

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

September 23, 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: Mr. Joe Butcher, Dr. Steve Perry, Ms. Judith Webster, Mrs. Mary Yount, Mrs. Millicent Roth, and Mr. John Dirks, Board President.

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

Mr. Dirks stated that there would be a Public Hearing for the 2009-10 Budget.

"In accordance with Section 17-1 of the School Code, the Board of Education will now hold a public hearing on the 2009-10 budget for the Bloomington Public Schools, District #87.

The District prepared a budget in tentative form for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010 which this Board reviewed at its August 12, 2009 meeting.

The tentative budget has been on file for public inspection at the Educational Services Center for District #87 for over thirty days and public notice of the availability of the budget was published in *The Pantagraph* on August 14, 2009. The tentative budget is on display in the rear of the room.

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

When all discussion has concluded, the public hearing will be adjourned.

At this time, Mr. Wood will present a summary of the budget."

Mr. Wood stated:

"The budget we're asking you to pass is the same that was presented to you earlier. There are only two changes and both are outside the Educational Fund. The largest change concerns the pass-through "on behalf of" money that the State is paying to TRS that we have to show. Our auditor has suggested that we increase the amount to \$6.5 million. The budget that you're being asked to pass is the second time we have presented a deficit budget. We presented a deficit budget last year but were able to close the deficit through watchful spending. This year is the first time we're presenting a deficit budget that I believe will be in deficit (\$1.8 million) at the end of the fiscal year. We may again close the deficit some through careful spending but, in general, we have structural issues, most of which are associated with the economy, corporate taxes being down, etc. We are also affected by the economy indirectly in that the State is cutting programs, some significantly and are also slowing their payments. By the end of this year, we believe we will be three quarters behind in special education and other payments.

Through watchful spending, we should be able to close some of the gap this year but the 2010-11 school year budget will be very difficult in that the State may begin to cut programs more significantly than they already have. Payments could ultimately be two years behind in the near future."

Mr. Dirks asked, "Is there any discussion from the Board?"

Dr. Perry asked if our budget would balance this year if the state were not behind on its payments. Mr. Wood stated that we would be much closer and, through careful spending, might be able to balance. He further stated that we are losing \$1 million through less corporate profits across the State and more from reduced interest earnings; this severely impacts the budget.

"Is there any discussion from the public?"

Mr. Dirks stated, "The Public Hearing is now concluded."

Mr. Dirks presented the Minutes for approval. Mrs. Yount asked that the last page of the minutes be changed to reflect "Stevenson" Elementary School. Mrs. Roth stated that the minutes should be changed to reflect that she attended the first game of the season, not the intercity game. It was moved by Ms. Webster, seconded by Mr. Butcher, that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on September 9, 2009, be approved with corrections. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye." Motion carried.

It was moved by Mrs. Roth, seconded by Dr. Perry, that the Minutes of the Closed Session of the Board of Education held on September 9, 2009, be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Dr. Nielsen stated that the United States Department of Education recently named the nation's 2009 Blue Ribbon Schools. Stevenson Elementary School is one of sixteen schools in Illinois to receive this award. Mrs. Tina Fogal, Mrs. Vickie Slagell, and Mrs. Julie Dawson will be traveling to Washington D.C. November 1-4, 2009 to receive the award. Dr. Nielsen introduced Mrs. Slagell, the Principal at Stevenson for a number of years before retiring, and Mrs. Tina Fogal, Principal at Stevenson Elementary School. Mrs. Fogal then introduced Stevenson staff members in attendance. Mrs. Fogal emphasized that this award was given due to the work of everyone who works at Stevenson. The Board and administration thanked and congratulated those in attendance.

Mr. Butcher recently attended Beyond the Books. This year, Beyond the Books will award grants based on merit. Fundraising is ongoing with Beyond the Books. Mr. Butcher also attended the BHS Steak Fry on September 12, 2009.

