

# ***Spotlight on the Board***

## **Notes from the District 15 School Board Meetings**

### **June 10th, 2009**

This was the last Regular Board of Education meeting for the 2008/2009 school year. All Board members were present.

#### **Public Hearing – CCSD15 2009/2010 Tentative Budget**

**Jane Van Wolvelear** – Palatine Resident

She saw the budget on the Internet today and sees millions of dollars of deficit spending over the next 4 years. A true budget is when your credits and debits equal. Asked the BOE how they can spend multiple millions of dollars in deficit spending and not cause financial ruin in District 15? Asked the Board if someone could please answer that question? (*No response given*)

**Frank Skorski** – Palatine resident

He said that he got to the Monday June 8<sup>th</sup> Special meeting a few minutes late and was unable to address the BOE at that time. Skorski stated that he doesn't know whose idea it was to jam this (teachers) contract through on Monday when most of the parents were spending time with their children. He heard that there was a lame excuse involving an insurance company. We are in a recession. There are a lot of insurance agents that would be happy to get this district's business. You could have had the teachers vote, they could have approved it and the BOE could have discussed it today and you could have gotten back to the insurance company. We do have Internet voting. We are in a recession/depression; a lot of his neighbors are unemployed and have been for months. One is a paramedic and union rep; instead of laying off men they are all not taking their 3 ½%. He moved here because of the excellent education system however the Unions are terrible. The Teachers Union Leaders are reprehensible. We are supposed to have balanced budgets.

**Van Wolvelear** (second request to speak)

First and foremost, she wants to say how disappointed she is with 5 of our 7 Board members who have shown their true colors to this district by approving a contract that gives our teachers 11.4% over the next 3 years. As was stated at the end of the meeting on Monday, there will probably only be about a 5% increase in income to the district over the life of this contract. Where is the additional 6% coming from? I would like to quote some of you of what you said in a public forum held before your election. Ms. Babcock you specifically said you "expect to negotiate openly and fairly". Van Wolvelear asked "where was your openness and how fair is this contract to the taxpayers of this district?"

**Board President Gerald Chapman** – You have a right to address the Board; you don't have the right to address an individual Board member.

**Van Wolvelear** – She respects that and will leave the names out. Another one of you stated that you were also in favor of open negotiations and that teachers must know that we are not living in Camelot. Well, apparently you are living in Camelot because you think that you can provide an 11% increase over 3 years when the Consumer Price Index is under 1%. Another one of you made a very bold statement that "lucky people have pay freezes rather than pay cuts" or no job at all. You specifically stated "pay freezes must be an option". Van Wolvelear said, "my how quickly you have all forgotten what you said to the people in this town in an open forum". She asked "why when the doors are closed you change?" Now that you have chosen to spend more money than you have, where do you plan to make the cuts? She states publicly that the people of this town will not accept "business as usual" when you are cutting teaching positions, cutting any program that directly affects students of our schools. "If you don't have the money to pay the bill, you can't buy the product" This country is in an economic crisis because of the "buy it now, worry about it next month" mentality. If anyone on this Board thinks that a referendum will pass to cover your inexcusable actions on Monday, you are horribly mistaken. For many people, the end of the rope has been reached with taxes and excess government spending. Every tax dollar must be accounted for from government entities. School Boards included.

You represent the people of Palatine not yourselves, or the Unions. Now that we are paying teachers excellent wages, what is currently in place to ensure accountability? What if a teacher is not doing their job to justify the salary? With tenure, there isn't much we can do. She has often said that a teacher should be paid a professional wage but guess what, they are now making professional wages and working less hours than the professional people in the private sector. Ask someone in the private sector the last time they worked a 40 hour week with no over-time wages, no additional pay. Asked if there was anything about accountability in the contract or will the teachers' Union just keep getting what they want with no consequences for poor performance? Van Wolvelear wanted to give a public thank you to Tim Millar and Sue Quinn for having a backbone, standing up and saying no to this fiscally irresponsible contract.

**NOTE:** The 2009/2010 CCSD15 Budget was approved 6:1 later in the evening. Millar voting NO.

## **Superintendent's Reports**

### **Transitional Kindergarten/Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)**

#### **Kindergarten**

**Mary Zarr, Asst. Superintendent for Curriculum** – Wanted to point out a few of the highlights of the proposal for Transitional Kindergarten and Transitional Bilingual Education that was given to the BOE in their packets on Friday. At the February 25<sup>th</sup> COW meeting, the Dept. of Instruction began the conversation about the possibility of Full Day Kindergarten and its potential as a future initiative in D15. (See: [www.spotlightontheboard.org/spotlight\\_pdfs/d15\\_feb\\_25\\_2009.pdf](http://www.spotlightontheboard.org/spotlight_pdfs/d15_feb_25_2009.pdf) )

Zarr stated that the proposals represent the most efficient use of our fiscal and human resources as well as our physical plant at this time. We believe that we put together a proposal for the Board and ask for their approval for implementation that allows us to address our most "at risk" students as we work through this program. They included the sectioning, the staff, the core materials, the curriculum, and potential location, impact on specials and what their evaluation plan will be over the next two years. Asked the Board if they had any specific questions on the proposal?

