

**DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
JANUARY 8, 2007**

The Board of Directors of the Davenport School District met in open session for a Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, January 8, 2007 pursuant to law. The meeting was held in the Jim Hester Board Room at the Administration Service Center, 1606 Brady Street, Davenport, Iowa, in said district. President Zamora called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

On roll call the following board members were present: President Patt Zamora; Directors Richard Clewell, Ken Krumwiede, Larry Roberson, and Tim Tupper. Absent: Directors Nikki De Fauw and Ralph Johanson. Superintendent Almanza and administrators were present.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Juli Staszewski and Teresa Bechen presented information on comprehensive elementary reading and the sixth grade read-with-me programs. They described the programs, talked about implementation, problem areas, and challenges of language arts. The Board learned about the core program "Treasures", the intervention program "Triumphs, the ELL program "Treasure Chest, and the Pre-K program "Little Treasures. The goal is to make students independent readers and there are focus points for strategies and skill development. They also focus on written communication development during the studies. Feedback includes assessments which were outlined for placement, benchmarks, units, and weekly progress. The class environment has an influence on students so teachers learn to be affective with student learning using various instructional strategies, classroom management, and curricular design. The four-block framework was explained for guided reading, working with words, writing, and self-selected reading. The next areas Ms. Bechen talked about were implementation, professional development, on-going staff development, and the parent home-school connection. Handouts were given to board members including recommendations from the National Reading Panel, an example of a third-grade unit model, communications with parents, and implementation criteria. They also had a write-up on the new reading textbook adoption and copies of comments from teachers about the books being used. There was a feedback sheet from teachers attending a district in-service dealing with questions and answers for various grade levels. Board members asked questions and learned Madison does use a different reading program. Pivot tables were explained and how they come from collected data. Mr. Almanza said the collected data helps teachers learn about their students and creates better teaching strategies for students.

COLLABORATIVE TIME

Rachael Mullins lead a panel of people who had experiences with collaborative time and were willing to share their thoughts on the early-out time on Wednesday afternoons. In the Fall of 2003 talks started about initiatives and time teachers needed for professional development. Truman Elementary became a model to follow. Ms. Mullins outlined the practices and how the plans needed to be budget neutral, consider transportation needs, work for district-wide staff, and have an after-school connection for families. A committee was pulled together to study the possibilities. Steven Mielenhausen talked about the model and how they looked at meeting the needs of students. There was positive feedback on what we were doing with the time. Rachael explained the use of time and transportation issues. Karen Farley presented a handout on Collaborative Time and talked about the focus on achievement and accountability. It has to be meaningful for the teachers and have an impact on students' achievement.

Ms. Mullins said in the Fall of 2005 the initiation was in place, they had looked at transportation, and had results of surveys. They worked on areas and evaluated strengths so the building implementation for teachers would be good. Dan Flaherty from Central Hall talked about various pilot plans for collaborative time they tried at Central High. He explained how departments worked on their Comprehensive School Improvement Plans, did assessments, prepared minutes of their meetings, and looked at career development. Teachers started talking about common curriculum, sharing strategies, changes and teaching. Cindy Cox from Smart Intermediate shared her thoughts on the Making Middle Grades Work initiatives and using data to help students. Teachers were able to see areas that needed more work and they had a better understanding of areas dealing with testing, norm references, and vocabulary. They could make comparisons of students and see expectations as well as work on career development plans. They really appreciated having the collaborative time.

Jean Giles, a fourth grade teacher at Garfield, talked about the Reading First Program and the 40 hours of required staff development needed. She mentioned goals and focus areas for reading, math, and instructional support dealing with security, bullying, technology, assessment, supervision, and playground work. She talked about the rotation schedule and how each group worked on the various focus areas. Teachers had an opportunity to address their concerns and support each other on achievement expectations. First-grade teacher Sara Happel from Fillmore Elementary shared her expertise on reading strategies and how teachers worked together on collaborative planning. They learned new strategies and how to change attitudes. They were teaching students the tools they needed to make connections with new situations. They were more thoughtful about what worked and what was best for different situations.

Ms. Mullins told board members this was just an overview of collaborative time and they will continue to monitor, assess, and report about student achievement. Board members commented about the impact the collaborative time was having on student achievement and they hoped more updates would be provided. They talked about the enthusiasm of the teachers and the relationship building that was going on during this time. Students are learning they need to be responsible for themselves. The panel was congratulated on their hard work and commitment to learning. There were some questions about having a monitoring system in place, keeping this teacher driven, and allowing time for brainstorming. Panel members responded with various examples on how the teachers were in a leadership position for the collaborative time decisions. There is flexibility, but there are many subgroups which specific assignments and data analysis that they do in order to development strategies for improvement. The plan looks different from one building to another and allows for flexibility.

