

Spotlight on the Board

Notes from the District 15 School Board Meetings

September 9th, 2009

This was a Regular Board of Education meeting. All Board members were present. In addition to the administration and district employees, over one hundred citizens were in attendance. Many were standing in the boardroom and outside in the hallway until after the Citizens Address the Board portion of the agenda concluded at 9 p.m.

6th Day Enrollment Report

The Final Student Assignment Plan, 6th Day Enrollment Report and an Update on Whiteley School Elementary Sectioning can be found online at:

http://www.ccsd15.net/AboutDistrict15/BoardOfEducation/AgendaAttachments/2009-10/2009-09-09_RegMtgAgendaAttach.pdf

Asst. Superintendent, Jim Garwood – As of the 6th day of school, we have 12,128 students in grades kindergarten through 8th, including 154 early childhood students at Conyers Learning Academy. Our demographic report continues to be accurate and we have 139 students less than last year. We work diligently to try to meet the BOE's class size averages of 20 for kindergarten, 24 for grades 1/2/3, 26 for grades 4/5/6 and 28 for junior high 7/8. Currently our primary average is 23.27 (district wide), 25.6 for intermediate and 27.09 for JH. As usual, we do have a number of grade levels across the district with different averages. Because of our staffing levels, we have a few grade levels in buildings that have class sizes that are larger than anyone would like to see. Again, those buildings are within the parameters that have been established by the BOE so we are not in a position to add extra staff to these buildings. There are probably eight situations across the district where there are class sizes that are bordering what we would think was too high. But if we make a decision to add staff to any one of those buildings at a ballpark cost of \$50K per staff member (salary/benefits), it is not a decision we make for one building – it is a decision we would make for 8 or 9 situations. A \$50K solution for one building becomes almost a half of a million dollars solution for 8 or 9 situations. Again all of those buildings are within the BOE's established parameters. We know that we have buildings that are working to address those larger class sizes. Many of the things used to address large class sizes are extra program assistant time is allocated to grade levels that have a higher class size. Often there is additional resource teacher time allocated there as well. Frank C. Whiteley School went through a situation where they had class sizes that were too high but within parameters so they didn't get additional staff members, and were "under the gun" to come up with a solution to deal with their class size issue.

Update on Whiteley Elementary School Sectioning

Whiteley Principal Mary Szuch – Our concern was how do we reduce class sizes while providing the best academic environment that we can for all students. So using the shared decision-making process, my primary team decided that in that best interest that we could establish a 1st/2nd multiage model for our 1st and 2nd grade classrooms. She has five teachers that are very experienced and they are here tonight, asked them to stand up. In a shared decision that is what we decided was in the best interest. Through the model that we are using, we also now have out-of-level 1st grade math. We have also utilized other resources. Our reading specialist is now teaching a section of 2nd grade reading. So we have used our resources to lower class size for reading instruction as well as math instruction. The average class size for the 1st/2nd grade classrooms is 24.5 students.

Garwood – The overall class size for primary grades (1/2/3) at Whiteley is 24.2 students so they are right on target where they should be. He said that he did need to point out an error in the Student Assignment Plan for Paddock School. They took a different approach to dealing with the class size issue with an additional staff member. What he reported to the BOE was that they have four 1st grade teachers and four 2nd grade teachers. When in truth what Paddock did was that they had taken an additional teacher and they are teaching ½ time in 1st grade level providing a literacy block there.

Then a little bit more than ½ of their time at the 2nd grade level with a Math block. So the truest picture there would be 3.5 teachers for 1st and 4.5 for 2nd grade.

No Questions/Comments from the Board of Education

Transportation Update

Spotlight notes from this portion of the meeting can be found at:

www.spotlightontheboard.org/spotlight_pdfs/d15_sept_9_2009_transportation.pdf

Architect's Update – Curtain Wall Projects, Phase II Winston Campus JH and Lake Louise

Architect Steve Nelson – The Hunting Ridge curtain wall was completed prior to the start of school. The inside courtyard at Winston Campus, as discussed at the August meeting, was also completed. At the administration's request, we have not have them start on the curtain wall for the last week and a half. We had a sit down meeting with them (contractors) last week - Now that school is in session and students are in the building – to review what had been completed, how it was done, what expectations might be moving forward now that the buildings are occupied with students and staff. We have asked them to look at some different scenarios. One is continuing with installation at these two schools (Winston Campus and Lake Louise) this fall and into the end of the calendar year. We also asked them to evaluate what the impacts would be if at least Lake Louise School, since there are 19 total bays to be replaced there, was postponed until next summer when the buildings are not occupied. There are a number of efficiencies that can be gained during that time because they don't have to just move one bay at a time as our bid specs did specify after August 26th. After that date, they could only move one bay at a time; they knew that going into it. It would also eliminate the majority of displacement.

We talked to them (construction contractors) about that last week; they were going to put some thoughts together on process and impact from their viewpoint with costs. We received a portion of that around 5:10 p.m. today. He has not received all of that relative to Lake Louise. Being that we have not received all of it at this point and haven't had ample time to evaluate it, he is not comfortable presenting any of those numbers or even make a recommendation in regard to Lake Louise right now. He should be getting some additional information by the end of the week, have some time to evaluate that before we can make a recommendation that we feel comfortable making.

Winston Campus has five remaining bays. All materials, for both WC and LL, we were told has been purchased and arrived and in their possession. They have been fabricating those (bays). Per our discussion with administration and the contractors, we have been recommending for Winston Campus to move forward one bay at a time so that it can be wrapped up. If at any time the building administration feels that it is not appropriate to continue for whatever the reason might be, problems with the educational process, we would discontinue that work at that time.

Our recommendation is to allow them to move forward at Winston Campus one bay at a time. Hopefully by Friday, Monday at the latest, we will have the culmination of the information relative to Lake Louise so we can make a recommendation on what to do, what the options are moving forward that are in the best interests of the district both from a financial and educational process.

Board questions/comments –

Board member Sue Quinn – Asked if the architect's information/recommendation be tagged onto the special meeting that is already scheduled for next Tuesday, September 15th.

Board member Peggy Babcock – Asked when Winston Campus is scheduled to be done?

Nelson – Depends, as long as the BOE is comfortable, they will get started probably next week.

Board member Richard Bokor – How long will it take per bay?

Nelson – The first bay will probably take two weeks. Each building has unique conditions. Once you open up and see what it is, they do get an idea what the unforeseens are and they can be prepared for that for the remaining bays.

Board President Gerald Chapman – So you are talking about 6 to 8 weeks?

Nelson – Yes, somewhere in that time. Right now they are looking at the end of October or first part of November. Weather predictions right now are okay and they can install in the cold weather. But we would rather have them do it quicker and we will continue to monitor it beyond that.

Chapman – And in terms of the leadership of the building?

Nelson – They were part of the meeting that we had last week (with the contractors).

Citizens Address the Board

Seventeen citizens or groups of citizens addressed the Board of Education.

Their comments can be found at:

www.spotlightontheboard.org/spotlight_pdfs/d15_sept_9_2009_citizens.pdf

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m. An Executive Session was not held.

Next Board of Education Meeting

Tuesday, September 15th, 6 p.m. at the Educational Service Center in Palatine

Agenda includes an update from the architects and a vote on whether to postpone the Lake Louise Curtain Wall project until summer 2010. After an executive session, the BOE will come back into Open Session to discuss "District Planning".

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

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Posted: Monday, September 14th, 2009