

SCHOOL DISTRICT U-46
ELGIN, ILLINOIS

January 24, 2009

SPECIAL CLOSED SESSION

A meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 8:18 a.m. at the Educational Services Center, 355 East Chicago Street, Elgin, Illinois. Board Members in attendance were Maria Bidelman, Karen Carney, Joyce Fountain, Amy Kerber, Dale Spencer, and Ken Kaczynski. Board Member Donna Smith (arrived 8:22 AM) was not present at roll call. Also in attendance were administrators José Torres, and Patrick Broncato. Also in attendance was Barbara Toney, Illinois Association of School Boards.

- I. Motion by Mrs. Carney, with a second by Mrs. Kerber, to enter into Closed Session to discuss information re the discipline, performance, appointment, employment or reclassification of an employee. Upon roll call, yes votes: Mrs. Bidelman, Mrs. Carney, Ms. Fountain, Mrs. Kerber, Mr. Spencer, and Mr. Kaczynski. No Votes: 0. Motion carried by a vote of 6-0.
- II. Information re the Discipline, Performance, Appointment, Employment or Reclassification of an Employee. Mr. Kaczynski indicated that the Board's evaluation tool is the same as was used last year. Mr. Kaczynski added that after this evaluation, if changes need to be made they can be done prior to next evaluation meeting.
 - A. Board Self-Evaluation. Barbara Toney, IASB, was present to help the Board facilitate the evaluation process.

The following areas were evaluated and discussed:

Policy Making. Mr. Spencer raised a question as to how often the policies should be reviewed. Mr. Kaczynski stated that the scheduled review process works with periodic updates from Administration as they are needed. It was also noted that there is a Board Policy that addresses the review process. Ms. Toney added that this is similar to what other districts do. There was a discussion about distribution of the Policy Manual. It was noted that it is kept current on the District's website--this ensures that individuals have access to the most updated information.

Board Meetings. Mr. Kaczynski noted that the only real issue is beginning meetings on time. This is an issue that everyone needs to be aware of. There was much discussion about individual scores.

11. Discusses immediately matters that might alienate Board members or the superintendent, preventing the situation from getting worse.

Mrs. Bidelman asked when it is OK to readdress a topic that perhaps was on a previous agenda. It was noted that issues can not be addressed in open session that are not on the agenda; and during closed session items can be addressed as long as they fall within one of the closed session categories.

12. Makes sure that Board members receive agenda information in adequate time before meetings.

Mrs. Bidelman raised a concern about having enough time to review each Board packet prior to the meetings. Discussion revolved around whether having the Board packets electronically should be revisited. Mrs. Bidelman indicated that she believes that electronic packets may not help. Ms. Toney indicated that the IASB has a new electronic system that the Board may wish to look into.

13. Encourages Board members to be prepared and informed on all agenda items before the meeting.

Mrs. Kerber raised a question as to who should the questions be addressed to--directly to the Superintendent to the staff member involved. Dr. Torres indicated that he would like to know what questions are out there, as well as direct the question to the appropriate person.

14. Agendas are prepared and sent to news media, school buildings, and other interested citizens in advance of regular and special meetings.

Dr. Torres reviewed the cycle in place for reviewing and setting each agenda for the Board meetings. This includes staff meetings and the preparation meeting the day of the Board meeting.

Ethical Standards. The Board discussed this area and the scores that were given.

Board Relationship. The Board reviewed and discussed this area of the evaluation. There was further

discussion on this area regarding efforts by all Board members to continue to build relationships. A comment was made regarding the fact that the Board continues to work together even when there may be differing opinions. Much discussion followed on how to improve in this area.

Personal Qualities of Board. The Board discussed this area and the scores that were given. It was acknowledged that there are different levels of knowledge within the Board.

3. An ability to think independently, to grow in knowledge, to rely on fact rather than prejudice and to consider all sides of any question.

Ms. Fountain commented specifically on this area noting the diverse population of the District and the goal she has taken to help other Board members understand this. Mrs. Bidelman added that she respects Ms. Fountain's views and opinions on this subject and would like to hear more from Ms. Fountain on this matter to help the Board make decisions to understand these views. Dr. Torres offered information on what is being done to look at the diverse population in reviewing test data. This area was extensively discussed. Dr. Torres stated that cultural conversations are difficult-but still need to happen.

