

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 28, 2009

6:30 P.M.

Educational Services Center

The Board of Education of the Bloomington Public Schools, School District 87, McLean County, Illinois, met in Regular Session.

Ms. Wilma Gleason, Board Secretary, established a quorum and the following Members were present: Mrs. Cheryl Jackson, President, Mr. John Dirks, Mrs. Janet Smith, Mr. Joe Butcher, Mr. Michael Harrison, and Dr. Steve Perry.

Present from the administrative staff were Dr. Robert Nielsen, Dr. Teresa Hill and Mr. David Wood.

Mrs. Jackson presented the Minutes for approval. It was moved by Mr. Harrison, seconded by Mr. Butcher, that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on January 14, 2009, and the Minutes of the Closed Session of the Board of Education held on January 14, 2009 be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye". Motion carried.

Mrs. Jackson introduced Judith Webster and Mary Yount, the two new School Board candidates. Ms. Webster and Ms. Yount will be on the April 7, 2009 ballot, along with Mr. Dirks and Mrs. Roth who are seeking re-election for four spots on the School Board.

Dr. Nielsen introduced Ms. Debbie Armendariz, Ms. Vickie Slagell, and Mr. Jim Cooper, the Principals from Bent, Irving and Sheridan Elementary Schools respectively. Bent, Irving and Sheridan elementary Schools have recently been named Illinois State Board of Education's "Spotlight Schools." These are high poverty schools where high academic performance is closing the "achievement gap." Located throughout the state in urban, suburban, and rural locations, 508 Spotlight Schools earned honors in this year. They exhibit achievements that are contrary to the conventional wisdom that test scores will reflect demographics despite local efforts. Criteria for selecting these schools are rigorous. All schools must have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the three most recent school years. At least half the students must be from low-income families (qualify for free and reduced lunch) and at least 60% must be passing the state achievement tests in reading and mathematics, based on the composite building-wide scores.

The principals then introduced staff members who were present. The Board and administration congratulated all those in attendance for these academic awards.

Dr. Nielsen introduced Ms. Tina Fogal, Stevenson Elementary School Principal, who introduced those staff members from Stevenson who were in attendance. Stevenson Elementary School in Bloomington has been nominated by the Illinois State Board of Education for designation as a No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School. Stevenson is one of only 16 schools in Illinois nominated for this honor.

The No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement to high levels. The schools are selected based on one of two criteria:

- Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance to high levels on state tests; and
- Public schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests.

Stevenson School was nominated based on its standing among the top 10 percent of schools in Illinois on standardized test scores.

The Board and administration congratulated all of those in attendance for this nomination.

Dr. Perry recently toured the new cafeteria at BHS and was very pleased. He further stated that there was an article in the Pantagraph recently regarding a chess tournament between children in Bloomington-Normal (via the Internet) and children in Russia. The Bloomington-Normal students had to win their way into the tournament. Bloomington-Normal won, 8-7.

Mrs. Smith - No report.

Mr. Dirks and Mr. Butcher attended a policy review committee meeting recently to look at revising the policy regarding BJHS requirements for advancement. This policy was presented for 1st reading at the February 11, 2009 Board meeting. He further stated that there was a meeting recently with the sample group who is looking at Illini Data. This sample group has had access to the project since the beginning of the year. Our teachers are still very excited and hopeful to launch Illini Data in August 2009. Mr. Dirks also attended the Youth Summit held at the Doubletree Hotel on January 19, 2009. Several students from BJHS and BHS attended the summit.

Mr. Harrison - No report.

Mr. Butcher - No report.

Mrs. Jackson - No report.

Dr. Nielsen introduced Mr. Geoff Fruin, the chairperson of Youth Impact, the juvenile justice program in McLean County. Mr. Fruin began by congratulating the Board and administration on the awards recently won by the elementary schools in District 87.

He explained that their mission is to reduce criminal activity, gang involvement and present positive opportunities for youth. The Board is comprised of approximately 30 members. The operating philosophy is communication and collaboration with schools and other organizations. Every 2-3 years, Youth Impact puts together a community prevention plan. This plan is broken up into three sections: prevention, intervention and suppression.

Prevention:

1. Partner with ISU Marketing Class to put together a marketing campaign on importance of parental involvement.
2. Investigate any barriers that might restrict greater parental involvement.
3. Education:

1. Support District 87 and other agencies that promote education
 - A. Support efforts to increase graduation rates.
 - B. Work with those attempting to earn GED (scholarships).