Ms. Webster recommended the reading of *The Element* by Dr. Ken Robinson, a noted educator from England. This book focuses on passion and changing the way education is viewed. It encourages teachers to find students' passions as well as how to improve the atmosphere in schools.

Mrs. Roth recently met with PTO Presidents along with Mr. Dirks and Dr. Nielsen. The PTO's are interested in fundraising and volunteer efforts. She encouraged Board members to get involved in the schools.

Dr. Perry - No report.

Mrs. Yount recently attended a Facilities Committee meeting. She stated that there are a lot of interesting things to come at BHS; Bent will be getting more classroom space in existing space.

Mr. Dirks attended the Facilities Committee meeting. Plans to move the tech area at BHS to another location will be discussed in October. Mr. Dirks attended the Policy Review Committee meeting last week as well as the PTO President meeting with Dr. Nielsen and Mrs. Roth. Mr. Dirks stated that the Board meeting on February 24th will be held at Oakland Elementary School, and the April 28th meeting will be held at Washington Elementary School.

Dr. Teresa Hill presented the Assessment Overview as follows:

Goals of District-Wide Student Assessment:

- Gather accurate information about student achievement;
- Identify strengths and needs in the curriculum and instructional program;
- Guide decisions about professional development;
- Identify students in need of additional intervention;
- Select students for special programs and evaluate the effectiveness of those programs; and
- Demonstrate student progress and growth.

Types of District-Wide Assessment:

- Standardized Assessments - These assessments provide information about our students' performance in comparison to other students in the state/nation. Specific rules govern how the test should be administered.
- Diagnostic Assessments - These assessments provide information about each student's areas of strength and weakness.
- Universal Screeners - These brief assessments help schools determine which students may be in need of additional instruction and intervention.

Data Collection & Management

- Testing companies provide individual and group score reports.
- The technology department inputs score information into IlliniData for recordkeeping and data analysis.
- Administrators and teachers analyze assessment data by school, grade level, class and student.
- Teachers share score report information with parents.

Assessment Policies

- Section 6 - Instruction
 - Board Policy 6.340 - Student Testing & Assessment Program
 - Board Policy 6.342 - Standardized Testing Program

Dr. Perry asked how the Standardized test results compare with classroom grades. Dr. Hill stated that, generally speaking, students who do well in the classroom are able to do well on Standardized tests. Students participating in the core curriculum and taking college prep type of coursework tend to do well on the tests. Students who are enrolled in

essential level courses or courses other than core curriculum often don't do as well.

Dr. Perry asked if there are students who don't do well in the classroom but score at the top on the tests. Dr. Hill said that we see that sometimes, and it is usually reflective of students who have learned the skills and have the ability but don't complete the classroom work. In most cases, teachers and principals are working with and encouraging students as well as talking to parents. Mrs. Roth said we may see more of this in the future since grading at the middle school and high school has recently changed.

Ms. Webster asked if 8th graders are tested for placement in high school. Dr. Hill said the SAT 10 scores, as well as teacher input, is used to determine placement. Students are encouraged to take the more challenging course if there's a question of placement.

Ms. Webster asked what areas we focus on for testing. Dr. Hill said that as far as assessments are concerned, the core curriculum areas (and writing at some grade levels) are assessed.

Ms. Webster asked if we do any hand dexterity, eye/hand coordination, and assessments on physical ability. Dr. Hill said we do presidential fitness as well as art and music assessments based on State Standards. There is district-wide music and art curriculum, and most of testing in those courses is classroom based.

Dr. Perry stated that Policy 6.340 states that testing is uniformly applied and then it talks about bilingual testing. Dr. Hill explained that all students are given the same test. For our district testing with SAT 10, we give the APPRENDA (Spanish version) through 3rd grade. We try to transition at 4th grade if students have language proficiency. For screeners, we have Spanish versions for students in need of that accommodation.