**Board member Sue Quinn** – Asked if this was going to be covered under the federal stimulus package? **Cindy Phelps, Special Education** – Yes, those amounts need to be expended in the next two years. Her plan is that in the next two years, they would evaluate the effectiveness of this increase. If it is indeed effective, if the cost-effectiveness of not having as many services when the student goes into first grade will be weighed. If it is not effective, then we go back to half day Transitional Kindergarten. **Zarr** – The Transitional Bilingual Kindergarten will not be coming out of AARA fund (stimulus). **Quinn** – Likes the idea of evaluating the program. Her concern with stimulus funding is what do you do after that? However these students are only in that program for one year. Quinn asked for clarification on the sections at Pleasant Hill, Willow Bend, Marion Jordan and Winston Campus.

**Superintendent Daniel Lukich** – Stated that after evaluating these programs over the next two years, the district can come back to the Board to talk about all day kindergarten for many more students. Right now they are targeting a very small population. He thinks that these proposals were extremely well crafted and in two weeks (June 24<sup>th</sup>), the administration will be talking to the Board about the remainder of the AARA money.

**NOTE:** Action Items for Transitional Kindergarten AND Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) Kindergarten were approved 7:0 later in the evening.

### **District Lunch Periods**

**Rebecca Allard, Asst. Superintendent for Business** – There was information received at the last BOE meeting about the lunch times throughout the district, particularly Paddock School and some concerns that parents had with the length of the lunch periods. Information was given to the Board (*and is posted on the district's Web site*) about the length of lunch periods and # of students at each school. There will be changes at some of the buildings, not just Paddock next year. Some of the

buildings that are currently at 25 or 30 minutes are going to a 20 minute lunch period. The # of lunch periods will be increased at Paddock which reduces the # of students going through the serving line.

**Guy Herrmann, Paddock School Principal** - In looking at capacity issues which had come to our attention at the beginning of this year, we realized that we had to address it by having fewer students in the cafeteria. After talking to staff, they decided to come up with a 2 hour 20/20/20 block which essentially means each grade level will be in the cafeteria for one 20-minute period. This pretty much cuts the number of students in half that were in the cafeteria/lunch lines this year. He believes that with the new configuration, students will get through the hot lunch line in two minutes rather than 4 minutes as is now. They will have the remainder of time to eat. The other issue they addressed was that Paddock did not have available sinks in the hallways. Setting up this plan we are able to guarantee that grades 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be coming directly from their classrooms so they will have the availability to wash their hands in their classrooms. Grades 5 and 6 will use the dispensers in the lunchrooms when they come into the lunchroom for those last two periods. Those were the two issues they were able to address with this schedule.

**Lukich** - We brought this to the Board because he knows that they received a number of emails and thought that they should be apprised of at least what one building was doing. Other buildings are making some adjustments because it helps with teacher time and instructional day.

**Quinn** - Has a question regarding teacher time and instruction day. What is the offset of doing a 30/30 lunch period?

**Herrmann** - From talking with other schools and school districts, we found that once it gets beyond 20 minutes, the students tend to finish and then that is when we begin to see more discipline issues occur in the lunchrooms. They begin to socialize, talk more and get restless. They want to get outside for recess and play. **Quinn** - Asked if that was the prime issue? **Herrmann** - No

**Quinn** - What are the other issues driving 20/20/20 lunch periods because there are other schools going to 20/20/20 that will be near the maximum of students getting through the lunch line? In particular Hunting Ridge and Jane Addams are both considering shortening their time next year.

**Lukich** - Doesn't want to say anything else, but there was a pretty good discussion in leadership about this issue. He thinks Herrmann is right and all principals will agree that 20 minutes is about the appropriate time for kids to actually eat and the rest of it has to do with supervision and the time of teachers. It seems to provide the appropriate amount of time.

**Herrmann** - The other buildings with 30 minutes have said that the kids have gotten more restless and when they went back to 20 minutes, the kids have gotten 10 more minutes of recess.

**Quinn** - The genesis of this most recent complaint from parents was that children did not have enough time for lunch. She has heard from other parents at other schools that this is an ongoing issue. She is concerned that this is not really addressing the needs of the kids.

