. Thinks a designated person on the Board or a committee is a good idea. Have to make sure that we are watching our tax dollars for this District.

Mikula – Stated that in the past, the Board developed a legislative position statement at the beginning of the year of issues that the legislature was expected to address, that impacted the District. Thinks we need to form relationships with other legislators other than our own – people who head different committees downstate. Said that in the past, the Board was more active in legislation.

Keenan – Says how the District is funded now is advantageous to the District. If the District demands equal payment, the state may not give it to District 15 without taking it from somewhere else.

Boucher – Has been heavily involved with lobbying in the District. Mentioned lobbying for nurses – so the District would not have to provide certified nurses but rather registered nurses in every school. This was a major campaign in the District. Boucher made trips to Springfield himself on issues concerning including bonds in the tax cap.

McKanna – Stated that in the near future, the Board will be setting up committees and have a discussion. Shared that he was involved twice to testify before some subcommittees – once in Chicago and once at Harper College. Next week, McKanna will be talking to legislators regarding the Lincoln committee for quality. Said it is not routine in the District to send employees to testify.

New Business/Other

Three New Board of Education Members in Audience

McKanna recognized that the three newly elected Board Members were in the audience – Gerald Chapman, James Ekeberg and Susan Quinn. McKanna said that there was a request tonight from one of the three if the District could start Board Member orientation now instead of waiting the two or three weeks before the Board meets again. McKanna said that if the Board is willing, he would get involved with that and set up a schedule to get that started. Current Board members could pair up with new Board members to help answer questions, etc. Board thought that would be a good idea.

Action Items

Personnel Report

It was noted that the salaries for non-union staff would be voted on later in the evening, after Executive Session. There needs to be a discussion regarding three years vs. one year. Personnel Report as presented (without non-union staff salaries). Approved 6:0 with Keenan abstaining.

Bids – Curtain Wall Improvements

Motion to reject the bid. Unanimously approved.

Bids – Walk-in Freezer

Motion to reject the bid. Unanimously approved.

Request for Proposal – Natural Gas

Millar removed himself from the vote because he had been working with this vendor to better understand the market for natural gas.

Keenan stated that the actual bids were not in the Board packet.

Noehlty realized that the pricing of the bids was not put in the packet. He explained that natural gas is exempt per Illinois School Code and does not require to be bid. District has worked with this vendor (Constellation Energy) for the past four years. District has seen substantial savings before and a reduction in overall pricing. Felt that this vendor was the most flexible given the volatility of the market.

Millar explained how natural gas is stored, taken out of storage at different times, said there are huge differences in prices depending on the management of the natural gas.

Noehlty confirmed. **Carlson** said that Noehlty explained the process to her recently.

Motion approved 6:0 (Millar did not vote)

Renewal of Life, Voluntary Life, AD&D, Long-Term Disability, Health, Dental and Vision Insurance

Unanimously approved.

Northwest Suburban Recreation Association Day Camp Agreement

Unanimously approved.

Insurance Consultant Contract

Unanimously approved.

Resolution – 2007-08 Tentative Budget

Unanimously approved.

The Board went into Executive Session at approximately 8:55 p.m.