

Board of Education Highlights

January 23, 2008 - Whittier Elementary School

Communication with Host School

Principal Joann Hall and her staff presented a short demonstration on “Smart Board” technology to the Board of Education. A Smart Board is an interactive computer tool displayed on a large white board that supports instruction. This instructional tool allows teachers to engage students directly in essential learning elements while providing them with clear visual and at times, tactile response options.

High School Student Reports

A representative from each high school reported to the Board about some of the activities taking place in their schools. They extended their appreciation on behalf of the students to the Board for allowing the first semester to end and take their final exams before the winter break. Wheaton Warrenville South High School Symphonic Orchestra was selected to perform at the Illinois Music Educators Association Convention. This is a very prestigious honor for the Orchestra and for the District. Wheaton North High School sold “Blue Out” (school color) t-shirts as a fund raising event so that there would be a sea of blue in the stands at basketball games. The sale generated over \$4,000 in profits that were donated to the Outreach Community Center.

Recognitions & Achievements:

Dr. Drury recognized and commended Dr. Margo Sorrick, Ali Maggio-Beiermeister, and Debby Stoll for designing and implementing the professional development sessions held on January 22 for District teachers on Understanding By Design (UBD). Dr. Sorrick and her staff trained 84 teachers who then delivered these training sessions to their peers. UBD is an instructional planning process that allows teachers to transform the District’s approved instructional standards into classroom lessons.

Belief Statement:

Dr. Drury highlighted another one of District 200’s belief statements: *Successful schools result when a partnership exists between the schools, parents, and the community.* Dr. Drury asked Dr. Margo Sorrick, Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services, to speak about the partnership between the District, parents, and the community that is working to address the State testing procedures for English Language Learners of our District. Under the current state regulations, the standardized tests, mandated under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), require that all students be tested in English regardless of their language ability. In other words, students in our District who have limited or no skills in English are required to take these standardized tests in a language in which they are not proficient. District 200 has nearly 1300 students whose primary language is not English, representing 40 different languages. Although the regulations allow for some accommodations for these students like having more time to complete the tests or having the directions read to them in their dominate language, they do not appropriately address

the difficulty students will face during these tests. Dr. Sorrick offered the Board an example of what students would face. She gave the Board members a reading test comprised of a short passage followed by a number of questions to answer. She told members that they could have all the time they needed. The passage and questions were written in Arabic. She said that students in our school would be facing the same challenge: taking a test in a language they don't understand that is designed to measure their academic knowledge. District 200 Director of English Language Learners, Phyllis Weaver, has been instrumental in leading the campaign to address this problem. Ms. Weaver was instrumental in drafting a position paper that has been adopted and endorsed by the Regional Office of Education and shared with other districts. Dr. Sorrick and Ms. Weaver have met with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, as well as political and area leaders, in an effort to bring to light the unfairness of these testing procedures. Dr. Sorrick encouraged Board members to remain vocal and sensitive to this matter as it affects the students of District 200 as well as students across the state.

The Board took the following action:

Approved the posting of K-6 Social Studies textbooks and supplemental materials.

Approved K-8 Social Studies and K-8 Physical Education Curriculums.

Approved to amend Policy 6.20, School Year Calendar and Day, as posted. The revision complies with the Silent Reflection and Student Prayer Act.

Approved the 2008-09 District Calendar as posted.

Approved to amend Policy 4.110, Transportation, as posted. The revision mandates safety procedures required of school bus drivers.

Approved a Centrex Contract with AT&T for telephone service that will save the District over \$34,000.

Oral Report

Dr. Drury reported to the Board about discussions that have occurred with parents from Lowell Elementary School. Last year, Lowell parents approached former superintendent, Dr. Catalani, and Lowell principal, Denise DeSalvo, about how the fifth grade students at Lowell are split when they move on to middle school; some of the students attend Franklin and some attend Hubble. The parents requested that this problem be examined and Dr. Catalani and Ms. DeSalvo indicated that the issue would be addressed by the new superintendent. Dr. Drury met with parents from the effected neighborhoods, Danada North, Briarcliffe North and South, to hear their concerns and explore possible solutions. Based on those parent conversations and after considering the various options with Ms. DeSalvo and other building administrators, the recommendation before the Board is for Danada North students to attend Lincoln Elementary School, which would be their neighborhood school, and then attend Edison Middle School. Students from both Briarcliffe neighborhoods would attend Wiesbrook Elementary School and then attend Hubble Middle School. These boundary changes would take effect for the 2008-09

school year. Students from the effected subdivisions currently attending Lowell would be able to finish their elementary experience at Lowell if parents desired. Current Danada North students who attend Hubble in grades 5 or 6 would have the option of remaining at Hubble or moving to Edison next year. A decision on this recommendation will be made by the end of February.

It was important to mention that this boundary adjustment is not connected in any way to the Hubble referendum and upon School Board approval, will be implemented in the fall of 2008 regardless of the referendum outcome.

Board members and Dr. Drury also stated that there is no redistricting being considered related to the February 5, 2008 referendum.

Next Meeting:

February 13, 2008 at Emerson Elementary School