

**SPECIAL CALL MEETING
IOWA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS
BOARD DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
OCTOBER 21, 2002**

The Board of Directors of the Davenport Community School District in the Counties of Scott and Muscatine, State of Iowa, met for a Special Call Workshop Session pursuant to law and the rules of said Board on Monday, October 21, 2002, in the Board Room of the Davenport Schools Administration Service Center, 1606 Brady Street, Davenport, Iowa, in said school district scheduled for 4:30 PM.

President Susan Low called the meeting to order at 4:45 PM. On roll call the following members were present: President Susan Low; Directors Richard Clewell, Alan Guard, Steve Hunter, Anne Losasso, and Dan Portes. Absent, Director Jim Hester.

President Low introduced Mary Jane Vens, Development Director for IASB, as the facilitator for a workshop on the topic of board development. Administrators attending the workshop were Dr. Jim Blanche, Mr. Howard Hunigan, Mrs. Ethel Reynolds, Mr. Bill Thiessen, and Administrative Intern Jean Powers.

The workshop allowed board members to talk about goals, relationships, and team building. There were several worksheets used to help board members look into the future and consider positive things being done in the district now. They talked about what makes the district good and what they would like to see in five years. They shared examples of working with effective teams and what they learned from those experiences. They heard about reasons people decided to run for the board or work in education. They talked about what things were most important. Packets provided information on items such as the Key Work of School Boards developed by the NSBA; Seven Key Conditions taken from the Lighthouse Study by IASB, a Board Workshop Feedback sheet from a October 2, 2000 board workshop; and a sheet describing the working relationship agreement on expectations between the Board and the Superintendent's Team. Ms. Vens spent time reviewing a School Board Leadership Model and explained how this could be used in meetings to help everyone remain focused on the areas of vision, structure, accountability, and advocacy.

There was a break for dinner around 6:20 PM. Director Portes left the meeting at this time due to a prior business commitment. The rest of the Board and administrators continued working on assignments in smaller groups. They had a task to complete a worksheet on board principles that govern the board's behavior. This will be a guide to help everyone make their decisions at the board table. They were asked to think about what would help people do a better job. Following small group settings, everyone returned to the table and compared ideas. There were some common goals that were shared during the meeting including decreasing the achievement gap, fiscal stability, community awareness, and providing a quality education for all. Ideas were shared about honoring diversity of opinion, thinking about all perspectives as being valid, having a shared vision, building trust and how this can be easily broken. Ms. Vens reminded board members that the students win when the board members make good decisions. We need to remember students don't win when boards become enmeshed on an issue and they can't focus on achievement. Board members agreed they believed in the commitment to all children.

Ms. Vens offered suggestions on how to appreciate the strengths of others and to see the power of all the people on the team. Discussion continued about keeping two-way lines of communication open, having equitable opportunities, holding high standards, and how respecting the opinion of others will help build trust. One group brought up using research data to provide information to help board members make their decisions, identifying priorities, and recognizing the unique responsibilities of each group--board members and administration. Ms. Vens worked on techniques to use in asking for information and offering help. They also talked about engaging the community and acting as a champion for the school district.

Ms. Vens told board members she would summarize all the ideas presented at the workshop and send a report that they can use during the year to help them make decisions that will focus on the common goals shared. She spoke about board evaluation and how this should be done in an open session as part of a formal evaluation to see how they were doing.

In summary, Ms. Vens asked people to write down one thing they were proud of about the school board and those ideas were shared at the conclusion of the meeting. She congratulated board members and administrators for having a commitment to education and for taking out the time from their busy schedules to attend the workshop. Everyone should be proud to know you are committed to being a district where all children can learn and everyone can succeed. You can close the achievement gap and accomplish other goals together. It takes time to learn how to work as a team, but you have a good start. People can also be proud of the fact you all believe that diversity is an opportunity for this district.

President Low thanked Mary Jane Vens for facilitating the workshop and providing a valuable opportunity for board members. President Low declared the workshop adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Linda M. Smith, Board Secretary