

SCHOOL DISTRICT U-46  
ELGIN, ILLINOIS  
May 22, 2007

**SPECIAL CLOSED SESSION**

A meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 5:33 p.m. at Educational Services Center, 355 East Chicago Street, Elgin, Illinois. Board Members in attendance were Maria Bidelman, Karen Carney, Joyce Fountain, Amy Kerber, Donna Smith, Dale Spencer and Ken Kaczynski. Also in attendance were administrators Connie Neale and Patrick Broncato. Also in attendance was Dawn Miller, Illinois Association of School Boards.

- I. Motion by Ms. Fountain, with a second by Mrs. Carney, to enter into Closed Session for individual student disciplinary matters (suspensions & expulsions); information re the discipline, performance, appointment, employment or reclassification of an Employee; and to consider self evaluation, practices and procedures or professional ethics when meeting with a representative of a statewide association of which the public body is a member. Upon roll call, yes votes: Mrs. Bidelman, Mrs. Carney, Ms. Fountain, Mrs. Kerber, Mrs. Smith, Mr. Spencer and Mr. Kaczynski. No Votes: 0. Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.
- II. Introductions. Mr. Kaczynski provided the Board with an opportunity to introduce themselves and gave a brief background of the District.
- III. Individual Student Disciplinary Matters (Suspensions & Expulsions).
- IV. Motion by Mrs. Carney, with a second by Ms. Fountain, to move to Open Session at 6:00 p.m. Upon roll call, yes votes: Mrs. Bidelman, Mrs. Carney, Ms. Fountain, Mrs. Kerber, Mrs. Smith, Mr. Spencer and Mr. Kaczynski. No votes: 0. Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

The Board reconvened in Closed Session at 6:07 p.m.

- V. Information re the Discipline, Performance, Appointment, Employment or Reclassification of an Employee. Dr. Neale announced the appointment of two new administrators.
  - A. Independence Center for Early Learners. Dr. Neale informed the Board that Lynn Reuter has been selected as the Supervisor for Independence Center for Early Learners. Most recently Ms. Reuter was an early childhood teacher at Cary School District. Ms. Reuter

has been well prepared and will make an excellent Supervisor at Independence.

- B. Woodland Hts Center for Early Learners. Dr. Neale informed the Board as to the selection of a supervisor at Woodland Hts Center for Early Learners; Ms. Sue Smith. Currently, Ms. Smith is principal at Glenbrook, and has had many teaching positions at other schools within the District. Ms. Smith has the experience and skills to successfully lead Woodland Hts.

- VI. New Board Member Training. Mr. Kaczynski reviewed the outline of items for discussion. Mr. Kaczynski added that this is a time to get to know each other and review general Board procedures.

Ms. Miller also provided information to the Board regarding the training she will be providing this evening. Ms. Miller also noted future Board training events throughout the year.

Ms. Miller provided the following materials for review and discussion.

- A. Foundational Principles of Effective Governance.

- The Board Clarifies the District Purpose
- The Board Connects with the Community
- The Board Employs a Superintendent
- The Board Delegates Authority
- The Board Monitors Performance
- The Board Takes Responsibility for Itself

- B. Board Governance-Self-Assessment for Board Members. Clarity about Board Role, Communications, Relationships, Governance.

- C. The Most Difficult Things to Learn.

- Determining what your function is on the board and how to accomplish it effectively.
- That no matter what you think you know about board service when you first come on board, you still have a lot to learn.
- Learning to publicly acknowledge that you have no power and authority as an individual board member; that only the board as whole can make policies and decisions for the school district.

- Recognizing the difference between setting policy (the board's job) and administering the schools (the superintendent's job).
- That you must represent all the students. Your decisions must be made in the interest of the total school system and not made solely for special groups or interests.
- Learning how to respond to the complaints and concerns of citizens, school administrators, and other staff.
- That change comes slowly.
- That you can't solve everyone's problems by yourself.
- That you must think deeply and sometimes accept a reality that is contrary to your own beliefs.
- That effective boardsmanship means being able to hold the minority viewpoint when voting on a given issue; then openly supporting the majority vote in your community.
- Discovering how the schools are funded.

