

Minutes of the REGULAR Meeting of the Board of Education
Community Unit School District No. 4, Champaign County, Illinois
Mellon Administrative Center, 703 S. New Street, Champaign, Illinois
April 16, 2007 Within the Boundaries of Said District

Regular Meeting

Board President Margie Skirvin called the Regular Meeting of the Board to order at 7:03 p.m.

Board Members Present

Minosca Alcantara, Reginald Alston, Nathaniel Banks, Arlene Blank, Margie Skirvin, David Tomlinson

Board Members Absent

Scott Anderson

Staff Members Present

Superintendent Arthur Culver, Deputy Superintendent Dorland Norris, Assistant Superintendent Beth Shepperd, Interim Assistant Superintendent Patricia Lewis, Chief Financial Officer Gene Logas, Special Projects Administrator Joe Davis

Guests

Representatives from CFT, and local media and other interested persons

Approval of Agenda

Nathaniel Banks moved, with a second by Reginald Alston, to approve the agenda. The motion carried on voice vote.

Board Member Scott Anderson arrived at 7:13 p.m.

Board candidates Chuck Jackson, Susan Grey, Greg Novak, Scott MacAdam, Minosca Alcantara and Nathaniel Banks were introduced to the audience.

Board President Margie Skirvin congratulated Fred Clarke on his appointment as Superintendent of the Albion School District in Michigan.

PTA Council

Brian Minsker invited everyone to attend the PTA Council State Convention on April 28th at the Hilton Gardens.

Board

Board Vice President David Tomlinson publicly thanked outgoing Board members Scott Anderson, Margie Skirvin, Minosca Alcantara and Reginald Alston for their leadership and service on the Board.

Reports**Academic Spotlight – Robeson Elementary**

Principal Barbara Sartain shared the following information regarding the Rockets for Reading Program at Robeson Elementary School. The program is designed to support the home-school connection in order to improve and accelerate the literacy skills of all students.

The Robeson staff believes that early literacy experience provides an extremely beneficial foundation for kindergarten and first grade students. “The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap” (American Educator, Spring 2003) and other research studies look at vocabulary acquisition and the number of printed words encountered by children from economically disadvantaged families when compared to children from families with higher income levels. The Champaign Rotary Club awarded the school a grant targeting kindergarten and first grade students who qualified for the school lunch program. The two primary goals of the program are to provide developmentally-appropriate and highly engaging home libraries, and to develop a series of four parent workshops designed to coach parents in assisting their children with early literacy experiences.

A diverse committee comprised of kindergarten and first grade teachers, literacy specialists, a secretary, the Student Services Coordinator, and the Principal worked collaboratively with the Champaign Rotary Club leadership to develop the program. The staff’s instructional goal was to increase student time spent at home with literacy experiences, especially with print, since the research shows that more time spent on reading tasks supports academic learning and reading fluency. The secondary goal is to give parents information and confidence in guiding their children in the area of literacy. The Robeson staff received periodic updates on the work of the committee.

All children learn well when instruction is differentiated. Working closely with parents also accelerates student progress. “Rockets for Reading” books were chosen by teachers for their appropriate reading levels and for the purpose of engaging students. In the classrooms, teachers collaborated to teach, re-teach, and target additional support effectively.

Student progress is monitored to assess progress on skills such as Concepts about Print scores; letter ID; DRA results; literacy interventions; quarterly first grade assessments; teacher-made tests; and daily observation.

The committee met each quarter to plan, collaborate, and monitor the program. The principal communicated frequently with the Champaign Rotary Club literacy committee chairperson and met with the full committee as well. An overview was provided at a regular Champaign Rotary Club meeting in August 2006 and will again in May 2007.

To ensure an optimum learning environment, the staff is a part of teaching and practicing the three universal expectations of readiness, respect, and responsibility. Each day begins with a recitation of the Peace Builder Promise over the intercom and a brief social skills lesson. Praise for both academic and behavioral success is provided and tracked. A Check-and-Connect program is in place for targeted students.

The Robeson staff is committed to creating relationships with students and their families and with working in a collaborative manner to learn about and implement best practices across disciplines. The beliefs expressed in the mission statement are the foundation: The mission is to

provide a comprehensive educational program in a positive environment which stimulates and challenges each student to reach his or her potential.