**Herrmann** - We will continue to monitor how long it takes students to get through the lunch line, how much actual "chew time" they have at the table and if we have students that are not finishing, how many on average and so on.

**NOTE:** To see the complete report on school lunch periods and how it may or may not change for your child's school, check the District's Web site at [www.ccsd15.net](http://www.ccsd15.net) Go to BOE Agendas from the Quick Links and open the Agenda Attachments for the June 10<sup>th</sup> Regular BOE meeting.

## **Financial and Human Resources Management System**

**Allard** - There is an Action Item later in the agenda to purchase this system. She has often indicated at BOE meetings that the current system does not serve the needs of the district. Allard provided a history of weaknesses of the system that were mentioned by the auditors. There were some concerns about user access, user friendliness, and she does believe the integrity of the financial data is a concern. It does not currently allow for accrual accounting. She believes the BOE needs to seriously consider replacing what the district currently has. They did an RFP and received six proposals for a new system. Those were provided to the BOE in their packets and she gave her recommendation. The recommendation was reached by all business office staff and the HR staff. The consensus was to go with Skyward Financial over a vendor that was a lower cost because the staff had some concerns about

the market share of that particular company and the limited # of Illinois clients. She said that Illinois's school fund accounting is unique to say the least and you need a software provider for your financials that can be compliant with IASB regulations and reporting required by the ISBE. The cost for the system is \$385K. The staff talked to other districts, clients, personal recommendations and it is the D15 staff preferred software. Skyward services over 180 IL school districts and has 29 years of exclusive K-12 market saturation. She also gave additional benefits of the company/software.

**Board member Tim Millar** - Has some concerns. First, it is a \$400K investment in addition to the other capital improvements that need to be done. He agrees that it needs to be done. His other concern is if this is good timing (to purchase) with the change of positions in the business office? Will the new person want to have that decision? Typically that would be that position's job to make that choice. **Lukich** - Wanted to say to Millar and the BOE that this conversation (new software system) did not go without some long conversations this week about the action that the BOE is going to take on Personnel. Thinks Allard should respond and have Garwood weigh in.

**Allard** - Thinks it can be debated whether the system could or could not be afforded based on the dollars and sense of the issue of the information that we display to our public. That is not for her to answer. But we do have funding and that is only one of the reasons why we are bringing it forward. There are funds from the 2008/09 budget, available in the technology line item and the capital outlay line item. They have not been spent to date and are more than adequate to cover the cost. It is not a "Becky Allard" decision but truly a decision coming from the Business Office. It has probably been the most discussed topic in the last two weeks. People have convinced her to advocate for this system.

**Garwood** - Regarding Part Two of this system - Given the "change" that will occur later on with the Personnel Report, Garwood will be coming back to the BOE in August with a recommendation of whether to host the new system off site or on site along with all of the pros and cons of each.

**Allard** - We felt that there was an obligation to inform the BOE that there was more of a cost than just the cost of the software (\$385K). We would not want you to approve that not knowing that. If it is done in house, there would be cost of additional staff or you could outsource that function, pay a monthly maintenance fee to do that. But Garwood will come back to the BOE with a recommendation about that in August.

**Lukich** - He understands Millar's concerns (about change in staff). Said that the easy decision would be to pull this item from the agenda and hand it to the next person and start all over. It became apparent to him that the district could not do that, to scrap a whole year of work. It made sense to have Garwood take it forward and have the next person to succeed take it from there.

**Board Member Peggy Babcock** - If we approve this, what would be the timeline for installation, actually using? **Allard** - Implementation of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010.

**Note:** Rebecca Allard's resignation as D15 Asst. Superintendent for Business was accepted by the Board later that evening. This was her last District 15 Board of Education meeting.

Ref: [http://www.d64.org/site/files/allardnews6\\_8\\_09.pdf](http://www.d64.org/site/files/allardnews6_8_09.pdf)

## Summer Construction Projects

**Ed Nelson, Architect** - Nelson advised the BOE that meetings have been held with D15 staff regarding the projects to coordinate both the items to be completed by D15 and those by outside vendors supervised by the architectural firm. Demolition has already started at several schools. Most work is scheduled to be completed by the second/third week of August (before school starts). The curtail wall replacements at three schools (Hunting Ridge, Lake Louise and Winston Campus) are the largest projects. There have been separate meetings between the architects and the principal/staff at those schools over the last few weeks to go over their expectations of the work. Of the three buildings, **Hunting Ridge** is the cleanest and simplest project (curtain wall) to accomplish. It is one single wall, two stories on the South side of the building.

