

MINUTES
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 200
March 10, 2010

The first regular meeting of the month of March of the Board of Education of Community Unit School District 200, DuPage County, Illinois, was called to order at Whittier Elementary School, 218 W. Park Avenue, Wheaton, IL, by Board President Andy Johnson, on Wednesday, March 10, 2010, at 7:30 PM.

ROLL CALL

Upon the roll being called, the following were present:

Board Members: Andy Johnson
 Rosemary Swanson
 John Bomher
 Joann Coghill
 Barbara Intihar
 Ken Knicker
 Marie Slater

Also in Attendance: Dr. Chuck Baker
 Dr. Lori Belha
 Mr. Bill Farley
 Mrs. Linda Knicker
 Dr. Margo Sorrick
 Dr. Robert Rammer

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mrs. Joanne Hall led the Board and community in the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE HOST SCHOOL

Mrs. Joanne Hall, Whittier Principal, welcomed the Board, administrators and community to the school. Mrs. Hall stated that this is Whittier's 85th birthday and shared a history of the building. A video was shown that outlined how Whittier incorporated the Olympics into the PE curriculum.

MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA

The Superintendent's Report was moved to just prior to the Discussion Item.

RECOGNITIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Dr. Baker reported that the ISAT testing is now completed and the results will be received in June. Dr. Baker thanked everyone involved for their hard work.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Agenda Items

President Johnson stated that the public comments are valuable and important to Board members. However, it is the Board's policy not to take action on any items until time has been taken to

gather adequate information and objectively discuss available options. Lack of action on comments made at this meeting does not imply any lack of interest in what has been said.

Speaker	Scott Brown
Topic	<p>Finance Committee Recommendations</p> <p>A PowerPoint Presentation was given by Mr. Brown that outlined the recommendations of the Finance Committee. The committee recommends that the \$8.6 million deficit be dealt with without issuing bonds. The Committee recommends the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make appropriate adjustments to the collective bargaining agreements to support financial sustainability • Negotiate a salary freeze with the bargaining units • Reduce compensation for administrators • Maintain elementary class sizes in primary grades (K-2) • Re-evaluate class sized “caps” • Reduce stipends by 10% • Remove the elimination of kindergarten PE from the cut list • Increase fees – registration, athletics (remove the family cap), high school parking, course fees • Maximize general operations expenditures • Explore a rate referendum at the earliest appropriate time <p>Mr. Brown stated that the committee believes all of these steps will lead to a balanced budget. The committee encourages all to get this done and get the contracts negotiated sooner rather than later.</p> <p>Board members thanked the committee for their work.</p>

Speaker	Cathy Halfacre
Topic	Programs Proposed to be Cut – i.e. Reading Specialists & Aides

Speaker	Charissa Ziemer
Topic	Cuts in Staff

Speaker	Julie Georgiou
Topic	Cuts

Speaker	Ann Marie Matthei
Topic	Reduction Recommendations

Speaker	Mary Ann Vitone
Topic	Budget

Speaker	Jeanne Ives
Topic	Budget

Speaker	Tom Rebman
Topic	Budget Cuts

Speaker	Eric Trusty
Topic	Budget

Speaker	John Seely
Topic	Budget

Speaker	Bryce Cann
Topic	Budget

Speaker	Gary Lorber
Topic	Budget

Speaker	Kristin McCoyd
Topic	Class Size/Reading

Speaker	Lisa Seleski
Topic	Class Size/Reading Budget

Speaker	Alex Ahnert
Topic	General

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of the Novell Software License Agreement Renewal – Recommend approval of the Novell Software License Agreement in the amount of \$30,352.50 as presented
2. Approval of Bills Payable and Payroll – Recommend approval of the bills payable and payroll as presented.
3. Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2010 Open and Closed - Recommend that the minutes be approved as presented. The closed session minutes will remain closed.
4. Approval of Personnel and Supplemental Personnel Reports – Recommend the approval of the Personnel and Supplemental Personnel Reports as presented.

MOTION

Member Slater moved, Member Bomher seconded to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: AYE 7, NAY 0. **The motion carried 7-0.**

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Dr. Baker presented information on the administrative budget reduction recommendations. Dr. Baker stated that this is one phase of the recommendation and, given the financial realities, it is imperative that we look forward; the district has to look to a new norm. Part of the recommendation includes ongoing studies to see how we run our schools.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Board members discussed the recommendations of the administrators and the Finance Committee.

Member Swanson thanked Dr. Baker for all of the work he and the staff have put in to develop this recommendation. As Mrs. Swanson reflected on all of the public comments and emails, she believes the Board has heard a lot of valuable ideas. Part of the job of the Board of Education is

to balance all of the approaches we have heard from the community. Most of the comments indicate that people feel the education offered is good, which goes right along with what the Board heard a few years ago in the stakeholder satisfaction survey. Member Swanson reminded people that the spending by the Board of Education has put the district in the range to be competitive in hiring. It seems that people think of administrators as nameless people doing paperwork; administrators are principals, assistant principals, deans, athletic directors. They are the people that put the programs together and guide the very good teachers. There is not a huge crowd of administrators sitting at the Administration Building. There are 56 administrators in the district and about 15 of them work at the Administration Building. The Board will be looking at that group and making any changes that are needed, but they are a valuable part of the district.

