

**DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
SEPTEMBER 8, 2008**

The Board of the Davenport Community School District met in open session for the Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, September 8, 2008, pursuant to law. The meeting was held in the library/media center at Fillmore Elementary School, 7307 North Pacific Street, Davenport, Iowa, in said District. President Zamora called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM.

On roll call the following board members were present: President Patt Zamora; Directors Richard Clewell, Nikki De Fauw, Ralph Johanson, Ken Krumwiede, Larry Roberson, and Tim Tupper. Others present were Superintendent Julio Almanza; Executive Directors Ethel Reynolds and Leslie O'Melia; Equity and Assessment Director Dawn Anderson Rascher, Principal Kent Ryan, as well as several parents and teachers.

SPECIAL REPORT ON TESTS

Superintendent Almanza explained the discussion for the evening would include a dialog on student achievement, ITBS/ED scores for 2007-08, growth information, and a review of "No Child Left Behind" compliance for 2008-2009. The staff is working on a number of on-going efforts to improve student achievement and testing is one measurement. We are showing good growth but we need more work. The administration used a CD to look at the average standard scores for reading comprehension, math, and science showing numbers by buildings and by grades for a four-year period from 2004-2008. During the presentation, the Board received updated printed charts on preliminary 2008-09 status reports.

Dawn Anderson Rascher provided preliminary information on the testing scores to the Board. The administration answered questions to help clarify how to understand and use the graphs and charts shown on the CD disc. Dawn talked about trajectory, safe harbor, the watch list, and other measurements. There was information about data on national averages for all students in the district, subgroups, and areas. They talked about evaluation of numbers and what they thought might be happening at certain grade levels. Mr. Almanza talked about growth issues, sharing data with schools so they can use this to improve, and having teachers use the data to help students achieve during the year. There were concerns expressed about getting all students to reach their potential, gaps at certain levels, and transition plans used for sixth and eighth grades. There were notes about the block schedule at high schools and questions about rigor in classes. They talked about the balanced calendar, intercessions, and resources needed for students. The superintendent went through samples on the CD and explained how the data was used and what it meant to the district and individual buildings. They looked in depth at reading and math data to make sure everyone understood the numbers and comparisons.

There was a short recess at 7:10 PM and then the discussions continued with all board members present. President Zamora thanked Fillmore School for hosting the Committee of the Whole meeting and she expressed appreciation for the staff and parents who attended. Board members made comments about possible reasons for students not performing at their best and how it was up to the district to make a difference in their lives. They mentioned the importance of parents taking leadership and participating in school functions. They talked about setting high expectations and wanted to know more about how students are contacted. One of the teachers responded by saying there are a series of steps the school follows including letters sent home and now they have support from the new liaison people. There were comments about working with students using interventions to identify those needing more help and reaching out to families. Dr. O'Melia talked more about the responsibilities of the family support people and how they were being used first at the elementary and intermediate schools, and then into the high school level. There is a report being planned for presentation at the October Committee of the Whole and the Board will hear a number of success stories.

There were additional comments about credit recovery, family support liaisons as resources, solution focus, and other interventions in place. Director Clewell asked what needed to be done in order to achieve 100% success by 2014 with No Child Left Behind mandates. Staff members from Fillmore said their students needed more hands-on experiences to help build their vocabulary. They also improve with one-on-one reading opportunities with volunteers. They talked about the benefits of the Great Minds programs which give them experiential learning opportunities and the teachers build on what students saw when they were on their field/study trips. It was suggested that in-coming kindergarten students take the ELL placement test to see what their actual vocabulary was and then teachers would know areas where students lacked language development skills. There were comments about the calendar year and if it would benefit students to be in school year round. They talked about problems caused because of mobility of students and if students could stay in one school and be transported all year, it would help.

Staff members joined in the conversations with the Board and shared their thoughts about test data and what was needed to help students achieve at higher levels. There were a number of questions from board members and the administration worked at answering the concerns and explaining the intervention programs and other remedies which the staff was using to help students at risk. They talked about the "Meets" and "Exceeds" category students and wanted to make sure these students were also receiving resources that would help them achieve at an even higher level.

Board members took turns thanking the administration for taking the time to go over the information, clarifying the data, and talking openly about things being done to help our students. It was exciting to hear the opportunities opening up for students; and hopefully we can take advantage of people in our community who want to assist us in these efforts to improve student achievement. Director Krumwiede would like a report in the future about the Reading Academy now being used in first and second grade. He wondered if the academy was making a difference in the test scores. If the academy wasn't making a difference, maybe the money used should be marked for intercessions instead at the balanced calendar schools. Board members would like to know more about long-term plans for continuing with growth and improvements in student achievement.

ADJOURNMENT

President Zamora adjourned the meeting at 8:15PM.

Linda Smith Kortemeyer, Board Secretary