

Spotlight on the Board

Notes from the District 15 School Board Meetings

August 13th 2008

This was a Regular Board of Education meeting. All Board members were present. This was the first District 15 BOE meeting with the new superintendent, Dr. Daniel Lukich.

Superintendent's Reports

Student Assignment Plan Update

Asst. Superintendent for Administrative Services, James Garwood – Based upon preliminary calculations, there are approximately 300 less students in the district than last year. Kindergarten enrollment is down about 100 students. Registrations typically continue through Labor Day at which point the numbers stabilize. At that time, families are back from vacation and children have moved out of or into the district. The administration's projections had shown a decrease of about 100 to 150 students. A final Student Assignment Plan will be presented at the September 10th Board meeting.

Preliminary Achievement Results

Ref: Chicago Tribune, 8/2/08 "*Errors may snarl state testing*"
www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Chicago_Tribune_08_02_08_ISAT_errors.pdf
Chicago Tribune, 8/9/08 "*State gets do-over on ISAT scoring*"
www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Chicago_Tribune_08_09_08_ISAT_scoring.pdf
Chicago Sun Times, 8/9/08 "*ISAT results don't add up*"
www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Chicago_Sun_Times_80908_ISAT_results.pdf

Asst. Superintendent for Curriculum, Special Services & School Improvement, Mary Zarr – Illinois school districts were advised that the ISAT results for grades 3 through 8 would be rescored due to wide fluctuations in the preliminary test results. It has not been confirmed as to what the scoring problem might have been. One perception is that there may have been a miscalculation of the weight given between the multiple choice and extended response questions. If the results are delivered to the district in time, Zarr expects to have the final report available to the Board in October.

District 15 does collect student achievement data in other ways including the MAP testing and can begin its school improvement planning immediately. There is a system in place to communicate with all staff as to where the district thinks it is, where it needs to be and where it wants to go in terms of student achievement. A delay in ISAT results will not delay the work that the staff needs to do.

Transportation Update – Opening of School

Ref: 2008/2009 Transportation (Busing) Services (chart)
www.fcwpta.org/pdf/d15_81308_transportation_chart.pdf
Daily Herald, 8/15/08 – "*Construction to pose traffic issues at Plum Grove Junior High*"
www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Daily_Herald_81508_PG_traffic.pdf

Asst. Superintendent for Business & Auxiliary Services, Rebecca Allard – She is thankful to speak positively about the school transportation system. Walt Doughty (new transportation director) has had a positive effect on the transportation department as a whole. The department has been working diligently to make sure the first day of school is as smooth as it could possibly be. Parent letters were mailed last week. Due to the volume of calls received last year when those letters with bus stops were received, a phone bank was set up this year to deal with parent concerns and issues. There were a number of calls on Monday, but by Tuesday it was much lower. Believes that shows the leadership and the commitment of the transportation department staff.

The Board received (and was posted online) some preliminary information regarding bus routes. Allard is confident that some of the extreme situations will be corrected before the start of school. Children will not be on the bus for 55 minutes or an hour. The department has already problem-solved some of those issues. It is critical that when students arrive at school in the morning, they arrive there feeling good about their school day and not terrible because of the experience they had getting there.

Director of Transportation Walt Doughty – The department is planning on starting school with 145 routes; they have 150 returning drivers and another eight drivers in training. He said they are starting out with a great bank of drivers and routes have already been selected. Adjustments have been made in regards to the start time changes. There is adequate time in between routes so that there will not be problems with the buses getting to their second (tier) schools.

As Allard stated, transportation went back and worked with the route averages and now all of the routes are within the guidelines that the district hoped they would be. Initial route issues have been problem-solved. As registration continues and programs change, if any route changes to a significant degree, the department will send out parent letters (to those affected).

Doughty expressed his gratitude for the transportation team he was given. At their meeting last night, the drivers were able to meet Lukich, Allard and John Fenton (Personnel). An organizational chart was established for the department so drivers know who they should contact to answer their questions.

In regards to the road construction taking place by Plum Grove JH – Doughty explained that the anticipated completion date has now been extended to mid-January 2009. The route estimates given to the Board (for PG JH) do allocate time for that construction. The morning routes will not be as great an issue as the afternoon. Arrangements have been worked out with the Rolling Meadows Police department and the other agencies involved to allow school buses to travel east and west bound on Old Plum Grove Road in order to load and dismiss buses. This will expedite the exiting process from Plum Grove JH so that it will not cause delays at the second tier level for the elementary schools. Doughty explained that it is the transportation department's job to answer those questions (regarding construction delays) before the public asks them.

