

**DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
AUGUST 7, 2006**

The Board of Directors of the Davenport Community School District met in open session for a Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, August 7, 2006 pursuant to law. The meeting was held in the Large Motor Room at Children's Village West, 2826 West Locust Street, Davenport, Iowa, in said district. President Zamora called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

On roll call the following board members were present: President Patt Zamora; Directors Richard Clewell, Katie Hanson, Ralph Johanson, Larry Roberson, and Tim Tupper. Absent: Director Nikki De Fauw. Superintendent Almanza and other administrators were also present.

FACILITIES

Bill Good handed out an overview of construction projects in the District that would help update the Board on activities. The report included information on parking, spill at North High, sidewalks, Truman vandalism, locker shortages, roof leak at Jackson, purchasing natural gas, heating, Lincoln property, and other items. Mr. Good explained the preliminary presentation on plans for Central High renovations was being presented tonight, and the final plans would be brought to the Board for approval in September. The website has a list of the projects we have been working on and the long-range construction plans.

Central High School has as its first priority at this time construction of a new PE building and renovation of Kemper Hall. The annex building will be razed and classes will be relocated. Mr. Good presented historical background information about Kemper Hall (1885 construction) and the major issue now is interior work involving mechanical ventilation, restrooms, maintaining integrity, and the heating system. Another area of concern is inadequacy and problems in the wrestling area. Mr. Good presented details about the team room, asbestos floors, wrestling room, plumbing infrastructure, and other floor plans being reconfigured. The new addition will serve the needs for industrial technology labs, ROTC classes, and will free up space for other programs. Principal Tim Wernentin was available to answer questions from board members. They spoke about equity issues, team rooms for the girls at the high school, and having a new multi-purpose area. The second floor at Kemper will be used for special education classrooms, and construction will be done on the boys' restroom and in the time-out room where the intervention problems are held. The wrestling room will be in the small gym and the multi-purpose room will replace the team area for students. Kemper Hall will have additional classrooms for special education and for journalism. The costs were broken down with a total projected for the work.

Board members spent some time asking questions about a number of matters dealing with the preliminary plans. This included areas such as physical education, safety, adequacy, wellness, 21st century needs, ROTC, math and journalism. Mr. Good presented the time table for the work with final plans in September, bidding on projects in October, approval of bids in November, starting work in December 2006, and completion of the projects by the end of 2007. Director Roberson asked if the Board would approve the \$3.2 million plus in renovations, what affect would this have on student achievement? Mr. Wernentin responded by talking about "Project Lead the Way" efforts, increased graduation requirements, PE, and elective classes that are part of the block schedule would be affected. The language arts program is impacted by having classes at Kemper Hall; with additional gymnasium area, students will have more assess to

facilities so they don't have to stay at school until 9 PM in order to find practice time. He felt there was a connection with improvements in the facilities and overall student achievement.

Mr. Good estimated around \$13 million has been spent on Central, North, and West High schools trying to make them equal and equitable. Another piece for further review at Central is the addition of a new swimming pool; this would have an estimated cost of around \$3 million. Superintendent Almanza noted the items originally requested were on the website for reference. He has had conversations with Palmer and the YMCA about the pool at Central, but these are preliminary discussions about how we can collaboratively benefit the community.

Mr. Good noted Director De Fauw had asked about the Partners in Education program at another meeting, and he spoke to Mr. Wernentin about pulling this group together. Director Roberson asked about additional problems that might be caused for parking around Central with the new addition of the gym. Mr. Good talked about monitoring parking and having discussions with Palmer about the lot at 12th and Harrison Street. Having access to this parking lot would help with a number of neighborhood issues and we are working on this matter. There were questions from Director Clewell about the historical significance of Kemper Hall and maintaining its integrity. President Zamora had questions about the field at the bottom of the hill and asked what was being done to prepare this for school. Mr. Good said the grass situation was being addressed so things should be set for the beginning of school and for band and PE.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A report was reviewed by Mrs. Betty Long outlining program offerings for special education. She talked about enrollment, programs, curriculum alignment, professional development, and services outside the traditional school setting. Mrs. Long outline services provided at Wittenmyer residential facility, Kimberly Center West, and early childhood special education classes. There are a number of other initiatives available for students with special needs. The staff is working at understanding underlying causes of behavior, doing assessments, developing behavior interventions, creating a protocol for students with IEPs, and examining data and statistics for students. She talked about clearly describing IEPs, strengthening the implementation for solution focus programs, and the effective use and changes for para-educators in the district. The Board heard about behavior intervention plans, therapeutic crisis intervention, and eyes on print strategies. Throughout the presentation board members asked questions and Betty Long addressed specific areas of concern. She was able to explain and clarify a number of issues relating to the services provided in special education. There are many proactive methods being used and we have a close connection to services offered through the AEA coordinated with our district.

Juli Staszewski helped explained and answer questions dealing with curriculum areas and special education offerings. She talked about protocol and examining gender and race data. There are matters dealing with behavioral patterns which look at tolerance and expectation levels. Davenport has more special students within the AEA 9 and the State is concerned about the data. Mrs. Long talked ore about collaborative teaching concepts and new innovations being used for special education students. The numbers say 75% of our special education students spend 80% of their time in special education classes. The State says this is no longer acceptable and students need more time in content areas. This is coming from the State and Federal Government with No Child Left Behind. We have six years to make adjustments. The Board heard about testing and measurement for special education students, consistency among buildings, and getting cooperation from the AEA.

