

Minutes of a Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Education of Hawthorn Community Consolidated School District Number 73, Lake County, Illinois, held in the Conference Room at 841 West End Court at 7:00PM on the 11th day of November 2008.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Tim Shanahan, President, at 7:05PM. Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Debbie Limer called the roll, with the following members of the Board of Education answering present: Jeff Bard, Michelle Comitor, John Sonnenberg, Donna Gaidamak, Anne Hoffman, Tim Shanahan. Absent: Lisa Jay

Building/District level:

1. Auditor

Tim Shanahan told the Board that the auditor is not yet ready. He will be here for the next meeting. Tim Shanahan requested that press updates be moved on the agenda after the Building/District level items are completed

1. Results of the Community Survey

Dr. Yomtoob told the Board we are not yet ready with the community survey. It will be discussed at the next meeting. Jeff Bard asked about the ECRA response. Dr. Zook commented that she was told they got back a good percentage of surveys from the parents. They were working on the community phone calls. That response was not as good, but she was assured that they would get enough to complete the survey.

2. Student Achievement Goals

Dr. Yomtoob brought up the subject of MAP scores and achievement goals. Lisa Cerauli told the Board that when the number of students receiving a 3.5 was added to the writing scores the percentage of students meeting State Standards went from 71% to 77%. Jeff Bard asked for the results by grade level. Ms. Cerauli commented that she could get those numbers for the Board. Jeff Bard asked if the ISAT scores came back as anything different than was expected. Ms. Cerauli reported that we are stronger in math. We are focused on writing and literacy. Overall the students did well on MAP testing.

Michelle Comitor stated that there are significant differences in the writing scores at the different schools. Tim Shanahan wanted to know if there was a demographic correlation. Ms. Cerauli reported that we have not yet looked into that specifically. Donna Gaidamak stated that she wants to see all of our students get a score of 4 on the ISAT writing prompt. Dr. Yomtoob commented that as our students get older they get better in writing. John Sonnenberg wanted to know if the scores for writing can be separated out by grade. He questioned if there are different writing programs within buildings. Ms. Cerauli told the Board that we receive weekly reports on My Access. The building principals have been meeting to discuss issues, plans, and look at the data. We are monitoring and changing the goals as needed. Dr. Zook stated that some of the difference is reflective of demographics. As an example there are less subgroups at Aspen. If one subgroup does not make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress), then the entire school does not make AYP. John Sonnenberg added that we have more experience in math testing, changes to testing in writing has come later. Anne Hoffman indicated that writing has been an issue for a long time. The accountability through data has been a positive step. She asked for an example of success. Ms. Cerauli stated that at the middle schools teachers are taking a leadership role. Writing is going on across the curriculum. The teachers are working hard. The writing expectations have changed, and so has the testing. Dr. Zook added that the expectations are higher at the elementary level. All 6th graders are now getting a writing block.

Ms. Cerauli told the Board that the My Access kinks are being worked out. We are hoping to get more data with it. Donna Gaidamak asked how the PE and non-Language Arts teachers are using writing in their classes. Ms. Cerauli explained that they are not teaching writing. They are reinforcing writing with reflection. It is collaboration between the Language Arts and non-Language Arts teachers. Donna Gaidamak asked how long and how many times a month the students are using My Access. Ms. Cerauli commented that it varies. Donna Gaidamak noted the keyboarding issue with My Access. It is very hard for students who do not know how to keyboard to enter effectively into My Access. Ms. Cerauli told the Board that the teacher can decide how many revisions are allowed for each writing prompt. Jeff Bard wanted to know if My Access is widely used. Ms. Cerauli commented that we get weekly reports for each building. The expectation is that each student will be on at least once a month. Jeff Bard asked about home usage. Ms. Cerauli stated that we can make it more visible with help screens for home usage. Donna Gaidamak wanted to know if the teachers are using it too much. Ms. Cerauli indicated that they are not. It is being used as one part of writing instruction.

Jeff Bard commented that his quick overview of the math and reading ISAT scores indicates that the number of students receiving 4's went down across the board from last year. He stated that his concern is that we are not meeting the needs of all of the students.