**Winston Campus** has that courtyard section which is certainly harder to access. We have the two outside walls on the West. It is a much larger project; there are 19 bays to replace. The contractor is not going to be fabricating the materials on site; they will fabricate sections in their shop. This way the building will not be "open" for as long as possible. Now most of the work will probably occur in late August through October. There is a very good chance that **Hunting Ridge** will be done before school starts so we will not be dealing with classrooms of displaced students at that building. **Winston Campus** is also expected to be done before the start of school.

Regarding **Lake Louise** – We knew going in that they weren't going to get all of that done (curtain wall). They will be working on all three (walls) simultaneously but there will be a very large chunk that will have to be done early in the school year. LL does have mobiles and the staff has already planned out how they are going to move two classrooms at a time. They will work from the West side around to the Entrance to the South end and then back up to along the East side, the street side. That was at the principal's request that that was the direction that the crews start from.

As far as staff support on this, he will be at the project sites all summer. Another architect will be at each building a minimum of once a week. Mainly in July/August but particularly September when the curtain wall projects will really start "kicking in". Nelson that "particularly with the changes that are occurring" the BOE can rely on Nelson and other architects as a crutch/support network. They are close by, can be out in 5 to 10 minutes to a project site.

**Quinn** – Asked what the district would be looking at in terms of student impact due to the delay in getting the curtain walls completed at the schools? **Jim Garwood, Asst. Superintendent** – Envision rotating classrooms out of the construction areas. **Nelson** – Will be giving the district weekly construction schedule updates throughout the summer. A lot is not happening until the first week of July. **Millar** – So the projects are going to go longer than the summer. What can be done to prevent this in the future? There is a liability risk having equipment out when school is in session. **Nelson** – Agreed, there were conversations about that at the administrative level. The key is lead time on the materials (needed to do the job). **Allard** – If the Board could allow us to bring bid results and specifications at an earlier time and award them in January/February so that we have that lead time.

## **Student Assignment Update**

**Garwood** – Commented on the Student Assignment Update that was provided to the BOE (also online). There were some changes in the # of sections based on changing enrollment. He noted that a section was lost at Whiteley School because they had a very high gifted enrollment that reduced the regular education numbers. Their parameters are still under 24 for primary.

**Chapman** – Asked if Garwood sees a concern about waiting until the August BOE meeting to determine if additional sections are needed based on summer enrollment. Would that be too late to recruit teachers? **Garwood** – If the August BOE meeting is moved back to a later date that may cause some problems. **Chapman** – Asked when do you know if you need additional staffing?

**Garwood** – It is usually by the end of the first week in August.

**NOTE:** To see the complete Student Assignment Plan Update and how many sections per grade/# of students per section for your child's school, check the District's Web site at [www.ccsd15.net](http://www.ccsd15.net) Go to "BOE Agendas" from the Quick Links and open the "Agenda Attachments" for the June 10<sup>th</sup> Regular BOE meeting. Click on Student Assignment Update and you will be taken directly to the report.

## **Citizens Address the Board**

**Nicholas Nicholson** – Parent of a District 15 student, who just completed sixth grade. "Don't tell me the sky is the limit, when there are footsteps on the moon!" These words were recently painted on the walls of our child's school as a 6th Grade Class Gift. These words have meaning for our child, as my wife and I have worked patiently with Administration and his teacher throughout the year to make sure that the sky was *not* the limit for him. Our child is wired for math. He came into 6th grade with Middle School Course 3 (Pre-Algebra) under his belt, ready to devour Algebra I. My wife

and I spent much of the past year questioning the logic of our Administrator who required that our child complete another year of Pre-Algebra despite an outstanding score on the pre-test for the course. As a result of having to repeat the course one chapter at a time, our child lost motivation for his most passionate subject. Despite this lost motivation, we stayed engaged with each stakeholder and worked to correct this situation. We developed an action plan – albeit one that took a few turns along the way - - that our son followed through the end of this past academic year. Working independently during the last few weeks of school, he completed 2/3 of the Algebra I course. Unfortunately, if he had been given the opportunity to start Algebra earlier in the year when he was clearly ready to, our child would have completed at year's end. Recognizing our child's rekindled passion for math this past month, his teacher and the Administration worked diligently to come up with instructional options that would fulfill our child's unique needs. We applaud the Administration's innovative efforts to meet the individual needs of our son. With much creativity from each stakeholder, our world-class district continues to meet the needs of *all* of its students, including its most gifted and talented students. We would hope that in the future that meeting gifted students' needs would be done with much less effort. Remember: *Don't tell me the sky is the limit, when there are footsteps on the moon!* Thank you.