D. A School Board Member's Approach to the Job.

- Be prepared to participate responsibly
- Remember that your identity is with the community, not the staff
- Represent the community, not a single constituency
- Be responsible for group behavior and productivity
- Honor divergent opinions without being intimidated by them
- Use your special expertise to inform your colleagues' wisdom
- Be aware of the community and staff's perceptions of the board
- Think upward and outward more than downward and inward
- Don't tolerate putting off the big issues forever
- Support the Board's final choice
- Don't mistake form for substance
- Don't expect agendas to be built on your interests
- Squelch your individual points of view during monitoring
- Obsess about ends
- Continuously ask of yourself and the board, "is this board work?"

E. School Board: Specific Responsibilities.

F. Four Simple Rules.

1. The Board says in writing that the superintendent is responsible to the board only for decisions it has made as a body.
2. The board resolves that the superintendent is bound to honor only written board expectations.
3. The board permits no fragmentation of its voice. For example, a board committee does not speak for the board.
4. In evaluating the superintendent, the board never makes a judgment on any criterion the board as a full body did not explicitly set.

G. Board Meeting Monitoring Form.

H. A Board Governance Framework.

- Unity of Purpose
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Working Agreements
- Behavioral Expectations
- Board Protocols
- Code of Conduct for Members of School Boards

In addition to the materials provided by Ms. Miller, Mr. Kaczynski addressed the following issues.

- A. Confidentiality. Mr. Kaczynski addressed this issue and asked veteran board members to add input to the matter. It's really important to not discuss anything that goes on during Closed Session. Discussion followed on current board members relying upon each other to work through these issues. Discussion was also had regarding procedure in presentation of programs and recommendations. Mr. Kaczynski provided the Board with the Annual Planning Cycle which will help identify what happens when. A question was raised by Ms. Bidelman, to all the Board members, as to what drew them to become a Board Member.
- B. Effective of the Board on the Staff. Mr. Kaczynski wants to address the impact the Board has on the effectiveness of the school staff.
- C. Media Relations. A question was raised about the relationship with the press and would the Board value a better relationship with the press. Mr. Kaczynski added that much of the poor public perception of the District is due to the press. Mr. Kaczynski went on to

explain how the Board, and the Superintendent, have attempted to improve that relationship through press conferences, individual meetings, etc. There was further discussion on how to handle the media. Ms. Bidelman suggested that the Board take things into their own hands—in essence, be its own press, and invite the public to more informal open conversations with the Board. A discussion was made that a closing statement be made to thank and acknowledge public speakers at the Board meetings. The Board further talked about other venues of communication that are currently going on in the District and things that have been tried in the past and have not worked, including moving Board meetings to other schools, town hall (style) meetings with the public, meetings with local elected officials, etc.

- D. Decision-Making Process. Basically, once the Board has made a decision—unanimous or not—the decision is made. That is why the Board, as a group, needs to support each other.
- E. Board-to-Board Communication. Mr. Kaczynski reminded everyone that they need to talk with each other. Whether it be general communication or a concern with another Board member, come and talk to each other.
- F. E-Mail Communication. Ms. Miller cautioned the Board not to use the e-mail system for conversational communication. The e-mail system can still be used for informational purposes.
- G. Electronic Board Packets. Mr. Kaczynski added that the Board is considering converting to a system of electronic packets.

There was also discussion about looking forward, for example, on the bills list. It was noted that new board members should not be expected to know everything, they will become aware of patterns and if there is anything out of the ordinary that should be discussed.

- VII. Motion by Ms. Fountain, with a second by Mrs. Smith, to adjourn 9:24 p.m. Upon roll call, yes votes: Ms. Bidelman, Mrs. Carney, Ms. Fountain, Mrs. Kerber, Mrs. Smith, Mr. Spencer and Mr. Kaczynski. No votes: 0. Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Approved this 13<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2007

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President

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Secretary