The grant provided \$6,615.00 for the purchase of the home library books and the periodical “Big Back Yard “ which were given to the children to keep, for school bus costs for transporting families, and for supplies. Other matching resources were needed for the parent workshops, which included in-kind and monetary donations of food, a donation of money to pay for babysitting, staff time, and the development of a focus group in consultation with the University of Illinois.

The question of whether providing more books for a child’s home library correlates to improved literacy will be analyzed by comparing participating students’ 2007 scores to the 2006 scores of counterpart students who were eligible that year for the lunch program. The literacy areas that were included are letter identification, concepts about print, and word test lists. A focus group for participating parents will provide feedback about the impact of the parent workshops and advise future program decisions.

Consent Decree Update – Collaboration Plan

Deputy Superintendent Dorland Norris provided a brief overview of the Collaboration Plan. A copy of the plan was shared with the audience.

In response to the Court Hearing held on July 31, 2006 and the Court Order issued on October 19, 2006 by Judge Joe B. McDade, the Champaign administrative staff spent numerous hours in collaboration with Plaintiffs in an effort to develop a transparent action plan which addresses all areas of the Consent Decree and the Equity Implementation Plan. Specific targets, steps and responsibilities to ensure Unit 4’s compliance with the Second Revised Consent Decree were included. This new Collaboration Plan covers the following areas:

- 1.) Student Performance
- 2.) Gifted Education
- 3.) Special Education
- 4.) Climate and Discipline
- 5.) Attendance
- 6.) Hiring, Retention and Staff Placement
- 7.) Information Technology
- 8.) North Side Seats/Student Assignment

The series of collaboration meetings were successfully facilitated by Dr. William Trent, with the final meeting being moderated by Dr. Robert Peterkin. The District will continue with efforts to provide ongoing staff development opportunities addressing each of the target areas as needed.

Financial implications will be determined (cost will be included in the 07 budget).

Each section of the Collaboration Plan designates responsibilities and identifies individual positions that will monitor the procedural steps in accomplishing the target goals of the plan.

AAEEO Audit & Report

Assistant Superintendent Beth Shepperd thanked Director Doretha Simmons for compiling the data for the report.

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for the establishment and implementation of the audit and reporting system for Affirmative Action. The Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources/Community Relations reviews the system on an annual basis and provides a written report to the Superintendent.

The annual audit includes:

1. an audit and report of current records on applicants, national labor statistics, employees selection, work force composition compared to relevant labor market, hires and building level distribution of work force,
2. and a listing of names of a standing committee (composed of members of both bargaining units, parents, administrators, and community members) which reviews the records and makes recommendations to the Superintendent.

Recommendations will be incorporated into the Human Resources recruiting plan as appropriate.

Existing staff will be utilized. Financial implications will be addressed in Human Resources Budget. Results of minority hiring will be evaluated annually and procedures to reflect results of the evaluation will be revised.

Academic Alternative Education Evening Academy

Interim Assistant Superintendent Patricia Lewis provided a brief report regarding the plan for an Academic Alternative Education Evening Academy for students in grades 10-12. The plan is in response to the findings and recommendations found in the following documents or sources:

- Educational Equity Audit: Findings and Recommendations - June 30, 1998 (p.17 and Chapters 4, 7, and 8)
- Court Monitor’s Report #1and #2
- Champaign Unit #4 Strategic Plan (p. 25, item 2.5.1-2.5.10)
- Alternative School Education Plan for Champaign Community Unit #4 School District
- Recommendations of Alternative School Restructuring Task Force

The Academic Alternative School Evening Academy will operate from the perspective of providing all students with educational choices that increase their opportunities for success. The District will develop and maintain alternative educational programs of high academic quality, based on the assumptions that high expectations for student achievement, access to a rigorous and age-appropriate curriculum, frequent monitoring of student progress, strong instructional leadership, active parent-community partnerships, access to community-based services, and the maintenance of a safe and orderly environment will play a significant role in increasing the likelihood of student success in an alternative school setting. Staff members will need to be trained in Differentiated Instruction.

Financial Implications (estimated costs)

Instructors:	\$30, 000
Benefits:	\$ 3,000
Secretary:	\$ 15,000
Materials:	\$ 5,000
Coordinator:	\$ 40,000
Benefits:	\$ 4,000
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Projected Costs:	\$ 97,000

Student attendance, assessments, progress reports, and graduation rates will measure the success of the program. The plan will be brought back for Board action at a subsequent meeting.

Board of Education Proposed Policy (Attendance: Schools of Choice Seat Assignment for Elementary schools, Grades K-5)

The following proposed policy represents the continued effort to update the District's Policy and Procedures Manual.

