

MINUTES
McLean County Unit District No. 5
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special Session
June 1, 2005

The Board of Education of Community Unit School District No. 5, McLean and Woodford Counties, Illinois, met in special session on June 1, 2005, at approximately 7:00 p.m. at the District Office, 1809 West Hovey Avenue, Normal, Illinois.

1.0 Roll Call Members present: Gail Ann Briggs, Meta Mickens-Baker, John Puzauskas, Jay Reece, Steve Whittington, and Board President Scott Lay. Members absent: Martin O'Connor.

Also present: Superintendent Dr. Alan Chapman, Assistant Superintendent of Operations/Human Resources John Pye, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum/Instruction Jim Braksick, Executive Director of Secondary Education Bruce Boswell, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer Tod Altenburg, Clerk of the Board Cindy Prescher, Phyllis Coulter from The Pantagraph (entered at 7:15 p.m.), and Kevin Heinkes from WJBC (entered at 7:05 p.m.).

2.0 Pledge of Allegiance The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3.0 Public Comments None.

4.0 Board/Cabinet Retreat President Lay opened the meeting and suggested participants be concise in making their comments during the retreat. He remarked that the purpose of the retreat was to provide a two-way discussion format for board and cabinet members. Chapman added that he hoped the retreat would be interactive and discussion oriented.

- Board Orientation and New Member Induction

- Boardmanship

- Chapman informed new board members that he would be willing to meet with them individually regarding orientation and new member induction, if they felt a need for more information after the meeting. He commented that he had asked veteran board member, Briggs, to share her expertise on the topic of boardmanship.

- Briggs provided board members with copies of the "New Board Member Orientation Model" from the Illinois Association of School Boards. She encouraged new board members to review the model at their leisure and to speak with Chapman or Lay if they needed further information. She also referenced three board policies provided to board members in their agenda packets: Policy 2.20 Powers and Duties of the Board, Policy 2.80 Board Member Code of Conduct, and Policy 2.120 Board Member Development. Briggs reviewed with board members a copy of "Board Members' Code of Conduct" based on John Carver's *Boards that Make a Difference*, which she felt outlined what boards should be doing and how they should be doing things collaboratively with the superintendent.

- Expectations

- Chapman felt the Board and Cabinet had a positive working relationship. He stated that he looked forward to continuing that relationship and learning process for all.

- Lay recognized that board members each have official and unofficial roles. He indicated he preferred to set a less structured tone and planned to draw upon board members' unique talents and abilities as much as possible. While the Board bears ultimate responsibility for the District, Lay emphasized that the Board must continue to defer to the professional judgment and expertise of the Superintendent and his administrative

team on educational matters. He also wanted the Board and administrative team to have a reputation for being active and engaged and felt it was very important for board members to be available. Board members concurred with the expectations. It was suggested that the Board be clearer about its expectations of the administrative team. Board and cabinet members were encouraged to work together to prepare each other as much as possible for board meetings.

Communications

- *Among Board Members*
- *Board Members and Staff*
- *General*

Board policy 2.140 Communications To and From the Board was discussed. A copy of the suggested policy 2.140 provided by the Illinois Association of School Boards' PRESS service was also provided to board and cabinet members. Whittington felt the District's current policy was not being followed and suggested its deletion. Lay felt there needed to be a distinction between Board and board member communications. He felt the "Board" should communicate through the Superintendent and suggested language be added in regard to how "board members" channel their communications. Lay stated he did not want to stifle communication or information flow, but emphasized the need to be respectful of the administrative team's time and duties so they are not overloaded with communications, etc. It was suggested that communication pathway and judgment also be addressed in the policy.

Chapman indicated it was appropriate for board members to ask questions and obtain information through the Superintendent's office, but felt there was a fine line that requires judgment in regard to when a request for information becomes an assignment of task. He did not feel individual board members should be assigning work tasks to administrators. Chapman suggested board members contact him if they had doubts about whether an item was a request for information or assignment of task. Lay proposed that Chapman, Briggs, and Whittington meet and revise policy 2.140 for the Board's consideration. It was noted that the Board already has a policy on communication with the news media.

- Strategic Plan

Chapman remarked that he was pleased with what was accomplished over the past year in relation to the Strategic Plan, and he looked forward to review of the Plan at the special board meeting scheduled for June 6.

- Cabinet Reports

Chapman informed board members that he had asked cabinet members to report on the direction of their individual responsibilities and departments for the next one to five years in relation to the Strategic Plan.

Tod Altenburg, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

Short-Term:

- Develop a risk management plan that describes how the District would use monies from the Tort Fund levy.
- Develop a rotation for bidding the District's various insurances.
- Publish and distribute the minutes of all Insurance Committee meetings to all email accounts in the District to improve employee communication.
- Implement the Skyward financial system.
- Continue to become well versed on the District's health insurance plan, options, and benefits.
- Each semester, provide staff development for building principals on the budgeting process, monitoring of building budgets and expenditures, and planning.