Mr. Almanza said the review of data show our numbers are going up on over-representation of minorities in special education caused by several reasons. We are looking at referrals by teachers, staffing for special education areas, and reassignments. Mrs. McClurg answered concerns about shortages and vacancies for special education teachers, which is a market issue. We are working hard at getting the teaching and staff positions in place for the coming year. Director Tupper said he would like to see more data on J.B. Young and Lincoln because of the changes in the areas of special education. Mrs. Long said she could provide more information for board members at a later time. President Zamora asked if there was data about the number of students in special education relating to drug and alcohol abuse by parents. Mrs. Long said we have contracted services through Vera French Mental Health Center that involves working with students along these lines and we are continuing our relationship with them through grant money we have available. They are looking at several groups and the district is doing more with special education classes having content integrity. Mr. Almanza said the staff was looking at the OCR and our concern is with appropriate placement for students when they need help, intervention, or other assistance. Mrs. Long said basically we have to be able to defend our numbers. Mr. Almanza said staff was looking at curriculum alignment in general education and special education in order to improve achievement. Staff development is a critical piece. We will share what we are doing to meet our goals. Director Roberson was pleased to hear talk about all children learning and what we can do to make student achievement improve. Director Hanson talked about content area for special education students and Mrs. Long responded with ideas about collaborative teaching models. She explained how the para-educators would be used and areas of specialization.

DISTRICT MEDICAL DIRECTOR SERVICES

Responding to concerns from the Board about the District Medical Director and services received, Jill Cirivello presented an update on what the district was doing. An ad hoc committee has been formed to review this service and they are looking at two issues: 1) appointment of the medical director and 2) services dealing with workers compensation areas. Our current provider agreement was extended until August 31 and a list of some of the services included physicals, medical protocol for nurses, in-service training, medial resources for nurses, compliance with the law, emergency response, medical procedure questions, work hazards, and other program information. We have used the same company for worker compensation matters also. They deal with case management and related issues. We are in the process of receiving quotes from other firms who might be interested in providing these services for the district. Two recommendations will be brought back to the Board for consideration during August—one for the Medical District Director and one for Workers Compensation.

Board Policies

Directors Clewell and Johanson talked about two policies that had been reviewed by the administration and the Policy Committee Members. The Graduation Requirements Board Policy 503.11 originally started with a discussion about deleting service learning as a requirement. As the committee met there were a few additional changes they felt could also be considered at this time dealing the wording for other requirements and health classes. Director Tupper was concerned with the requirement for making students carry a full load during their third year and thought that would present challenges for a number of students. His concern was that statement might prevent a student from graduating even though they had fulfilled all the other requirements but they didn't keep a full load during their first three years of high school. Some students don't fit the mold and we need to allow for more flexibility in order for them to graduate.

Leslie O'Melia and Juli Staszewski talked about carrying a full load of classes and the importance of this requirement. There are many electives and opportunities available for students and we hope students will experience a wide variety of classes in high school. Board members talked more about expectations, challenges, and achievement for high school students. Director Johanson thought the Policy Committee could review this to see if they felt any changes in wording could be made. Betty Long also talked about some additional wording Director Clewell had suggested be added dealing with special education. Other board members also commented about the suggestion, but did not favor having an additional paragraph added. We want high expectations for special education students and the staff would like the policy to just include the original recommendations for revision.

The second policy was #505.05 Athletic Eligibility and Directors Clewell and Johanson talked about the changes recommended in this policy. The original policy was very complex and contained information that was really more of an administration regulation. There have been changes in the law as of July 1, 2006 and we need to comply with the rulings on athletic eligibility. Director Roberson asked about athletic study tables and how this should be made available for all students, not just athletes. The Board also talked about the district being penalized by the new law because we are on the four block schedule and other school districts only have two periods of eligibility. We will need to work on this at the state level, but at this time the State feels it is a local control issue. Both policies will come back for recommendations at the next board meeting if they are ready.

READINESS REPORTS

Superintendent Almanza noted the Readiness Report which the Board had received on the preparations being taken by staff to be ready for the beginning of the school year. They shared concerns about reading materials, but now all the balanced calendar schools have the major portion of their materials. We had an issue with Hayes air conditioning, but it was solved—now we have one room that is actually too cold. The report is a way to help the Board get information and if they receive calls about issues, this report might help them understand what is going on in preparing for the start of school. President Zamora remarked it was very comprehensive. Director Hanson asked about the list of teachers that was still required. Mrs. McClurg responded they are continuing to make efforts to fill all the openings and they are using a number of methods to find teachers. If we are unable to fill with permanent staff, we will use guest teachers for a while and many of them are looking for a long-term assignment.

BOARD REPORTS

Director Johanson talked about the Legislative Advocacy Workshop for School Boards that would be held on Wednesday, August 16 from 6 to 9 at the AEA. We are getting interested members from other school board together for a workshop facilitated by Margaret Buckton from the IASB. We will look at areas of common interest and working together for legislative advocacy in the next session of the legislature. President Zamora thanked members of the committee for their enthusiasm in this area.

BOARD GOAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

President Zamora announced a second Board Goal Development (self-evaluation) workshop would be held on August 21, 2006 at 5:30 PM in Conference Room A at the Administration Service Center. The board members would work at making a list of their goals for the school year and then bring them back for approval in the fall.

FIRST CLASS SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Superintendent Almanza thanked the staff, volunteers, and Karen Farley for their efforts in the First Class School Supplies project over the past weekend. People worked late on Saturday and for many hours on Sunday sorting, counting, and boxing up school supplies for our at-risk students. Thank you was given to the community for their donations and the area post offices and their carriers collecting the items. A lot of work goes into this project and it will help students do better in school and benefit the community.

Adjournment

President Zamora declared the meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Linda Smith Kortemeyer, Board Secretary