Intervention:

1. Reach out to at-risk youth that may be on the verge of criminal activity or gang involvement.
 - A. Expand summer jobs program that have been piloted the last couple of years. The idea is to give youth in the community an opportunity to get job skills as well as teaching them how to fill out an application, interview, etc.
2. Reach out to other organizations doing similar type of work (i.e., Western Avenue Community Center).
3. McLean County is adopting the state-wide initiative "Redeploy Illinois". This program is for 13-18 year olds entering the juvenile detention system and offers them social services which are much more beneficial to the youth and more cost effective to the county and state. Youth Impact will be an oversight committee ensuring that services given to the youth will be evidence based and that providers will be accountable.

Suppression:

1. They have the top law enforcement officials on their Board. Communication with these law enforcement agencies is key to the success of the program.

Mrs. Smith asked what ages of children Youth Impact is working with, and Mr. Fruin stated that the majority are junior high and high school students. Youth Impact works with Project Oz and the individual schools as well as other partner agencies.

The Board thanked Mr. Fruin for his presentation and the work being done by Youth Impact.

Drs. Teresa Hill and Sue Silvey presented proposed requirements for graduation from BJHS. The proposal is to change the promotion standards to indicate that promotion/advancement to the next grade at Bloomington Junior High School will be based on:

1. Earning passing grades (D or better) for 75% of all quarters during the school year; and
2. Earning passing grades for 3 of the 4 quarters in each of the core areas including Reading, Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science and PE/health. This will mean an average student with 28 quarter grades would have to pass 21 quarters under the new standard (instead of 18). It also means that students will need to pass classes in all of the core areas. If students do not meet the standard for promotion, they will be able to attend summer school for up to two courses. By successfully completing summer school, the student will be able to earn promotion to the next grade level. If a student fails 3 or more courses, he/she will be retained.

Mrs. Smith asked how many students this would affect. Dr. Silvey stated that if this were in place right now, 8% would not pass under the 75% proposal as opposed to 5% under the 65% current policy. Dr. Perry asked

Dr. Silvey if she thinks teachers will be reluctant to fail a student for a second quarter. Dr. Silvey said she does not see the staff backing off because a student may have to go to summer school. Mr. Dirks said we've seen that students will rise to the occasion when they must. Dr. Silvey thinks this will help the scores of the school and will help students as they transition into high school.

Dr. Nielsen presented the proposed 2009-10 calendar. This has been shared with the BEA and BESP and will be made public.

There will be a waiver hearing in two weeks asking for the following holidays to be waived: Veteran's Day, Lincoln's Birthday (we will observe President's Day instead), Casimir Pulaski Day (which falls on the first day of ISAT testing each year), and Columbus Day (we will not waive this holiday next year). Parent/Teacher conferences will be moved to Mondays at the request of specialists who meet with students on Fridays. We will not take Good Friday off since it's not a legal holiday.

Dr. Perry asked about the Winter Break holiday schedule. He feels that we'll lose a week of instruction (along with the two weeks of Winter Break) with the proposed schedule. He also voiced concerns regarding travel plans for the holidays. The current draft is that students will be in attendance through Tuesday, December 22, 2009 and return on Wednesday, January 6, 2010. Dr. Perry would like to see students attend school through Friday, December 18, 2009, and return on Monday, January 4, 2010. Mrs. Smith concurred.

Mrs. Jackson and Mr. Dirks stated the high school and junior high schools will be having final exams on December 21 and 22, 2009, and they don't see it as an issue. Mr. Dirks also stated that if we were to begin Winter Break after the 18th instead of the 22nd, the 1st semester would be shorter than 2nd semester.

It was moved by Mr. Dirks, seconded by Mrs. Smith, that the Consent Agenda (Human Resources Report, Bills, Treasurer's Report, Financial Summary, 2009 District Flooring Bid Recommendation, 2009 District Asbestos Abatement Bid Recommendation, 2009 BHS Kitchen Equipment Bid Recommendation) be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye". Motion carried.

Dr. Nielsen reported that the cafeteria is on schedule and should start being used the first week in February. The upper purple restrooms are currently being renovated, and lower purple restrooms will be completed next. The flooring at Stevenson has been replaced, classrooms have been painted, and they'll be back in the classrooms next week after the recent flooding due to a broken water main. Dr. Nielsen commended Mr. Colin Manahan and the custodial staff who came in on Martin Luther King Day to take care of this flooding situation.

It was moved by Dr. Perry, seconded by Mr. Butcher, that Board Policy 7.100 (Health and Dental Examinations, Immunizations and Exclusion of Students) be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye". Motion carried.

It was moved by Mrs. Smith, seconded by Mr. Dirks, that the BHS 2009-10 proposed textbooks be adopted. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye." Motion carried.

It was moved by Mr. Dirks, seconded by Mr. Harrison, that the 2009-10 Deficit Reduction Plan be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Dr. Perry thanked Dr. Silvey for holding the chess tournament at BJHS on Martin Luther King Day.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mrs. Jackson adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

President

Secretary