Finance. This area was discussed in terms of the scores given regarding the Board's individual concerns on the District's finances. The Board asked for guidance regarding what they should/could be doing to secure additional funding for the District. It was noted that the Board continues to promote the District throughout the community. There was also discussion regarding the Foundation. Mr. Kaczynski indicated that fund raising and programs regarding the Foundation have been left up to the Foundation Board.

There was further discussion regarding the Foundation. Board Members asked to be kept informed about Foundation activities on a regular basis. It was suggested that the Board be provided the Foundation meeting minutes. Mr. Kaczynski pointed out that the Foundation meets quarterly.

(The Board Members voted to recess for 15 minutes while food was delivered.)

Personnel. The Board discussed ways to better communicate with staff members.

4. Encourages the staff to grow professionally by providing enough funds for in-service education, approved by the Superintendent.

Ms. Bidelman raised a concern about staff development and if there is enough and is it being used appropriately. She has heard concerns from staff members about not enough variety in the staff development being offered. Mrs. Kerber also commented--is the staff benefiting from the staff development being offered.

5. Makes staff members aware of the esteem in which they are held.

Several Board members echoed the same comment regarding the change in esteem among staff members since Dr. Torres became superintendent.

7. Promotes opportunities for staff to communicate to the Board.

Mr. Kaczynski indicated that he feels staff members may be "afraid" to speak directly with the Board--they often say what the Board wants to hear--rather than what they feel.

Instruction. Discussion was had regarding this area.

2. Participates in the review of school improvement plans from the local schools.

Mrs. Kerber raised a concern regarding the Board's involvement in reviewing these plans. Mr. Kaczynski indicated that when the SIP plans come to the Board it is at that point that the Board accepts the plans. It was pointed out that by the time the Plans come to the Board, Administration has already reviewed them. Ms. Toney offered advice on this area and will provide the Board with a list of questions that the Board can use to guide their review of the SIP plans. Ms. Toney added that there is another set of questions for the second year for monitoring the implementation of the SIP plans. These questions will help the Board focus and guide their role in this area.

4. Understands the State Board and legislation requirements for instruction for the public schools in the State.

There was a question raised about legislative changes. Dr. Torres indicated that the District is very involved with local legislators. Mr. Broncato added that Representative Keith Farnham (Ruth Munson's replacement) has already made contact with the District and wants to work closely with the District on educational issues.

Relationship with the Community. The Board discussed this topic and scoring that was given. Discussion revolved around ways to involve the Board and community. Dr. Torres commented that there needs to be more focus on involving the community with positive communication. The Board asked about the Superintendent's Brown Bag lunches and the participation of community members. Dr. Torres indicated that the lunches so far have been well attended and there has been good communication.

Goal Setting-Planning. This area was reviewed and discussed. Mr. Kaczynski stated that the Board has improved in this area.

7. Uses planning for site acquisition, school plant construction, and plant maintenance.

The Board raised a concern about the acquisition of property for future use by the District. Mrs. Carney added that although it is Administration's responsibility to acquire the land—it is the Board's responsibility to pursue land acquisitions.

8. Uses short-term and long-range goals to evaluate the instructional program.

Comments for this item included the fact the Board has annual self-evaluation meetings and reviews its goals, as well as the District's goals.

Dr. Torres commented on the use of the Board's self-evaluation, in that he is pleased to be working with a Board that is active in its role to serve the District and its Community.

Ms. Toney addressed the Board again acknowledging the Board for its commitment to continue its self-evaluation process. Ms. Toney provided the Board with the following:

- Open Meetings Act card
- Governance Basics
- Code of Conduct update
- Opportunities and Expectations

- Orienting New School Board Members

Ms. Toney left the meeting at this point.

Discussion followed regarding the Student Board Member that will soon be placed on the Board. Mr. Kaczynski's concern is where this individual will sit. It was determined that a way to expand the dais will be sought in order to have the Board Secretary at the main table-next to the Board President.

The Board broke for lunch and reconvened.

C. Superintendent's Evaluation. The Board met and discussed the Superintendent's evaluation and contract.

Relationship with Superintendent. The Board discussed this portion of the evaluation. Mr. Kaczynski indicated that as an overall perception Dr. Torres has exceeded the Board's expectations. The Board further discussed its relationship with the Superintendent.

III. Motion by Mrs. Carney, with a second by Mrs. Kerber, to adjourn at 3:28 p.m. Upon roll call, yes votes: Ms. Bidelman, Mrs. Carney, Ms. Fountain, Mrs. Kerber, Mr. Spencer, Mrs. Smith, and Mr. Kaczynski. No votes: 0. Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Approved this 4th day of May, 2009

President

Secretary