He would also like to see a comparison of the data from year to year on the same group of students as they progress through the grades. Dr. Zook explained that 62.5% was the target this year. There are differences from year to year. Two schools can have the same scores. They will have different AYP scores based on the questions that were pulled from the ISATs. Jeff Bard wanted to

know if we are diminishing other subject areas with the focus on writing. Ms. Cerauli stated that the students are getting more subject content through the writing. Dr. Zook added that there will be updates on the School Improvement Plan in January.

3. Class size/enrollment figures

Dr. Zook went over the class sizes. Aspen and Townline are filled. The kindergarten classes vary due to boundaries. Donna Gaidamak asked about the disparity between the first grade classes at Townline versus Elementary North. Dr. Zook explained that we added a section at Elementary North. She added that the teachers are showing good results with the smaller classes at Elementary North. Donna Gaidamak asked why we are not filling the classes at Elementary North and South. Dr. Yomtoob explained that we are filling those schools because during the year when new students move in. They will attend Elementary North or South. Tim Shanahan questioned how many new students come in a week. Dr. Yomtoob commented that there can be as many as three to ten a week. Jeff Bard added that at the same time there are students who leave the District during the year as well. Donna Gaidamak added that a parent can keep his or her child in our school to finish out the year, if they decided to move out of the District. Jeff Bard asked about when an aide is put into a larger classroom. Dr. Zook explained that there are a number of one-on-one aides. That one-on-one still benefits the students in that classroom. Eileen Conway added that the District employs 22 one-on-one aides.

Dr. Zook explained the reason for the disparity of classroom sizes at the middle school level in Language Arts and Math. Those two subjects are leveled depending on the needs of the students. The classrooms with the higher numbers are the higher levels. The teachers are okay with the larger class size in that situation. Science and Social Studies are not leveled. The larger classes may have an aide. She stated that we have a few students who may move schools for math. A fifth grader may come to the middle school. We have a student at Middle School South who goes to the high school for his math class. Dr. Yomtoob added that the numbers change throughout the year. Donna Gaidamak asked about the threshold for splitting classes. Dr. Zook stated as an example that a teacher did an assessment and determined that she had two different levels in the classroom. We changed the classrooms around to meet the needs of the students. Anne Hoffman asked if the second class was differentiated. Dr. Zook explained that the class was supposed to be average math. We created an advanced class for those students who needed it. Anne Hoffman commented that there are studies that prove that the AAA students need to be clustered together. They make greater improvements when they are clustered. Dr. Zook stated that they are kept together. She added that there will be a December MAP tests for all 5th graders to help with 6th grade placement.

Jeff Bard asked if we, like some other schools, could get a waiver if we chose to for kids who are not meeting their AYP. He questioned if we would reduce the number of PE or other specials like art to increase their time on academics. Dr. Zook explained that we are looking at interventions. There are guidelines in place. We do it as a case by case. Our first choice would be to have extra time for the student before or after school. In a lot of cases PE, art, or music is a student's strength. We do not want to take that away. Dr. Yomtoob commented that other schools have the waivers, but it does not necessarily work. We need to find that child's strength and build on it. Jeff Bard commented that some students would rather spend time on improving academics.

Policy:

1. Press Updates

Tim Shanahan brought up the February press updates. They have to do with school board business and minutes. Anne Hoffman commented that in light of those updates we have changed how we are taking Committee of the Whole Minutes. They will be handled as the business meetings are handled. For any type of meeting we will be listing absent board members as well as members who come late or leave early. Tim Shanahan mentioned reviewing the closed minutes and the log to release to the public in an annual review. Anne Hoffman stated that we do that as a part of the consent agenda. We release closed minutes twice a year. The recommendation of release is done by our attorney. Tim Shanahan commented that the tapes are destroyed every six months. Anne Hoffman explained that we are already doing a lot of the things are required. Jeff Bard stated that we have to decide what format we are adopting. Anne Hoffman indicated that we are limiting ourselves if we add the exhibits. She recommended that we not add the exhibits.

Tim Shanahan asked if there were any questions. John Sonnenberg stated most of the items we have to adopt are State Laws. Anne Hoffman added that most of them are informative, and there is nothing that we need to do.