Opening of 2008-09 School Year

Ref: Daily Herald, 8/14/08 – "New Dist. 15 chief sees sunny skies ahead"

www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Daily_Herald_081408_sunny_skies.pdf

District 15 Superintendent Dr. Daniel Lukich – Listed activities that took place this summer in preparation of starting the new school year. **June** – Meetings were held with administrators, principals, Cabinet and leadership team to aid in his transition as superintendent. They started the process of addressing some preliminary student achievement results. **July** – Dept. of Instruction implemented three meetings with principals to begin to get into the data. Lukich believes that regardless of whatever the (ISAT) results are going to be, it will not only be important for the district to create the system's response but each building create the response that addresses its needs at the building level. He thinks that the only way to address a result that you may not be particularly happy with is to have a building plan led by the principal/building leadership team. The key to that will be teacher input. There have been some meetings with the CTC and they are part of any resolution to improve test results for every building.

Course of the summer (Facilities Study) - Conducted building visits with new Cabinet, principals, building supervisors. The purpose was to familiarize themselves with the district's 20 buildings. Gave them an opportunity to take a look at the facilities and understand some of the issues/problems. That was done in conjunction with weekly meetings with the Board's architectural firm (conducting a facility study). They are beginning to ramp up that process by learning what the architectural firm is finding on a building by building basis. The firm is making a most detailed and deliberate study. The report will be coming to the BOE by mid- to late-September and on into the fall.

In meeting with the architects over the course of the last couple of weeks, Lukich thinks that the buildings for what they are, the issues that are there, are really ready for school. There are things that

were addressed over the summer. There was a very detailed report submitted by the maintenance crew. Most things are in good shape and ready for the start of school.

New Teacher Orientation – Welcomed 55 new teachers to the district during a 5 day orientation. From his standpoint, believes that District 15 does a great job at introducing new employees to the district as to its vision, mission and purpose.

Welcoming staff to the new school year – Lukich and Cabinet members will make an appearance/say a few words at each of the buildings over the course of two days (August 19th/20th). He invited Board members to join them where they can to represent the Board at the buildings' staff meetings.

Board Discussion and Reports

First Reading – Board of Education Policy

7:100 Students – Health, Eye and Dental Examinations, and Exclusion of Students

Garwood – This Policy has been updated to reflect that eye examinations are now required by the State of Illinois prior to a child entering an Illinois school for the first time. This applies to incoming kindergarteners or any other grade if a child is transferring from out of state or out of the country. The eye examinations must be done by a physician. Information has already been sent to parents along with a list of clinics that offer reduced pricing.

He wanted to point out that if the child does not have the eye exam, they will not be excluded from attending school. It is unlike the immunization requirement that must be done before entering school. The eye exam is a strong recommendation from the ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education). However, the strongest stipulation that the State imposes on school districts is that if the family does not comply with the requirement, the school "may" withhold the child's report card. That is the same with the dental examination requirement. The State does not give the district the ability to exclude children based on non-compliance with the dental or eye exams. The district does not intend to withhold report cards for non-compliance.

Vision screening will continue to be done in the schools but not in the same manner as before. He will provide additional information on that subject at a later date.

New Business - Town Hall Meetings

Board Member Sue Quinn – Would like the Board to consider holding a series of town hall type meetings in order for the public to have the opportunity to dialogue with the Board. She thinks it is important to have it structured. Quinn proposes that the Board draw topics from the district's strategic planning process that could be used as the focus of the meetings. The meetings should be structured in a way that everyone feels comfortable with. Citizens now have opportunities to converse with individual Board members or send emails if they have a particular concern. However there is not currently an opportunity for the public to engage in dialogue about where the future of education is in the district. Thinks there is a lot of value to having that type of conversation. Wants to find out what the rest of the Board thinks about that and come to some kind of agreement or plan.

Board member Wendy Rowden – Is in favor of doing something that is very structured and within the strategic planning process. Would like to have an agenda (topic specific) for the meeting and not have it be an opportunity for any issue to be put before the Board. It should be a meeting where the public has an opportunity to give input and get information but not where it is going to lead to a philosophical debate.

Board member Nancy Lee Carlson - Suggests that the Board wait until the data comes in from the Facilities Study and they have time to digest the information. There will be definite decisions that are going to have to be made and the Board will need community input. The structure of our school district has been looked at and what we need to do on a future basis. Carlson would really like a dialogue after the Board has that information (from the Facilities Study). At that point in time, we will be looking at new ways for the district to grow, there may be ramifications depending on what we find out. It (study)

is a very important document which will be the foundation for this district going forward for the next ten years. Although she likes and thinks the idea of a town hall meeting is important, Carlson would first like documentation she and the public can digest. Then the public can ask questions and there can be a true dialogue on how the school district will be managed in the future.