Policy 705.09 (ATTENDANCE: Schools of Choice Seat Assignment for Elementary Schools – Grades K-5)

The policy was revised to further clarify the procedures for the Controlled Choice Program for students who are not assigned any of their three choice schools. The policy will be submitted for approval on May 14, 2007.

Action Agenda

Resolution to Abate Working Cash (Exhibit "A")

Nathaniel Banks moved, with a second by David Tomlinson, to adopt the Resolution to Abate \$2,100,000 from the Working Cash Fund to the Education Fund for FY 07. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

Chief Financial Officer Gene Logas provided a brief presentation regarding the request for approval of a Resolution to Abate Working Cash. In January 2006, the District issued \$6.3 million of Working Cash Bonds to balance the 2007, 2008 and 2009 school years. Each year \$2.1 million is to be transferred from the Working Cash Fund to the Education Fund. This is the first of the three transfers.

After cutting \$2 million from the 2006 Budget, the projected deficit in the 2007 Budget remained at approximately \$2 million. Rather than cutting another \$2 million from the 2007 Budget, the District issued the Working Cash Bonds to balance the 2007, 2008 and 2009 Budgets.

Consent Agenda

David Tomlinson moved, with a second by Nathaniel Banks, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

The Board of Education approved the following Consent Agenda items:

2008 Elementary & High School Reading Adoption

The Board of Education approved the 2008 Elementary & High School Reading Adoption in the amount of \$700,000.

During the 2006-07 school year, elementary and high school teachers reviewed resources to support the curriculum work completed in the area of reading. After reviewing various materials, the requests were submitted for the Board's review and approval. High school materials include textbooks, supplementary materials, and technology support. Elementary materials include shared and guided teaching plans, shared and guided reading books, and word study notebooks.

High School:

- Prentice Hall has agreed to support in-service needs related to adopted materials free of charge for the life of the adoption (6 years).
- SIP and Teacher Institute Days will be used for collaboration and integration of Prentice Hall Resources into daily instruction, curriculum maps, and quarterly assessments, thereby supporting Unit #4 curriculum and instruction.
- Additional staff development opportunities will be provided after school and as needed by Prentice Hall Consultants and 6-12 ELA Curriculum Coordinator.

Elementary:

- Training on reading adoption will occur in May 2007 and continue through Spring 2008, including all SIP and institute days during the 2007-08 school year.

The budget amount for the high school adoption is \$303,165.90 with \$182,497.90 coming from District funds and \$120,668.00 (5% over allotted \$114,969.85) coming from the Textbook Adoption Loan Program. The elementary adoption is \$517,502.10 coming from District funds.

The District fund of \$700,000 and the Textbook Adoption Loan fund of \$120,668.00 total \$820,668. The total cost of the elementary and high school reading adoption is \$820,668. The cost to the district, for the 2007-08 school year, for both elementary and high school is \$700,000.

Assessment/Evaluation: The reading pilot teachers reached consensus through investigation, use, and examination of materials and through evaluation of materials according to merits listed above.

Modification of 2006/2007 School Calendar

The Board of Education approved June 4, 2007 as the last official day of school for both the 2006-07 Regular- and Balanced-calendar schools.

Annually, the administration requests that the Board adjust the adopted school calendar to set the last official day of school. As required by the Illinois State Board of Education, the calendar adopted by the School Board includes five (5) emergency weather days. If all five days are used, the final day of school would be June 6 for the Regular- and Balanced-calendar schools. Since the District used only three of these emergency weather days, the last day of this school year would be June 4, 2007 for both the Regular- and Balanced-calendar schools.

Donations

The Board of Education authorized the acceptance of the donation from Peter Fox, valued at \$25,752.71.

The donation submitted for the April 16, 2007 Board meeting is from Peter Fox. Technology renovation equipment and landscaping valued at \$23,752.71 was donated to Kenwood Elementary School. Kitchen cabinetry valued at \$2,000.00 was donated to Westview Elementary School. The donation required approval by the Board of Education, as it is \$5,000 or more in value.

Bids (Yearbook) (Exhibit "B")

The Board of Education approved the bid submitted by Herff-Jones for FY08 for yearbook printing.

Board policy states that bids will be solicited when items are expected to exceed a total of \$10,000. As part of the bidding process, bids were solicited and received from three vendors for yearbook printing. Bid was awarded for FY2007-08 to Herff-Jones. The cost will be charged to each school's respective yearbook activity account.