Anne Hoffman suggested that we should review the enrollment estimates before the beginning of the year. Tim Shanahan stated that we already have the required Wellness Policy that takes into account the new requirements for dental and eye exams. Another requirement we are already doing is visitor badges.

Tim Shanahan went over the June policy changes that had to do with credit cards and procurement cards and the policies related to such. Anne Hoffman stated it is a procedure on a process. It is checks and balances. Jeff Bard reported that there are options to consider in the recommended policy changes from the Press. Donna Gaidamak commented that we need to talk about this issue. Dr. Yomtoob explained that there are three credit cards that can be borrowed for a specific purpose. Tim Shanahan explained that we are allowed three options. He suggested the option that allowed for superintendent discretion. Anne Hoffman added that we all see the financial statements. Jeff Bard commented that he would like to see a procedure based on the policy for the credit card use that includes the positions allowed to borrow the card, the amount of money that can be spent, and the check out policy.

Tim Shanahan mentioned our Activity Fund. Jeff Bard commented that there are options that need to be decided on how it is handled. Anne Hoffman stated that we need to discuss this with Alan Hahn. Jeff Bard explained that it is being recommended in the Press packet that we change auditors from time to time. He stated that he did not want to change auditors yearly because then every year we start back at the beginning of the learning curve, but at the same time we should look at other auditors. Anne Hoffman suggested the wording be "periodic" because we do not want to limit our options.

Tim Shanahan brought up disposition of District property. Jeff Bard mentioned that once again there are options to consider in the Press packet. Anne Hoffman stated that we should allow the superintendent to make the decisions. Donna Gaidamak asked about building principals. Anne Hoffman stated that the superintendent should have the final word as the superintendent is our only employee.

Tim Shanahan mentioned revolving funds. The discussion was tabled until it could be discussed with Alan Hahn.

Tim Shanahan mentioned the removing of the Moment of Silence from the school district policy. Jeff Bard commented at this point we have caught up with some of the policies and suggested we hold off discussion of the additional policy updates.

Finance:

1. 2009/2010 Budget Calendar

Tim Shanahan brought up the 2009-2010 budget calendar. Jeff Bard questioned who works on the budget. He wanted to know if Alan Hahn directs the building principals. He questioned who decides on the capital outlay. Dr. Yomtoob stated that we try to do multiple big capital outlays rather than multiple smaller ones. For an example, the PE department makes one capital outlay purchase per year. Jeff Bard asked what happens if the outlay is not approved. John Sonnenberg commented that the materials are needed before the start of the school year. Dr. Zook indicated that the capital outlays are a couple of hundred dollars per purchase order. Dr. Yomtoob reported that he would talk to Alan Hahn about this issue. We come to the Board of Education with significant changes. Jeff Bard stated that he would like to see an overview discussion of the budget before July. Some school districts do it in May. Donna Gaidamak commented that it is a good idea. Michelle Comitor asked if that will change other dates related to the budget. Donna Gaidamak stated that it does not have to. Dr. Yomtoob suggested that we get Alan Hahn's opinion. Jeff Bard stated that he would like to approve the tentative budget earlier than we do currently. Anne Hoffman suggested that we table this for a later discussion with Alan Hahn. She added that Alan Hahn should be prepared for our questions ahead of time. Tim Shanahan stated that Alan Hahn should give us some options for the next meeting.

2. IMRF Election

Tim Shanahan brought up the IMRF election. The Board of Education consensus was for William Stafford. Donna Gaidamak abstained.

Communication:

1. Review Doug Reeves presentation

Tim Shanahan brought up the subject of the Doug Reeves presentation. John Sonnenberg told the Board that he thought Doug Reeves did a great job with the community. He was glad that others came. He would like to know the numbers from the Hawthorn community and from other communities. He added that he liked his view on tracking. Tim Shanahan stated that he was proud of the families who came out. They asked great questions. Donna Gaidamak explained that she was listening as a parent, and his comments were spot on with common sense.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Tim Shanahan requested a motion to adjourn.

Michelle Comitor moved to adjourn the meeting. Donna Gaidamak seconded the motion. Voice Vote: 6 ayes: 0 nays. Motion carried.

Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 9:35PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Limer

Timothy Shanahan, President

Anne Hoffman, Secretary