

Spotlight on the Board

Notes from the District 15 School Board Meetings

October 15th, 2008

Spotlight on the Board is a synopsis of notes and recordings taken at the District 15 School Board meetings by Frank C. Whiteley PTA's school board liaison, Jennifer Mondy. They are meant to help parents and staff who are unable to attend the Board meetings on a regular basis to keep informed about the issues and plans affecting the district. These Notes are not endorsed by District 15 or the Board of Education. Below are the highlights from the October 15th Regular Board of Education Meeting.

2008 Student Achievement Report

The district as a whole, along with eight individual schools did not make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) on the Reading portion of the ISATs this past March. This was due in part to Limited English Proficient (LEP) students losing the option of taking the IMAGE test as was done in previous years. They are now required to take the ISATs with no accommodations granted for the Reading portion. To improve test scores next year, administrators have implemented several programs including extended day centers at eleven schools, homework centers where students receive targeted instruction, a study skills program at the junior high level for those not performing to their ability levels and a literacy coaching model that will improve classroom instruction for all readers. In order to make AYP in 2008, all student subgroups needed to achieve 62.5% at the meets or exceeds level. The goal for AYP in 2009 increases to 70% for all categories of students.

Proposed 2008 Tax Levy – Resolution: Truth in Taxation Law

Tax levies are limited to either CPI (Consumer Price Index) or 5%. The levy that was just extended and used in the calculation of current real estate tax bills was a factor of 2.5%. December 2007 CPI was 4.1% and will affect the funds received by District 15 next year. A proposed 19% tax levy by the administration was debated before the Board approved a 15% request in order to assure the capture of new taxes from a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) scheduled to end in downtown Palatine. It was noted that this high percentage has no impact on individual homeowners' taxes. However it does allow the district to levy against those TIF properties at its current rate.

Class Size – Parameters and Procedures

In response to petitions received by the Board concerning large class sizes, the administration provided details on how different class size targets would affect staffing levels. It was determined that the cost of just reducing class sizes by one across the district would be \$1 million. Board members expressed opinions ranging from an increase in taxes through a referendum, better managing the district's contracts and taking a look at educational objectives as a whole, rather than just class size. A long-term plan taking a look at all issues of education, including facilities and the use of funds will begin at a Special Board meeting scheduled for Saturday, October 18th with the presentation of the Facility Study Audit.

Full detailed notes for this meeting and all past meetings can be found at www.fcwpta.org/board_notes.htm
Subscribe to the *Spotlight on the Board* notes and have the highlights emailed to you whenever a Board meeting occurs. The next scheduled Regular Board of Education meeting will be held **Wednesday, November 12th, 7 p.m.** at Sundling Junior High on Smith Street in Palatine.

A Special Board of Education meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, October 18th at 8 a.m.** at Sundling Junior High for the presentation of the District 15 Facility Audit Study by Gilfillan Callahan Nelson Architects.