Mrs. Reynolds talked about a survey instrument and looking at areas needing help. Professional development was lead by the teachers and some buildings share more than others. Mr. Almanza explained the panel was made of teachers who wanted to address your concerns. We had a lot of programs in place, but they said we need time to get through programs and learn from each other. We will continue to update the Board about collaborative time efforts.

EARLY START WAIVER FOR AUGUST 23, 2007

Mrs. Linda McClurg outlined the process needed for submitting a request to the State for a waiver for an early start date for the traditional calendar schools. We do need a public hearing before approving the start date and we will make a waiver request on the spring BEDS report. We are not required to do this prior to November 1 but do report on the BEDS report. We bring this recommendation to the Board for two reasons. Starting on Thursday will give us an opportunity to better accommodate the schools and help students get in the grove before a full

week of classes. This is an advantage for teachers to get to know the students and make schedule adjustments. The second reason is because we know we have a lot of transportation routes to organize and an early start will help us work through the problems and get resolution. The code said the decision to start early is stated on the BEDS report in the spring and explained how waiting could have a negative impact on our district. She discussed this matter with Del Hoover at the State Department and reviewed the rationale for the waiver. This was in line with other districts requesting early start dates. Some high schools even wish to start earlier and finish before winter break, but this is a minimal early start for our district.

Director Tupper asked how soon we would have to start to finish the semester before winter break. Mrs. McClurg thought it would be in mid August—around the 13 or 15th and other districts were looking at that time frame. President Zamora asked what advantage it was to finish before the winter break. Mrs. McClurg said holidays and breaks were mandatory topics for bargaining. At the high school level there is not much time after the break for teachers to review before students are taking finals. They discussed this, but we are not ready to start early yet because many of the buildings are not yet air conditioned. Mr. Almanza said the Board will need to look at the PPEL and consider where we are going with air conditioning needs and making plans. Mrs. McClurg said there will be choices to make and additional discussions before making a decision. If we do air conditioning, what other sacrifices have to be made. The Balanced Calendar buildings start around August 8 and this isn't a change for them because they have air conditioning at the facilities.

WEST HIGH SCHOOL REMODELING AND FACILITIES

Mr. Good said the preliminary plans for remodeling at West High had been presented during a Committee of the Whole meeting and the board members received a design book for the final plans and specifications. A presentation will be given during the Regular Meeting by the architect and final approval will be recommended for the remodeling for science rooms and other areas at West High. President Zamora asked about the bedrock problem at Central High and how that work was coming along. Mr. Good said they were moving ahead but still waiting on a cost. They will have a pre-bid on Wednesday and then a remedy for a design. Mrs. Zamora also asked about the weight room at Central and updating equipment by the booster's club. Mr. Good said if they want to expand, the booster's club could look into updating equipment. Director Tupper asked about replacement of the turf at the stadium and any cost figures. Mr. Good said he hasn't zeroed in on a specific cost, but we will be ahead of others because of the work already in place with the current AstroTurf. He guessed this would be in the range of \$400 to \$600,000. He will bring samples for the board members to examine for the infield system. It is a combination of AstroTurf, rubber, and sand and is much more forgiving on bodies. Mr. Almanza said the new surface will be better for the bones of our football players. Director Tupper asked about contributions from any partners groups for this expense. Mr. Good said no because there was still a considerable loan for them from the last project. We have been setting money aside for this for some time.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mrs. Tangen and Mrs. Wood when over the November financial statements included in the board packets for review. They talked about the cash balance, fund balance, trends, revenues, graphs and trend lines. There are some modifications and other explanations were summarized for special education funding. Mrs. Tangen said we had asked for \$700,000 in funding for special education costs, and we just got notification we are only receiving \$150,000. We don't know why and have asked for an explanation of the difference. We have adjusted the budget to

reflect the lower amount but want more information from the State so we understand their justification. Mrs. Wood reviewed the self-insurance funds, balances, reserves, and unreserved funds. President Zamora had concerns about the self-insurance fund reserve being too low. Mrs. Tangen explained how we have made progress toward building this up and we hope to see additional improvements next year with reconciliations.

ADJOURNMENT

President Zamora declared the meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM. Board members took a recess prior to the Regular Meeting scheduled for 7:00 PM.

Linda Smith Kortemeyer, Board Secretary