Grants - IDEA Part B Flow-Through Grant Amendment

The Board of Education approved the second amendment of the FY07 IDEA Part B Flow Through Grant in the amount of \$2,448,358. The amendment increases the grant from \$2,412,035 to \$2,448,358. The increase of \$36,323 is covered by a portion of the District's carryover allocation for the IDEA grant.

The second amendment to the FY07 IDEA Flow Through Grant was written to:

- adjust annual salaries and benefits
- indicate staff changes and teacher materials
- add money for supplies
- add funds for BST stipends
- decrease funds for equipment costs
- add funds for vision services

The grant continues to support required staff development activities. All activities are monitored and evaluated by the Illinois State Board of Education

Tax-Exempt Lease Purchase Financing (Exhibit "C")

The Board of Education approved Sovereign Bank as the company to provide the financing of \$249,756 for the four new busses over five years at 4.90%. The lease payments and interest costs will be built into the 2008 budget (and through the 2012 budget). By spreading the cost over five years, the incremental costs from year to year will be minimized.

Although not required by law, last year the District sought competitive bids on the interest rate charged to the District for the financing of school busses. An advertisement was placed in the News-Gazette and a RFP was sent to several vendors. Midwest Transit Equipment (the manufacturer of the busses) in conjunction with Sovereign Bank (Kankakee, IL) was the lowest bidder at 4.95%. As Sovereign Bank quoted a rate of 4.90% for the financing of the four new busses slated to arrive in August.

Resolution Authorizing Legal Representative to File Request to Intervene in Property Tax Appeal Board Matters (Exhibit "D")

The Board of Education approved the Resolution Authorizing Attorney Michael J. Tague and Flynn, Palmer & Tague, as its legal representative to file request to intervene in property tax appeal Board matters.

Whenever Attorney Mike Tague intervenes in a property tax assessment appeal, the Board of Education must pass the accompanying resolution. Mr. Tague was notified of the tax appeal on March 20, 2007. The Board of Education then has 30 days to approve the resolution.

Minutes – March 5 & 12, 2007 Board Meetings

The Board of Education approved the minutes as presented.

Bills & Treasurer’s Report (Exhibit “E”)

The Board of Education approved the Bills and Treasurer’s Report as presented.

Human Resource Changes (Exhibit “F”)

The Board of Education approved the Human Resource changes as presented.

Executive Session

David Tomlinson moved, with a second by Arlene Blank, to adjourn into *Closed Session* in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2c) to consider Personnel as it relates to employee appointments 120/2(c)(1) and Student Discipline 120/2(c)(9). The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

The Board convened into *Closed Session* at 8:46 p.m.

Open Session

The Board convened into *Open Session* at 9:42 p.m.

Appointment – Principal, Dr. Howard Elementary (Exhibit “G”)

David Tomlinson moved, with a second by Arlene Blank, to appoint of Sheila Donas as Principal at Dr. Howard Elementary. The salary will be \$81,000 plus all Board-approved fringe benefits, including contributions to the Teachers’ Retirement System. The effective date of employment is August 1, 2007. The contract year is 215 days. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

Student Discipline

David Tomlinson moved, with a second by Arlene Blank, to expel student #640236 from Franklin Middle School for the remainder of the 06/07 school year, and reassign to Homebound for violating Conduct Code #18 (Physical Confrontation with Staff) of the Champaign Unit 4 Student Code of Conduct. The student may return to the regularly assigned school following the expulsion period, provided the student has completed the requirements of the alternative school. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

Reginald Alston moved, with a second by Arlene Blank, that student #640329 should not be expelled from Central High School. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

David Tomlinson moved, with a second by Reginald Alston, that student #694341 should not be expelled from Central High School. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

Scott Anderson moved, with a second by Arlene Blank, to expel student #640492 from Franklin Middle School for the remainder of the 06/07 school year, and reassign to Columbia Middle

School, and the student will document attendance in the Fire Setter Program for violating Conduct Code #31 (Other Acts that Endanger the Well-Being of Students, Staff, or Any School District-Authorized Personnel) of the Champaign Unit 4 Student Code of Conduct. The student may return to the regularly assigned school following the expulsion period, provided the student has completed the requirements of the alternative school. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Nathaniel Banks moved, with a second by Arlene Blank, to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. The motion carried on voice vote.

Board Approved: May 14, 2007