

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

December 12, 2007 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: Mr. Joseph Butcher, Mr. John Dirks, Mrs. Millicent Roth, Mr. Mike Harrison, Mrs. Cheryl Jackson, Mr. Steve Perry, and Mrs. Janet Smith.

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

Present from the media were Ms. Sharon Wolfe, The Pantagraph, and Ms. Beth Whisman and Ms. Dara Brockmeyer from WJBC Radio.

Mrs. Smith stated that we will now have a Public Hearing for the Tax Levy 2007. She stated that "In accordance with the Truth in Taxation Law (35 ILCS 200/18-60), the Board of Education will now hold a public hearing on the 2007 Tax Levy for the Bloomington Public Schools, District #87.

The District prepared a 2007 Levy Report which the Board reviewed at its November 14, 2007 meeting. The Board also approved a resolution which determined the amount of money estimated to be necessary from the property tax for the next fiscal year at that meeting.

Notice of a Public Hearing on the 2007 Levy was published in The Pantagraph on December 1, 2007.

The proposed 2007 levy, including debt service, is \$37.9M, an increase of 2.9% over the 2006 levy and a 5.5% increase over the 2006 extension. The primary need for additional funds is to pay increases in salary, benefits, and purchased services and to offset changes in state and federal funds.

Mr. David Wood, Chief Financial and Legal Officer for District #87, will summarize the 2007 levy and the Board and members of the public will be given an opportunity to discuss the budget."

Mr. Wood summarized the 2007 levy and indicated that nothing had changed since the Levy Report was presented in November. He stated that the specific amount paid by each taxpayer will ultimately depend on their particular assessment and the final tax rate.

Mrs. Smith asked "Is there any discussion from the Board?"

There was no discussion by the Board.

Mrs. Smith asked "Is there any discussion from the public?"

There was no discussion from the public.

Mrs. Smith stated "The Public Hearing is now concluded."

Mrs. Smith presented the November 14, 2007 Minutes for approval. It was moved by Mr. Dirks, seconded by Mr. Butcher that the Minutes be approved.

Upon a roll call vote, all members but Mrs. Smith "Aye." Mrs. Smith voted "Present" since she wasn't at the November 14, 2007 meeting. Motion carried.

Dr. Silvey, Principal at Bloomington Jr. High School, introduced Coach Tony Perry and the 7th Grade Girls' Basketball Team (24-4), who placed 2nd at the IESA State Basketball Tournament. The Administration and Board congratulated the team and coach on a great season.

State Representative Dan Brady was in attendance to report on the Illinois budget. If the Governor doesn't sign the Budget by January 5, 2008, the budget will become law and the 2008 money will begin to be disbursed. There is currently a proposed Gaming Bill which will expand gaming as a revenue source for the State. There has been an agreement in concept of 70% of those dollars being used for capital, and 30% will be used for education. There is debate over the bill. The next session is scheduled for December 17, 2007.

Dr. Nielsen asked about funds for special education. Representative Brady stated that it is his understanding that this would be the first fully funded year of special education since 1985. The bill itself was written on 2007 figures and if, in fact, the bill becomes law in 2008, that section may have to be appealed. Dr. Nielsen asked about the \$1000 per teacher (from \$8000 - \$9000). Dr. Nielsen has heard that there is a problem with the language and this won't go into effect this year no matter what happens with the budget. Representative Brady said that his understanding is that because the language in the current budget says "current year", and the budget may not be finalized until 2008, this funding may not be available.

Mr. Dirks asked for clarification on the 70/30 funds and whether these funds represent new money. Representative Brady explained that the Gaming Bill proposes potentially \$300,000,000 to schools; however, there will be accountability for schools.

Dr. Nielsen asked if there is anything the School Board can do to require the Illinois State Board of Education to go through the General Assembly when making legislative changes. Representative Brady said this issue is being advocated for and, in some arenas, lawsuits have been filed reminding administrators that they must go through State legislation. He stated that he will continue to advocate on behalf of the school districts he represents. Dr. Nielsen thanked Representative Brady for his representation, accessibility, availability and presence at many events.

Representative Brady informed the Board that several students at Oakland Elementary School were in Springfield earlier this year to advocate and lobby on behalf of "Adlai Stevenson Day" in Illinois. There is a resolution and piece of legislation that "Adlai Stevenson Day" will be an official holiday in the State of Illinois thanks to the students at Oakland Elementary School and the video they produced on Adlai Stevenson and his life.

Mr. Dirks reported that during the State Board convention, he attended sessions on legislative issues impacting school districts, and a session regarding technology and government for communication purposes.

Mrs. Jackson reported that she attended the delegate assembly at the School Board convention and that the votes all went the way we voted. Mrs. Jackson recently chaired the Illinois State Testing Review Committee to

discuss accommodations for English Language Learners (ELL). The state has been behind in developing an adequate test for the ELL. The test they have used in the past measured proficiency in the language but not content learning. The committee was meeting to suggest accommodations that could be made to help the ELL who will now take ISAT and PSAE. There were several suggestions discussing most of the 50 or so accommodations that New York uses which might be used. Most of the discussion involved allowing extra time required to take the test, smaller groups, and on-site translation of the test. There was no quorum at the meeting and this committee is designed to give recommendations to the ISBE before they vote on this issue. Without a quorum, the committee could make no formal recommendations; therefore, the head of state testing is now going to take the discussions back to the State Board.

Mr. Harrison reported that he was unable to attend the School Board convention due to a family obligation.

