

Spotlight on the Board

Notes from the District 15 School Board Meeting

August 10th, 2005

Communication Plan

Bob Tenczar, D15 Director of Communication, presented the administration's new Communication Plan, an effort to improve communications between the Board and Administration and the stakeholders (citizens and parents) in District 15. The plan includes:

- "Board Briefs" – newsletter mailed to entire community 4 times per year to address issues of concern and communicate district plans
- 2 times per year provide some mechanism for community to respond to the Board
- "breakfasts" over the course of the year to have face to face communication with Village, parents, park district, other stakeholders
- expand DACEE by creating a "Parents Advisory Council" that would be open to the public, providing parents more access to the Board
- "State of the District" Breakfasts for government officials (February)
- Annual report at the end of the year to the entire community

Carlson noted that she wants more parents to send email to let the Board know what they are thinking. Millar noted that the web site could have more financial data, contract information, timelier posting of Board agenda and minutes, and a 5 year plan. McKanna asked that Tenczar look into what would be required to put the Board meetings on TV or video.

ED/RED/IASB/NSBA Annual Dues

There was some discussion about the relative merits and costs of belonging to ED/RED, IASB (Illinois Association of School Boards) and NSBA (National School Boards Association). Keenan wanted to opt out of ED-RED and Carlson doesn't think they have been effective (they are a lobbying group for suburban schools that provides information as well and spend most of their time in Springfield). ED-RED was approved 3-2 (Rowden, Silverman absent). Membership in IASB was seen as beneficial, especially for policy information and was approved unanimously. The Board unanimously opted out of NSBA (the primary benefit was seen as an opportunity for Board member education).

Fertilizer and Cleaning Supplies

Keenan expressed concern that the fertilizer on some school lawns and the cleaning supplies used throughout District 15 were the "least toxic" chemicals, in the interest of protecting the children. Not all district lawns receive fertilizer, but those that do are applied with as much time as possible allowed (day or two) between application and use by the children. Cleaning supplies are similarly scrutinized to use the least toxic, effective cleansers available. Carlson noted she had personally inspected the MSDS sheets for the cleansers and was impressed with how non-toxic they were.

Staffing

There have been several changes in staff over the summer, including three new Principals, five new Building Assistants. Pleasant Hills' new Building Assistant is Matt Palcer, who has spent 8 years in the District, and is an assistant principal to both PH and Jane Adams (Diane Murphy will be leaving PH to be Hunting Ridge's new Principal). The administration noted that until walk-in registration is complete, they may still have to move some teachers around to have an adequate amount of teachers in each school. They are making an effort not to force grade level splits at this late date, and have included ½ time positions for assistant principals.

School Report Cards/No Child Left Behind

Winston Campus is at risk for not meeting the NCLB goal of 47 ½% passing for all their subgroups, and have already begun remedial measures. School and individual student report cards will be available in October.

Citizens Address the Board

Carolyn Alexander – Food Service at Lake Louise. Complained that freezing salaries for foodservice was offensive and that there had been no communication to the people affected before reading it in the paper.

Kathy Murphy – Kitchen Assistant. Said food service has the lowest hourly wage in the district, and that food service's budget is separate and in the black, so she objected to food service being denied raises this year.

Debbie Lebka – student at Thomas Jefferson. Was concerned about increasing class size and that children that need special assistance will not get their needs met.