Member Intihar stated that the titles might be misleading, but the administrators are the “doers”. Member Intihar suggested that maybe the district needs an organizational description so the public better understands what the administrators do and what their job descriptions are. Without great administrators, the district would not have programs like the reading program. The principals are busy investigating new theories and approaches while the teachers are busy teaching students all day. We need the leadership to make “it” happen.

Member Knicker thanked all 56 people that spoke publically and stated that he appreciates everything that was shared. Mr. Knicker stated that as the budget reductions move ahead the quality of education will not change and the Board will do everything they can to protect that quality as the district moves into this new reality.

Member Bomher stated that these are tough times and reductions have to be made in expenditures. This is going to be a painful task, but frankly many of the recommendations are changes management would be making due to declining enrollment – the district is “right sizing” and this is fiscally responsible. Member Bomher stated that he has concerns about some of the proposed administrative cuts because they will impair the ability to recruit and retain the brightest and best people. The forward advancement of administrators has to have an appeal to get them to move to that level from the teaching ranks. Due to the increased rate of teacher pay raises over the years and the lack of raises for administrators it is hard to encourage new young people to become administrators. One of the most important factors in academic success is the ability of the principal to lead. Dr. Baker stated that there is research that shows that the most important part of the school is the principal; and likewise, successful districts have strong superintendents that set the bar for the entire district.

Member Slater stated that she believes the district must go after the entire \$8.6 million deficit. The recommendations do not reach that number. How will the remaining balance be attained? Dr. Baker stated that some of it will come from a recommendation to increase fees, but staff needs input from the Board on what level of increase the Board is comfortable with. A fee increase proposal will be coming to the Board at the next meeting. Dr. Baker also stated that additional reductions will come from the negotiation of the bargaining unit contracts. Borrowing from the working cash fund is not a recommendation from staff. That money will be necessary if the State of Illinois “doomsday” prediction comes true.

Mr. Farley explained that the working cash fund is basically the savings account of the district. That balance has never been more important to maintain a healthy balance given the condition of the state.

Member Coghill stated that she too believes the district must get to the total \$8.6 million deficit. Based on her experience in real estate, Member Coghill reported that property taxes on comparable homes in District 200 are lower than many of the surrounding towns.

There was a discussion regarding the proposal to eliminate PE at the kindergarten level, and the middle school B sports program. Dr. Baker stated that staff has had discussion with the Park District about the B sports program and they believe they can offer the same program for our students. The district has not entered into any formal agreement at this time.

There was a discussion about the need to reduce enough staff by March 24th to afford the district flexibility in staffing decisions. The March 24th date is a legal requirement and is an effort to give teachers fair notice.

There was a discussion about the class size recommendation and the difference in the recommendations from staff versus the recommendations from the Finance Committee. Dr. Baker will provide additional information on this issue prior to the Board making their decision.

Member Intihar asked if the district has looked at absenteeism in the district and the use of substitutes. Dr. Belha reported that staff is looking at absenteeism and has been tracking the daily numbers over the last three years.

Member Slater clarified that teachers pay their full contribution to the Teacher Retirement System (TRS), the district does not contribute to this at all. Teachers do not pay into social security; their TRS is the equivalent of social security. Classified employees are part of the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) and the district pays a state mandated portion of their contribution.

Member Swanson asked questions about the proposed changes to the Academy Program. Dr. Baker stated that opportunities will not be taken away from kids. This proposal will just change the times of the day that they attend the program. Mrs. Knicker stated that this is a reduction in how we deliver the program. This change will provide opportunities for more students at less cost.

Dr. Baker responded to a comment made during Public Comment regarding the Franklin Middle School orchestra students going to the Administration Building to perform. There is no lunch being served to the staff or students. The students are coming to the building to show their talents and perform for a different group of people. The only cost is the bus and that is part of the already budgeted funds for 2009-10.

Member Intihar clarified a public comment statement regarding travel allowances. Administrators are given a travel allocation to cover travel between buildings in the course of their work, not to travel from home to their job.

President Johnson clarified that the money spent to build Hubble Middle School has no impact on the budget situation. Those funds were received as the result of a referendum passed by the community and can not be used for any other purpose. President Johnson stated that the Finance Committee spoke about the future need to run an education fund referendum. The independent auditors that review the financials of the district have reported time and time again that this is

something the district needs to consider. Most districts run these fund referendums every five to seven years and District 200 has not run one since 1987.

Member Slater thanked Dr. Rammer for all of his answers to the many emails received regarding the proposed reductions. It took a lot of time and expertise to answer all of them.

WRITTEN REPORTS

None

REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Member Knicker reported that the League of Women Voters is hosting a forum on the use of the old Hubble property on March 18.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

2010-11 Budget

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

March 24, 2010 – Edison Middle School, 7:30 PM

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Non-Agenda Items

President Johnson stated that the public comments are valuable and important to Board members. However, it is the Board's policy not to take action on any items until time has been taken to gather adequate information and objectively discuss available options. Lack of action on comments made at this meeting does not imply any lack of interest in what has been said.

Speaker	Mark Stern
Topic	Contract

MOTION

There being no further business to come before the Board in Open Session, Member Intihar moved, Member Bomher seconded to suspend the rules and adjourn the meeting to Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Student Discipline 5ILCS 120/2(c)(9), Personnel Items 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and Collective Negotiating 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1). Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: AYE 7, NAY 0. **The motion carried 7-0.**

The meeting was adjourned to Closed Session at 11:00 PM.

No action is expected following the closed session.

Barbara Intihar, Secretary

Andrew Johnson, President