Minutes
McLean County Unit District No. 5
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special Session ~ Strategic Planning
June 3, 2006

The Board of Education of Community Unit School District No. 5, McLean and Woodford Counties, Illinois, met in special session on June 3, 2006, at approximately 9:00 a.m. at the District Office, 1809 W. Hovey Avenue, Normal, Illinois.

1.0   Roll Call

Members present: Gail Ann Briggs, Scott Lay, Meta Mickens-Baker, Martin O'Connor, John Puzauskas, Jay Reece, and Steve Whittington. Members absent: None.

Also present: Superintendent Alan Chapman; Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Human Resources John Pye; Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Jim Braksick; Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer Tod Altenburg; Community Relations Specialist Meghan Leiseberg; Director of Technology Loren Baele; Principals Tom Eder and Scott Peters; Director of Special Education Operations Chuck Hartseil; Teachers LaTishia Baker, Kate Behrens, Peggy Caslow, and Angelca Delatorre-Im; Counselor Camille Taylor; CAC President Mark Pritchett; and, Students Michelle Bender, Matthew Loss, Sarah Tretter, Katie Fedden, Joe Gonzalez, and James Spaulding.

2.0   Strategic Plan Review

Steve Whittington opened the meeting with introductions.

Whittington introduced the agenda and explained the purpose of the endeavor. He guided the group through the process of looking at themes and determining if the themes made sense. Objectives were considered to determine which needed to be removed (accomplished, no longer make sense for district) and which needed to remain. Small groups were used to determine what should be added. SMART objectives were used for this process. Objectives created in small groups will be reviewed at the next scheduled meeting.

Whittington reinforced that SMART objectives are extremely important and will serve as the focus of the activities. SMART stands for the following: S = Specific, M = Measurable, A = Actionable, R = Realistic, T = Time-bound. It is important to determine if objectives are realistic. The realistic nature of the objectives would be discussed in the large group, as small groups may or may not have the resources to determine if objectives are realistic.

The process began with Whittington asking participants to review the current Strategic Plan objectives under each theme. Participants were asked to provide questions regarding any of the objectives that were unclear or in need of additional explanation. Items mentioned/discussed are as follows:

Community Connections:
  • Study Circles should be reflected in the Community Connections theme.

Student Achievement:
  • Clarification of the concept of differentiated instruction was requested. It was indicated that this concept applies to instructors meeting students' individual academic needs at their varying levels and addressing their interests and strengths in the process. Clarification of the word "success" and what it means was requested and it was indicated that it is very difficult to define success in a measurable way. Whittington indicated that goal statements are necessarily broader in scope, but that objectives must address the measurable nature of the plan.

Growth and Change:
  • Actual growth of student populations and how those needs will be met is not addressed specifically enough in this goal. "Facility use" is too ambiguous. Additional information pertaining to the timelines used in the Diversity Plan and broadening the scope of who is involved in attaining the goals was requested. Chapman indicated that the person responsible in the plan is the one to whom the main leadership falls. It was indicated that the use of specific names for "responsible" would be important. We should address the connections between fiscal responsibility and growth and change. It was

indicated that there are two distinct parts of "growth and change" – one is diversity related (human relations) and the other is more infrastructure based.

Fiscal Responsibility:
- The "assessing the feasibility of referenda" is mentioned, but we need to add the component of how to take the steps to get a referendum on the ballot. It was indicated that a campaign plan cannot be included in a district sponsored document. We cannot venture too far into the referendum process in a district-wide document. Chapman indicated that the idea from the beginning of strategic planning is to lay out a 5-year window of future action.

General:
- It was asked if there should be a one-to-one correspondence between goals and objectives. (Should objectives be specifically matched to a goal that is listed?) Whittington indicated that there will be an opportunity to be more specific with objectives and goals in the small groups.

Whittington announced that the full group would determine which objectives should be deleted and which should remain under each theme.