Long-Term:

- Maintain a balanced budget in the Educational Fund.
- Investigate ways to increase revenue and reduce expenditures in the Operations and Maintenance Fund.

- Continue to update the PMA financial model.
- Establish ways to maintain proper fund reserves.
- Assist in any way possible to re-establish Unit 5 as the premier school district in Central Illinois.

Suggestions:

- Be sure the goals are actionable and measurable.
- For the long-term, consider providing staff development over a period of time for all staff on the budgeting process, monitoring budgets and expenditures, and planning for better understanding and accountability.

Jim Braksick, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum/Instruction

Short-Term:

- No Child Left Behind requirements and alignment
 - Accuracy in the analysis of our data which is the end product of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
 - Compliance and accountability
 - Scientifically research-based instructional methods, instructional materials, and professional development activities
 - The school improvement process
 - Standards and performance
 - Assessments and tests
 - Interactive plan and improvement strategies
 - Highly-qualified teachers
 - Monitor changes/alignment
 - Greater emphasis on using standards for all planning, teaching, and assessing at all levels – differentiated instruction to meet student needs
- Implement the Skyward student management system.
- Develop a more standardized, computer-generated elementary report card.
- Improve the collection and format of student assessment data.
- Grades K-5 Science program evaluation/recommendation (February 2006)/implementation (Fall 2006)
- Establish curriculum task forces each year.
- Review and revise graduation requirements.
- Re-establish calendar rotation for curriculum review and textbook adoptions.

Long-Term:

- No Child Left Behind
 - Preparation for school choice and supplemental services due to sanctions
- Technology
 - Family/parent access – 3-year implementation
 - Educator grade book
 - Curriculum mapping
- Curriculum review/textbook adoptions
 - Reinstate department head positions
- Re-establish Unit 5 as a premier district in Central Illinois.

Suggestion:

- Investigate the possibility of again providing a comparison of data for LUDA school districts.
- As a Board, devote more time to curriculum matters. Once or twice a year, have curriculum-related discussions at regular board meetings or through another venue.

Bruce Boswell, Executive Director of Secondary Education

Boswell, who will retire this month, indicated he was not asked to prepare a report, but might have some comments during the meeting.

John Pye, Assistant Superintendent of Operations/Human Resources

Short-Term:

- Recruit/retain employees in all categories
 - Establish a formal program to recruit and train highly-qualified minority teachers.
 - Attract and retain transportation personnel.
- Update employee handbooks for all groups.
- Maintain positive working relationships with all employee groups.
- Implement the Skyward human resources system.
- Conduct a study of facility usage.
 - Attendance centers
 - Year-round schools
 - Alternative scheduling
- Monitor implementation of the new transportation plan.
- Provide professional development opportunities for administrators on working with staff and students.

Long-Term:

- Establish systems and programs to enhance our ability to plan and respond effectively to a wide range of emergencies that impact schools, students, and staff.
- Continue to review long-range facility needs and alternatives to address our growing student population over the next five years.
- Continue to explore programs to attract and retain highly-qualified employees regardless of the employee classification.
- Re-establish Unit 5 as a premier school district.
- Re-examine our transportation system and explore ways to operate it more efficiently and effectively, as well as reduce expenditures in the Transportation Fund.
- Maintain negotiated contracts/agreements with all employee groups.

Suggestions:

- Distribute new bus schedules to families as soon as possible.
- Be aware that use of the term “highly-qualified”, in relation to minority teachers, is a sensitive matter with the minority population.
- Consider involving Camille Taylor in the recruitment of minority teachers.

Alan Chapman, Superintendent

Short and Long Term:

- Monitor enrollment growth and make appropriate plans to adequately serve students.
- Make sure the District is on-track to provide appropriate facilities to house student as the enrollment grows.
- Expand staff while keeping in mind the need to be efficient in staffing and frugal with expenses.
- Fiscal responsibility – continue to strive toward a balanced budget.
- Continue to advocate for change at the state level.
- Identify the potential for referenda for various funds. If a decision is made to pursue referenda, plan and coordinate the effort.
- Collaboration and communication
 - Lead the Unit 5 team.
 - Be where people are – with parents, citizens, business, etc.
 - Interagency – government, other educational and social service agencies
- Diversity
 - Improve our District’s understanding of diversity and ability to value differences and recognize similarities among people.
 - Improve the diversity of the District’s staff in all employee groups.
 - Continue to improve how we deliver services to improve student achievement.
- Make sure that appropriate time and resources are allocated for professional development for cabinet members and directors.
- Continue to recognize student and staff efforts.

- Provide an environment in which professionals and students can be successful.

