

Spotlight on the Board

Notes from the District 15 School Board Meeting

May 11th, 2005

<u>Your District 15 Board Members:</u>	<u>email</u>	<u>status</u>
Scott Boucher, Board Pres	Bouches2@ccsd15.net	elected 4-2003
Nancy Carlson	Carlson2@ccsd15.net	re-elected 4-2005
Kelly Keenan	KeenanK@ccsd15.net	elected 4-2005
Tim Millar, Board Vice Pres	MillarT@ccsd15.net	elected 4-2005
Paula Mikula	Mikulap2@ccsd15.net	re-elected 4-2003
Wendy Rowden (P.H.mom)	RowdenW@ccsd15.net	elected 4-2005
Linda Silverman	Silverl2@ccsd15.net	re-elected 4-2003

Budget

At the May board meeting, the tentative 2005-2006 Budget was presented, with Final Budget Adoption scheduled for the June 8, 2005 meeting (7pm at Walter Sundling Jr. High School). This Budget included the restored 40 minutes to the Jr. High day, which includes the restoration of 18 teaching positions. The restoration of the 40 minutes to the Jr. High day enables the bus schedule to remain the same as it is now, at a cost of approximately \$1 million (several alternative bus schedules were presented in the March 21st Special Meeting, with objections from a range of parties for various reasons, see below).

The 2005-2006 tentative Budget (Education Fund only) shows the projected Expenditures at \$100M (6% reduction from 2004-2005) and projected Revenue at \$96.7M (a 1.7% increase from 2004-2005), resulting in an operating deficit of 3.3% for 2005-2006 (compared to a 11% deficit for 2004-2005). The \$1 million cost to restore 18 teaching positions (see above) accounts for approximately 1/3 of the operating deficit for 2005-2006. This \$3M deficit will further reduce the Educational Fund cash reserves to approximately \$12M in the year 2005-2006 (the total cash reserves are approximately \$20M, including over \$4M in the Transportation Fund).

Starting in 2005-2006, a 10 year Life/Safety cycle begins, which means that all buildings will be assessed to determine which require repair or safety measures. The estimated costs for these repairs will be in the millions of dollars, and it is likely that District 15 would need a separate referendum (for a bond fund) to cover life/safety costs.

The only portion of the budget to see an increase over the 2004-2005 Budget is in Operations & Maintenance for the purchase of the Ela Road property (\$2.88M) in 2005-2006.

Citizens Address the Board

Several art teachers from across the District addressed the board to object to the reduction of visual art class time from 45 minutes/week to 30 minutes/week. They objected that 30 min of art class yields just 7-12 min of art work time, which was insufficient to meet the District's Art Learner Statement Objectives.

Three parents and teachers from John G. Conyers Learning Academy addressed the board to object to the proposed change to the CLA name, citing sudden change, expenses related to the change, and lack of consultation with parents or PTA. The board noted that kids are not being moved out of CLA and that the board is looking at developing a committee to discuss utilization of all District 15 buildings, in search of cost savings from consolidation due to excess capacity (see committees below).

One citizen addressed the board to object to the reduction of field trips to the Fire Station for fire safety training for 5th graders. Dr. McKenna confirmed that the field trips would be reduced to only "in-house" visits by firemen. The citizen stressed the importance of this fire safety training, and lack of alternative source for fire safety

student awareness.

A citizen from Northwest Tax Watch addressed the board, citing reasons for the failed referendum including a lack of trust with the "old board", and communication that "turned off" the voters.

Policy Changes

A change was proposed to policy 2:220, which currently requires a semi-annual review of closed meeting verbatim recordings to determine if they were still confidential, or were no longer confidential and could be released to the public. The change eliminated this requirement, allowing the verbatim recordings to be destroyed after 18 months without the 6 month review to determine confidentiality. Kelly Keenan objected to this policy change, emphasizing the need for transparency. The proposed change was put off until a check could be made of the Open Meetings Act to see if the policy was in accordance with the Act.

A revised list of Building Use Fees was tabled (as moved by Tim Millar), awaiting more information about who was exempt from the fees and how the fees compared to last years fees. Tim Millar emphasized the desire to have boy- and girl-scout groups counted exempt from fees. Bob Strand from Finance noted that we have reciprocal agreements with some park districts, which do mowing in exchange for facility use, and that some of these agreements may be re-negotiated in light of reduced facility use days (due to budget cuts).

New Committees/Members

The board members chose the committees they wanted to be involved in for the 2005-2006 school year. The committees are as follows:

- Real Estate/Building Utilization Committee – Carlson, Keenan
- Investment – Carlson, Keenan
- Technology – Silverman, Millar
- Insurance – Millar, Mikula
- Finance – Millar, Silverman
- DACEE – Keenan, Rowden
- Architecture – Carlson, Keenan
- InterGovernmental Relations/ Community (Park/City) – all
- Curriculum – Keenan, Rowden
- D15 Ed Foundation – Rowden
- IASB/ED/RED – Mikula, Rowden, Silverman

Busing (review from prior board meetings):

On Mar 21, 2005, the Board held a special meeting to discuss possible changes to the busing schedule. Three alternate schedules were proposed, each accommodating the reduced Jr. High day (by 40 min, which was driven by reduced staff) and the reduced Elementary day (by 30 min M/F only, which was driven by the elimination of Art and Music). At the beginning of the Mar 21st meeting, the Board announced they would keep Art and Music at the Elementary level and tabled until April 13th a decision on the busing schedule. Many parents and teachers objected to the change in busing schedule for a variety of reasons: starting and ending too early for the kids or too late for activities after school, the reduced amount of school time available to parochial schools, as well as other reasons. At the April 13th meeting, busing was deferred again, until the new board members were sworn in. On April 26th a special board meeting was held to swear in the new board members. At that meeting, the board voted to reinstate 18 teachers to restore 40 min to the Jr. High School Class period, at a cost of \$1M. Wendy Rowden read a statement, expressing the difficulty of the decision, but that she believed it was in the best interests of the students to keep the 40 min in their schedule and keep the busing schedule as it currently exists. There was some discussion of flipping the two elementary tiers (tier 1 8:30am start = Thomas Jefferson, Marion Jordan, etc; tier 2 9:10

am start= Pleasant Hill, Hunting Ridge, etc), so that Pleasant Hill would start at the earlier start time (8:30 am). Bob Strande (Administration Finance) presented information about the configuration of the bus schedules. There are some schools that cannot be changed to an earlier time (Hunting Ridge) due to safety concerns (getting out at the same time as Fremd). If the schedules are changed, additional buses would be required in the field to provide "overlap" time. This would require 9 additional drivers, at a cost of \$250k for the first year. The estimated cost over 5 years would be \$500k, assuming some efficiency in the schedule that would be regained over time. He noted that approximately 60% of this cost would be recovered from the State, which reimburses the district for busing private school students. Currently, the bus schedule will remain as it is now.

If you have questions for the board, you can email them directly or email Superintendent McKanna (McKannaR@ccsd15.net), or you can present questions directly to the board at the next Board meeting (June 8, 2005, 7 pm at Sundling Jr. High). All emails sent to Dr. McKanna are automatically copied to the entire School Board.