Community Connections:
- Fifth objective may need to be deleted or revised – do we still wish to do so? We may have accomplished this.
- A Communication Plan has been written and needs to be implemented in a SMART manner.
- Should we show something in the plan if it is already underway? Should only new things appear in the plan or should we still show the things that are ongoing?
- What are family learning workshops? Clarification provided.
- Town meetings and family learning workshops are old terms – we are doing those things, but the same language is no longer being used. We should bring the language into alignment with current trends.

Professional Quality:
- We have possibly created an effective recruiting and hiring process, but may want to maintain this goal long-term, and can keep it.
- What do the dates mean? What happens at this point? Is a report submitted to the Board? Is there a point of accountability? It is included in the twice-a-year update that Dr. Chapman creates. Need to know more about what we actually did. Specificity is important throughout. We need to eliminate fuzziness throughout the plan.
- Need to be more specific about how objectives will be accomplished – need a way to find out more (a reference point).
- How do you determine when an objective has been accomplished?
- Sometimes objectives are not accomplished, and that can be acceptable.
- As we write objectives, we are looking to include outcomes and a reporting device. However, we could really bog ourselves down with reporting.

Student Achievement:
- Nothing mentioned for possible deletion.

Growth and Change:
- Is the Diversity Plan being evaluated? Yes, it has its own process.
- What is a school-based committee? The point is that each building has diversity assigned to a specific committee or one that already exists.
- View growth and change with optimism and leverage opportunities to improve needs to be a little more specific and try to make it measurable. At the time the plan was produced, we were thinking very broadly.
- Consider adding "in conjunction with" to the Diversity Plan item (1st bullet).
- Are people aware of the Diversity Plan? We may need to be better directing people from the document to where they can get more information. Have link to Diversity Plan in Strategic Plan to allow people to have access to the specific items.
- Do we keep an account of the items committees are addressing at the school level? Should we have a log of what these items are? "Utilize" might be too broad of a term.

- When the associated objective is re-written, we may need to be looking toward the way that technology can be built into the usefulness of the plan.
- We do not want to overburden the people who will be handling the plan with reporting mechanisms.
- Accountability is a huge consideration. If it is in the plan, then the expectation is that evidence can be produced at every given moment.
- We have to be careful that we do not have too much reporting built in; busywork could be elevated as the result.
- We have not specifically dealt with change management planning at this point. Now we have the CAC's report – steps will build from there. We need a timeline for the next steps.

Fiscal Responsibility:
- The last bullet is redundant and covered in the previous items. May need to be deleted.

Participants took a ten minute break. At 10:20 a.m. Whittington stressed that this is important work that must be given ample time and consideration. Small groups were charged with the task of evaluating and rewriting or creating objectives, as necessary. Participants were assigned to groups as follows:

Community Connections
- Gail Ann Briggs, LaTishia Baker, Jimmy Spaulding, Alan Chapman

Professional Quality
- Meta Mickens-Baker, John Pye, Matt Loss, Kate Behrens, Camille Taylor, Tom Eder

Student Achievement
- Marty O'Connor, Jim Braksick, Chuck Hartseil, Michelle Bender, Angelica Delatorre-Im,

Growth and Change
- John Puzauskas, Meghan Leiseberg, Loren Baele, Scott Peters, Katie Fedden

Fiscal Responsibility
- Scott Lay, Jay Reece, Tod Altenburg, Sarah Tretter, Joe Gonzalez, Peggy Caslow

At 11:25 a.m., the entire group was reconvened to discuss challenges of the process. Many groups cited the challenges of common language and measurability in the process. Often, new objectives were needed. Sometimes information needed to identify gaps was lacking and left discussions less informed than participants would have liked. Participants agreed that a focus on deliverables is necessary to demonstrate goal achievement. Groups shared objectives crafted and the SMART aspects of the objectives were evaluated by the entire group.

Whittington indicated that the group would reconvene on Saturday, June 10 at 9:00 a.m. to complete objectives. Small groups were encouraged to consider their topics prior to the next meeting.

3.0   Announcements
   None.

4.0   Adjournment
   The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

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

ATTEST:

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Meta Mickens-Baker, Board of Education Secretary

Approved Date: _____