

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 200**  
**October 8, 2010**

A special meeting of the Board of Education of Community Unit School District 200, DuPage County, Illinois, was called to order at The School Service Center, 130 W. Park Avenue, Wheaton, IL, by Vice Board President Rosemary Swanson, on Friday, October 8, 2010, at 7:30 AM. Local legislators were present at the meeting to discuss educational issues and the funding of education in the State of Illinois.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon the roll being called, the following were present:

Board Members:      Rosemary Swanson  
                             Ken Knicker  
                             Barbara Intihar  
                             John Bomher  
                             Joann Coghill  
                             Marie C. Slater

Absent:                 Andrew Johnson

Also in Attendance: Dr. Brian Harris  
                             Dr. Lori Belha  
                             Ms. Erica Foreman  
                             Mr. Bill Farley  
                             Mrs. Linda Knicker  
                             Dr. Robert Rammer  
                             Dr. Margo Sorrick

Legislators:            Senator Randy Hultgren  
                             Senator Carol Pankau  
                             Representative Sandy Pihos  
                             Regional Superintendent Darlene Ruscitti

**MOTION**

Member Bomher moved, Member Intihar seconded to suspend the rules and adjourn to a workshop setting. Upon a voice call vote being taken, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Introductions were made around the room. Dr. Harris thanked everyone for attending. Documents were provided to the legislators that summarize the District 200 budget for 2010-11.

There was discussion regarding the status of the state finances and budget and the impact that has on the school district. Board members stated that District 200 worked very hard to reduce spending and increase revenue and have achieved a balanced budget. The Board stated that the

community members would like to see the state do the same thing. If additional cuts are necessary for District 200, the cuts will be core decisions and will affect opportunities for students.

Representative Pihos stated that if nothing changes in Springfield from the elections, nothing will change in Springfield. This will not be known until after November. Funding of education is a critical issue and Representative Pihos thanked the Board of Education for doing a tremendous job on the development of the budget. Representative Pihos stated that she sits on all of the state education committees. She believes that spending in the state is out of line with the income and finances have to be better balanced. There needs to be more than one party working in Springfield.

Senator Pankau stated that the entire tenor of Springfield will be different after November. Republicans will become players again. Citizens are mad and they want the state to do what District 200 has done; look at every expense and see if we really need it. The state did not get in this mess overnight and it won't get out of it overnight either.

Regional Superintendent Darlene Ruscitti stated that the way funding is given out needs to be looked at. Districts are required to complete approximately 57 forms for the federal government alone and then there are state reports on top of that. There is redundancy that could be eliminated which would reduce the wasting of time and resources.

Dr. Harris stated that it is about efficiencies. Nothing ever comes off the plate, just more is added. Unfunded mandates are a large challenge. When new laws are changed districts have to implement them and it is a huge staff heavy issue with no funding. Dr. Harris asked the legislators to consider the requirements, mandates and impact at the local level.

Board member Bomher stated that he would like to see a moratorium on mandates until we can agree on a funding level. We are always asking our administrators to do more and more with less. Over the long term this will have a negative effect; how long can you ask your top people to take pay cuts but increase the work demands?

Board member Intihar stated that Illinois is a whole state and no one district or area should be more important than another. How do we get to what is best for kids and not just what the democrats in Chicago want or the republicans in DuPage County want? All groups need to be in this together and should be looking globally at education and the issue of funding.

Representative Pihos stated that the law will not change that lets Chicago get their money right off the top and they are not required to fill out the forms like all other districts. Senator Pankau stated that things are not going to change in education until all students are viewed the same. Member Slater stated that the state has to say this is our commitment; all kids deserve the same education and opportunities. Representative Pihos stated that Illinois has to put its financial house in order first and then we can go back to the fight for all kids.

Senator Hultgren stated that he believes the number one priority of legislators is education. One frustration he has is that it all gets wrapped into one funding system. This puts districts in a horrible position of deciding staffing in April and not getting funding until November. Senator Hultgren would like to see the education budget deadline moved up to March 15 or 31 for

passage and then everything else fits into the budget after that. It is not fair to districts as leaders, and not to teachers not to know what is going to happen with their jobs. Senator Hultgren proposes putting legislation forward to require the state education budget to be decided by the end of March and tie it to some form of incentive for the legislators to get it done. Board member Swanson stated that you can't measure the human toll when districts have to RIF all non-tenured teachers because we don't know where the state budget is going to land. District 200 lost good people because they accepted jobs elsewhere before we could call them back to work.

Regional Superintendent Darlene Ruscitti stated that public perception is big right now. The public wants to see what schools are doing with their money. We need to be able to show how the money is helping kids and how we are protecting the tax payer dollars. We need to educate the students, but we also have to educate the public too. Negative PR is harder to fight than anything else.

There was a discussion about one-time money, such as the ARRA funds. Dr. Harris stated that it has helped the district weather the current storm, but it is one-time money that will go away and then we will be back to zero.

There was discussion about what the state needs to do to fix the budget issues. Representative Pihos stated that there needs to be a balance of power in Springfield. Legislators don't even discuss the budget all year long. They receive the budget right before the vote and that is why she has voted no on the last seven budgets. Senator Hultgren stated that when one party dominates the power, nothing gets done. It will require a balance of power, along with a combination of cuts and revenue increases to fix the financial crisis.

Dr. Harris distributed a document regarding Appropriate Assessment Systems for All Students. Dr. Margo Sorrick reviewed the key points of the document. There is a need for appropriate assessment mechanisms. Currently, some groups are inappropriately assessed and there is a need to look at an accountability system that is fair for all kids.

Member Knicker suggested that this group meet again after the elections to see how we can move forward and what District 200 can do to help the legislators resolve the budget and funding issues. It was decided that a follow-up session will be scheduled in January.

#### **MOTION**

There being no further business to come before the Board in Open Session, Member Intihar moved, Member Coghill seconded to adjourn the meeting. Upon a voice call vote being taken, all were in favor and **the motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 AM.

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**Barbara Intihar, Secretary**

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**Andrew Johnson, President**