Board Vice President Kelly Keenan – Wants to make it clear that the architects' study is not to be the basis of the Board's decision-making. It is supposed to be a tool. It is our educational goals that are the driving force of what the Board does with the Facilities Study. It is not the study that is doing the driving. Secondly, it is going to take months to digest the Facilities Study. Dr. Lukich said that he wants to have at least four meetings with each cluster being a junior high. If the Board waits that long, it would be next year before meetings were held. Keenan thinks that the Board can answer at least some questions now without having the Facilities Study.

Quinn – Doesn't disagree that the Board should wait for information from the study. She is proposing the idea of town hall meetings now; it is not an action item. It is just something for the Board to consider and keep in mind as it proceeds with the strategic planning process. The Facility Study is just the first step in getting the data.

As for a town hall meeting, Quinn envisions a general meeting upfront while the data collection continues and ideas are formed; then have a more specific town hall meeting that is targeted to specific areas of the strategic plan. There are some actions that will come out of the strategic plan and the Board is going to want to have public input at that point. It may not be in a town hall format but perhaps another format more favorable to gathering information from the public. The meetings would be in the form of a Committee of the Whole where all Board members attend.

Keenan – Suggests that if the Board wants to look into research, how other school districts do this – there should be some Committee legwork involved before the Board goes out and has a meeting. Maybe couple that with other Committee topics as action items.

The *consensus of the Board* was to bring back this topic as an Action Item next month. Discussion can take place and if the Board is not ready to take action then, it can be brought back the next month for action.

New Business - Financial Report Card (FRC)

Quinn – Last year, the district published a Financial Report Card for the public in easy-to-understand terms as to the financial status of the district as well as future projections. Quinn would like to have that done again this year and hopefully repeated every fall as a regular steady method of communicating with the public. She doesn't know if this needs to be put on the agenda as an action item next month or if the Board can just come to a consensus to agree to direct the administration to proceed with putting the FRC together for the Board at some point when the audit is completed. The FRC was made available last December (after the audit was completed in November) via the district's Web site and a copy went home in students' backpacks.

Consensus was to have this topic put as an Action Item for the September Board meeting.

Action Items

Consent Calendar

Item J: Presbyterian Church Parking Lot Rehabilitation

Ref: *Diagram of Parking Lot and Proposal for Site Engineering Services*

www.fcwpta.org/pdf/d15_81308_church_lot.pdf

Keenan – Asked to have this item pulled from the Consent Calendar. Keenan does not think it is necessary for the district to hire a civil engineering firm to survey the reconstruction of either parking lot at this time (church or Winston Campus). All the district is doing now is repaving the lot; it is not

being torn up. Even if that was done, she is not sure if there needs to be a civil engineering firm to do that. An engineering firm is not needed to repave and stripe a parking lot. Said that the person that wanted the district to do this work is not in attendance tonight and we do not understand the logic behind it. **Board President Gerald Chapman** – Said that the district has a responsibility to get that parking lot into the condition it was in and wants to make sure the Board takes care of its obligation.

Rowden – Asked what is going on with the lot now. She had just driven by it and the church lot has been resurfaced (seal coated). The Winston Campus part has not yet been done.

Allard – District staff did some saw cutting, asphalt was done in some particularly hazardous areas and also sealcoating. She had the architect go through that parking lot today and also look at the one at Winston Campus where there have been some discussions about expanding parking on our own site. Allard stated that you do need a licensed engineer (whether it is our own architectural firm or a separate civil engineer) to write the scope of the work. That is needed because the condition of the soil needs to be checked. Before repaving or constructing a parking lot, you must make sure that the proper sub bases are underneath (the lot). Parking lots would be constructed differently whether there is just automobile traffic or if there would be buses going through it.

The pavement work itself is not recommended until next summer.

Chapman – Since the work would not be done until next summer there is time to get more information and explore every possibility to make sure the district is getting the best value for the dollar before voting on this item. **Keenan** – We do not have an agreement in place (with the church) and the lease is up September 8th. Why would we spend the money before we even know what our plan is for the lot?

Keenan made a **motion to reject item J on the consent calendar** – Unanimously approved.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m. and the Board did not go into Executive Session.

For information on items not covered in this edition of *Spotlight on the Board*, please see the district's "Summary of Board Actions" for this meeting at:

<http://www.ccsd15.net/AboutDistrict15/BoardOfEducation/HTML/BOEMeetingDates.html>

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