Mr. Butcher reported that he attended the Regional Planning Commission. He also attended several sessions at the State Board convention, one on board policies and one regarding disciplining employees for off-duty conduct, which he found very informative. Mrs. Smith asked for copies of the discipline handouts for the Board. Mr. Butcher also talked to bus companies regarding ranges of their routes, availability, etc.

Dr. Perry reported that he attended the all-day workshop on effectively communicating the School Board's vision as well as workshops on contract negotiations and revenue. Dr. Perry has copies of case law on religious displays and religious language used during the holiday season if anyone is interested.

Mrs. Roth - No report.

Mrs. Smith - No report.

Mr. David Wochner and Mr. Jack Harris were in attendance to explain Mr. Harris' appointment for several years as District 87's representative to the Public Building Commission of McLean County. The Board thanked Mr. Harris and Mr. Wochner for their work over the years. Dr. Perry stated that he feels it is important that we have an avenue for communication between the Board and Mr. Harris. Mr. Wochner stated that minutes and audits can be provided to the Board, and he will inquire as to whether the information can be sent electronically. Mr. Harris said he's enjoyed representing District 87 over the years.

Dr. Susan Silvey, Mr. Tim Moore, Ms. Melissa Brown and Ms. Lupita Taylor presented proposed foreign language changes at BJHS and BHS. The proposal included introducing Spanish I and French I at the 7th grade level for high school credit as an elective for 2008-09, introducing an Exploratory Foreign Language course at the 6th grade level as an elective for 2009-10, and expanding Foreign Language instruction each year at BHS beginning in 2008 culminating in 2013 with Spanish VI (AP Literature) in 2013. Students would take this in place of Arts for Life (Home Ec, Art, IT, Health). Students would be selected based on certain criteria; however, students can enroll in the courses if the parent and student request enrollment. Dr. Nielsen suggested that the Board vote on the proposal for 7th grade at the January 9th meeting and explore the 6th grade proposal at a later date.

Mrs. Becky Francois and Mrs. Cory Tello presented proposed Elementary Special Education Program changes. There are currently 338 students who receive special education services. 62 students are served in instructional classrooms at four elementary schools. The proposal is to provide a wide range of services at all elementary schools where students would attend their home schools. Advantages to serving students in their home schools include attending the same school as their siblings and neighborhood friends, a natural proportion of students with disabilities at every school site, a sense of belonging to the school community, and less bus time to and from school. All students will benefit by learning to value diversity, learning tolerance and acceptance, and additional instructional resources. This proposal means that only a small number of students would change attendance centers (28 students). Student and family considerations include 5th graders being given an option of returning to home school or remaining at current school, transition needs for individual students, and a commitment to provision of all IEP services. We currently have 19 teachers and 7 program assistants; we don't anticipate hiring new teachers or having many people changing buildings. The special education department is committed to professional development including school visits, teacher roles and responsibilities, differentiated instruction, continued SAC training, continued training on targeted curriculum (core, special education, intervention, software, assistive technology), and transition support. Pending board action, faculty meeting presentations will be held, building level planning and implementation teams will be put in place, and letters will be sent to parents. Preliminary assignments will be done in March with the finalization of assignments in May/June. Professional development will occur during the spring, summer and fall.

Dr. Nielsen presented the following Board of Education Policies for Second Reading: 1.20 (District Organization, Operations and Cooperative Agreements), 2.125 (Board Member Expenses), 4.180 (Pandemic Preparedness), 5.130 (Responsibilities Concerning Internal Information), 5.186 (Temporary Illness or Temporary Incapacity), and 7.090 (Release During School Hours).

Dr. Barry Reilly presented "Ventures for Excellence", a human resources tool used for hiring. Applicants currently apply online and then complete an online Gallup Teacher Insight Interview. Select candidates are then contacted and interviewed. Background checks and reference checks are completed, and candidates are hired. In the Gallup process, changes have occurred which have impacted us negatively.

Ventures for Excellence has been used for 25 years by many schools in their hiring. Ventures has a lot of research behind it and the information provided is much more detailed than Gallup. Principals are then provided scripted questions the principals will ask the candidates. Costs included with implementing Ventures for Excellence include \$25,080 for training of all staff (4 full days of training), and the online tool for 2008 would be \$2,495 for a total one-time expense of \$27,575. The annual service fee is \$5,000, and additional administrators would be trained at \$1,140 each.

Dr. Nielsen presented a request from WJBC to change Board Meeting days from the current 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month to the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays. Beth Whisman from WJBC was in attendance and explained that WJBC is trying to improve their coverage of School Board Meetings. She stated the difficulty in doing so because Unit #5 and District #87 have the Board Meetings on the same nights. Dr. Perry asked if there were alternatives other

than Wednesdays. She stated that Mondays aren't good because of City Council meetings.

It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Harrison, that the Consent Agenda (Human Resource Report, Bills, and Payroll) be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all members voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Dr. Nielsen wished everyone a happy holiday and a happy new year.

It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Butcher, that the 2007 Levy for 2009 Budget be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all members voted "Aye." Motion carried.

It was moved by Mr. Dirks, seconded by Mrs. Roth that the district insurance bid be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all members voted "Aye." Motion carried.

It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mrs. Roth that the BHS curriculum course proposals for 2008-09 be approved ([See BHS Curriculum Changes for 2008-09](#)). Upon a roll call vote, all members voted "Aye." Motion carried.

It was moved by Mrs. Roth, seconded by Mr. Butcher that the course title changes for BAVC/RAVC be approved ([See BAVC/RAVC Course Title Changes for 2008-09](#)). Upon a roll call vote, all members voted "Aye." Motion carried.

There was no public comment.

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

Approved:

Attest:

President

Secretary