Suggestions:

- With our staff reductions, consider what tasks could be eliminated or handled in another way, in order to focus on priorities.
- Involve parents and staff in looking at what we are doing, how we are doing it, what is critical to be done, what is nice to be done, etc.

A break was taken from approximately 7:45-8:00 p.m.

- Intergovernmental Collaboration

This topic was not discussed.

- Organizational Development and Communication

Chapman sought direction from the Board regarding the preparation of reports, timeline for reporting, and expectations. He referenced a training document provided by State Farm, which the Cabinet and directors had reviewed and discussed. Chapman felt the Administration did not have the time to produce staff reports such as those completed by corporate project teams. He pointed out a difference in environment and indicated the Cabinet was often scrambling to complete reports on time for meetings due to workload.

Lay asked how the Board could assist the administrative team with managing workload and processes or developing templates so that information flow could become less of a chore and an easier task to accomplish. Chapman indicated the information flow should also meet the Board's needs in making decisions.

It was suggested that board members, at times, needed more information in a timelier manner, in order to make more qualified decisions. The recent Skyward proposal was given as an example of an area in which more information would have been helpful to board members. Another suggestion offered was to move back proposals, if necessary, to allow more time for the completion of reports. Using a consistent report format was encouraged. Chapman remarked that the Administration would make a commitment to do a better job of providing needed information to the Board within the reasonable limits of what it could accomplish. It was felt that higher cost recommendations might dictate the need for more information. Briggs noted that a report format was previously developed by Whittington and could be revisited for possible use.

- Short and Long Range Facility Needs

Chapman shared information regarding local population, enrollment, and classroom needs projections. (Attachment #1) He hoped discussion would focus on possibilities such as investigation of different delivery systems, portable classrooms, adding onto existing facilities, construction of new schools, etc.

It was reported that five elementary schools could accommodate additions. Chapman stated that the District had some funds it could use toward construction, but could not do much without a referendum. In considering additions to elementary schools, it was suggested the Board consider optimal size and school environment.

Chapman reported the Administration was comfortable that it would be able to accommodate the total enrollment for the coming school year, with no change in facilities. However, he was not absolutely comfortable about the following school year. The greatest concern was reported to be at the middle school level. Chapman stated that portable classrooms could be needed as early as 2006 at the middle school level. He pointed out that the enrollment was not evenly distributed across the District and available classroom space was not always where it was needed. A chart of possible building bond referenda scenarios was provided. Chapman noted that the School Construction Grant Program was no longer available from the state.

It was reported that the District currently has two school sites—one at the corner of Ireland Grove and Hershey Roads. In addition, there is an approximate 11 acre school site available to Unit 5 until 2009 in the Northbridge Subdivision in north Normal. If the District would not build on the site by 2009, the property would be sold and the funds would become available for land acquisition or school construction.

Concerning adding onto the high schools, Chapman was not sure it would be practical. In response to a question about whether it was cheaper to add onto a facility versus building a new school, it was felt it was slightly cheaper to add on. It was also noted that students could be housed in a portable classroom while construction was underway.

It was suggested the District explore ways to keep the enrollments up at schools such as Brigham and Glenn that do not have excessive growth, in order to avoid another Field School situation and to let parents and the community know the value of those schools and how good they are. Chapman remarked that the District has always preached the fact that the educational opportunities are equal across Unit 5. The Administration has never suggested one school has any greater value than another in the District. A suggestion was to provide school visits for parents.

Chapman stated the District would have a good indication this coming fall of whether it would be able to accommodate student enrollment in 2006 with existing facilities. It was suggested the District inform the cities and County of any potential school construction plans as early as possible.

- Potential Referenda

Chapman reported that the Operations and Maintenance Fund was in a deficit mode. With the Energy Education agreement, it is hoped that additional savings in the fund will be realized. He shared two PMA financial projections with the Board that included both 15 and 20 cents tax rate increases for the fund. (Attachment #2) Altenburg suggested as an option transferring monies from the Working Cash Fund to the Operations and Maintenance Fund. Also, if the Educational Fund reserve would ever be built up again, he suggested moving utility expenditures back to that Fund.

- 5.0 Closed Session** Reece moved, Briggs seconded, to adjourn to closed session to consider the purchase or lease of real property. Roll call: Ayes: Briggs, Mickens-Baker, Puzauskas, Reece, Whittington, Lay. Nays: None. **Motion carried.**
- 6.0 Return to Public Session** Mickens-Baker moved, Briggs seconded, to come out of closed session and return to public session. Roll call: Ayes: Briggs, Mickens-Baker, Puzauskas, Reece, Whittington, Lay. Nays: None. **Motion carried.**
- 7.0 Announcements** None.
- 8.0 Adjournment** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:42 p.m.

Scott Lay, Board of Education President
Community Unit School District No. 5
McLean and Woodford Counties, Illinois

ATTEST:

Steve Whittington, Board of Education Secretary

Approved: _____
(Date)