Dr. Perry asked if we have many students in our schools that have other language basis for which we provide ESL services. Dr. Mary Kay Scharf and Ms. Tina Fogal, Principals at Oakland and Stevenson Elementary Schools, were in the audience and stated that their schools have students whose home languages represent 16-18 different languages. Those students are tested in English. They also participate in class in English although they get ESL support. Mrs. Roth asked why we don't provide them tests in their language. Mrs. Hill said the tests are prepared in English and Spanish. The curriculum and testing companies tell us that there is not enough demand for them to produce the tests in those languages. There are some things we do to try to accommodate these students. In order to teach and give the tests in particular languages, the teacher would have to teach all those languages. The ESL teachers don't speak the language of the students. Ms. Webster asked if we can "home grow" teachers to teach in all the different languages. Dr. Scharf stated that even though English is the students' second spoken language, they have had instruction in English. To provide a test in their home spoken language would really put them at a disadvantage since they may not read in their spoken language.

Dr. Nielsen presented Board policies 6.140 (Response to Intervention) and 6.342 (Standardized Testing Program) for first reading.

In regards to policy 6.342, Dr. Perry asked if aptitude is tested or if the current wording doesn't describe what we do with regard to aptitude testing. Dr. Hill said it's a little of both and that the test has changed twice since 1995 when this policy was written. The test that we were giving didn't focus on aptitude; we don't have a test that accurately measures potential or aptitude.

Dr. Perry said that we are not mandated to deal with aptitudes but rather achievements of the students. Dr. Hill said we have done school ability testing in the past and found that it doesn't provide the kind of information that people think it provides. It is very often compared with an IQ test. One of the major differences is that an IQ test is given 1:1 in a specific way to gain accurate information. The school ability test is given in a large group. We have found that the aptitude test didn't always give us the kind of information that would allow us to make decisions based on aptitude. We were not using it other than to have it in students' files. The main reason we try to look at aptitude is to look at if students are academically gifted or talented, and the major push is to focus on what is the student able to do academically, which is information we get from the achievement tests. We don't have a gifted program, but we do identify students as gifted or academically talented.

It was moved by Mrs. Roth, seconded by Mr. Butcher, that the Agenda (Human Resources Report, Bills, Treasurer's Report, Financial Summary, IntelliStaf Contract, and Food Service Agreement with Bromenn Regional Medical Center) be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye". Motion carried. (See with Original Minutes, Attachment 09-23-09/1)

Dr. Nielsen stated that the General Assembly rewrote the Freedom of Information Act (PA 96-542) last session, and we are working to be in compliance with this as well as PA 96-434 which requires the posting of salaries and compensation for administrators and directors. David Wood will be our official FOIA officer.

Mrs. Roth stated that she doesn't like the new State mandate that all school district employees' salaries now have to be posted on the district website. She will be contacting legislators and encouraged others to do the same.

Ms. Webster stated that this is probably going to be disruptive to some but she feels that the taxpayers who are paying salaries have a right to know where their money is going.

Dr. Nielsen reminded the Board of the following dates:

- Sunday, September 27th - 2:00-4:00 p.m. BHS Community-wide Open House
- Monday, September 28th - 7:00 p.m. - Academic Monogram Night at BHS
- Thursday, October 1st - 6:00 p.m. - Hall of Fame Induction and Dinner in the BHS cafeteria (14 inductees).
- Friday, October 2nd - 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. - Homecoming tailgate, football game, introductions of Hall of Fame inductees and Homecoming court
- Saturday, October 3rd - Homecoming dance at BHS

It was moved by Ms. Webster, seconded by Mrs. Yount, that the 2009-10 Budget be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye". Motion carried. (See with Original Minutes, Attachment 09-23-09/2)

It was moved by Mr. Butcher, seconded by Dr. Perry, that the BEA Letter of Understanding - Course Approval be approved. Upon a roll call vote, all Members present voted "Aye." Motion carried. (See with Original Minutes, Attachment 09-23-09/3)

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Dirks adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

President

Secretary