**Ada Ruan** – Whiteley School parent

She is addressing the BOE regarding lunch times. The children do not have enough time to eat and it is very important that you know what is happening in the lunchroom. She is not present in the lunchroom to see what happens but her child sees what happens. He is here tonight (because he received a perfect score in Math – was recognized at the BOE meeting) to tell the BOE.

**Justin Ruan** - Whiteley School student

He would like to inform the BOE of a very important issue. We do not have enough time to eat lunch at District 15 schools. Now you might think that 20 minutes is just enough time to provide us for lunch. But if you haven't noticed, we only get about 5 to 15 minutes to eat. They say that 20 minutes is a reasonable amount of time to eat lunch but we don't even have 20 minutes to eat. It takes about 2 to 3 minutes to line up and another 5 to 6 minutes is subtracted from our 20 minutes of lunch because of long lunch lines. For us there is a rule about no talking in the hallways. Chatterboxes will get the "loud mouth" warning and teachers give write ups. So especially for the back of the lunch line, we get less than 20 minutes; we get only 5 to 15 minutes to eat. Even teachers get longer to eat their lunch. Because of this, we have to eat fast and by that children can develop obesity when they reach adulthood. I have seen my fellow students stuffing their mouths directly over the garbage cans and even eating on the steps of the stage. Also many lunches are being disposed of because they can't finish them on time which is a waste of food. Our lunchroom throws away a lot of food. Children on the other side of the world have almost nothing to eat. District 15 should give children 30 minutes to eat. He is speaking on behalf of his fellow students and peers. Thank you for listening.

**Ada Ruan** - Children are not getting enough nutrition. There are 6 ½ hours of school time and they only get a few bites. And the lunch itself, the students are not getting a full lunch but are paying the full price. It is very difficult because they have so little time to eat. Some of her son's classmate's mothers have to work so they have no breakfast, two bites of lunch and have to go the whole day. It will affect their health in the long run. We are talking about over a long period of time, it will affect their health when they grow up and can cause some people to be overweight when they grow up. That is also one of the concerns that other parents have for their children. Not just for Frank C. Whiteley School. She has talked to other parents and they have the same problem with other District 15 schools. This is very important and you just heard from one student. Tonight is her first time (at a BOE meeting) here because her son got a perfect score in math, that is how he got here. That gave him the opportunity to speak for his peers.

**Frank Skorski** – Palatine resident

Skorski wanted reiterate that he wants to be helpful. He has no problems with school teachers, his children have had good success with D15 and looking forward to D211. But he does want to help the district come up with money. He is tired of the government jamming unfunded mandates to school boards. He would be happy to take time to drive down to Springfield, meet with people to discuss that unfunded mandates are wrong.

**Rhonda Bischoff** – Palatine resident

She stated that she spoke to the BOE at the March meeting on behalf of a group of parents to make sure Transitional Kindergarten is a full day program. She is here to reiterate the benefits of TK and ask the BOE to approve the administration's proposal to change TK to a full day program next year. (See [www.spotlightontheboard.org/spotlight\\_pdfs/d15\\_mar\\_11\\_2009.pdf](http://www.spotlightontheboard.org/spotlight_pdfs/d15_mar_11_2009.pdf) for Bischoff's comments).

### **Board of Education Assignments**

Appointment of D15 Educational Foundation Representative – **BABCOCK**

Appointment of ED-RED Representative – **BOKOR**

Appointment of IL Association of School Boards (IASB) North Cook Governing Board Rep – **EKEBERG**

Appointment of District Representative to the National Affiliate Advocacy Network of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) – **CHAPMAN**

### **Executive Session**

The Board went into Executive Session at approximately 9:30 p.m. They were expected to vote on the Personnel Report when they returned to Open Session.

### **CCSD15 Summary of Board Actions and Official Minutes**

A "Summary of Board Actions" will be posted on the District 15 Web site as quickly as possible after each **Regular** Board of Education meeting, usually within two days. Official minutes of Board of Education meetings cannot be posted until after they are approved by a vote of the board at the next regular monthly meeting. Board of Education meetings are open to the public, and all board actions, with the exception of closed sessions, are considered to be public records.

[www.ccsd15.net/AboutDistrict15/BoardOfEducation/HTML/BOEMeetingDates.html](http://www.ccsd15.net/AboutDistrict15/BoardOfEducation/HTML/BOEMeetingDates.html)

By: Jennifer Mondy [fcwnews@comcast.net](mailto:fcwnews@comcast.net)

Web site: [www.spotlightontheboard.org](http://www.spotlightontheboard.org)

Posted: Friday, June 12, 2009