

Spotlight on the Board

Notes from the District 15 School Board Meeting

November 8th, 2006

This Board of Education meeting was a “Regular” meeting.
Boucher and Silverman were absent.

Superintendent’s Reports

McKanna reported that the district had been advised that the BOE meetings were not being aired on the cable stations. He asked if anyone has seen them. If they have not, he stated that plenty of copies are available in the district office.

Board Discussion and Reports

ED-RED Council/Legislation – Mikula reported that junk food rules are in effect and are scheduled to be revised in January, 2007. Veto sessions are scheduled for November 14th – 16th and again from November 28th – 30th. The sessions are expected to be light with no major issues coming forward.

District 15 Educational Foundation – Mikula reported that the very first D15 Foundation newsletter in many years will be coming out shortly. It will detail what the Foundation is, what it does and what it would like to do. The mini grant application deadline has passed and the committee will be meeting shortly to make those awards.

The Foundation’s major fundraising and social event, “Hearts of Gold” is scheduled for February, 2007. It generates the Foundation’s operating funds which is what funds the mini grants. One of the goals for this year’s “Hearts of Gold” event is to raise funds to provide flat screen monitors for all of the district’s computer labs.

District Advisory Committee for Educational Excellence (DACEE) – McKanna reported that the district is working on 2007-2008 school calendar. The District is working with two high school districts on dates for December, 2007. Plans are to present the 2007-2008 school calendar at the December 13th board meeting.

He also stated that the Department of Instruction is looking for community participation in two committees – the gifted and “out of level” math programs. They are looking for input from the community, parents, board members and staff since these programs have not been reviewed in many years. He indicated that 70 people have already signed up for one of the committees. McKanna advised that Mary Zarr, Executive Director for Instruction has a lot of ideas on how to make some changes in these programs.

At this point, Kelly Keenan asked Dr. McKanna to speak to concerns in the community about only new (BA+1) teachers being hired by the District. McKanna confirmed that the District did that a couple of years ago in order to save money. He further confirmed that last year the Board did authorize to hire 22+ new teachers at the Masters level with experience. He stated that the District typically hires experienced teachers for the Special Education and English Language Learners (ELL) programs. Last year, 122 certified staff were hired and a fair number of them were experienced. McKanna stated that this is something the District wants to stay with – good to have a balance of experience.

Keenan proposed that the CTC needs to be involved in this discussion. Board discussion ensued as to when this could be put on the agenda. Keenan recommended that it should be a Committee of The Whole board meeting.

Citizens Address the Board

Mary Vanek - Referred to an October 24th, 2006 email sent from a CTC union official using the district's website to over 50 District 15 teachers. The email urged the employees to conduct political activity for a particular candidate in the recent election. Vanek read information from the Illinois Attorney General's website regarding ethics reform laws that were passed in late 2003. She stated that these laws prohibited public employees, while on compensated time, from conducting any form of political activity. School districts and other forms of local government were required to adopt ordinances and/or resolutions regulating political activity no later than May 19, 2004. Vanek asked to see a copy of D15's ordinance. She asked if one has not passed, would the district be in compliance with this law prior to the April, 2007 election.

Action Items

Personnel Report – Approved, Keenan abstained.

2006-07 Official School Calendar – Unanimously approved.

Bids

Bids for Flooring Improvements and Custodial Cleaning Equipment were unanimously approved. There was vote to reject the bid for Custodial Cleaning Supplies and it was unanimously approved.

Consent Calendar

The consent calendar was unanimously approved.

Correspondence

Freedom of Information Act Requests (FOIA)

Five FOIA requests were made in October, 2006.

On October 2nd, 2006, there was a request from Mr. Richard Bryant, resident of Naples, FL for the check register of the activity revolving fund from May 1st, 2003 until September 29th, 2006 and copies of the first 100 checks from the activity revolving fund which were written at this time.

On October 13th, 2006, there was a request from Donald Yu, Attorney at Law, Chicago for copies of all documents in any way related to the resolution directing of contracts for electrical services that were voted on at the October 11th, 2006 BOE meeting including but not limited to any underlying supporting documents such as emails, board minutes, request for proposals, correspondence, request for pricing, etc.

On October 24th, 2006, there was a request from Shirley Folbee, President of D211 local teachers' union concerning information for employee insurance for D15

employees specifically the insurance company, coverage cost, premiums and policy options for single and family members of District 15 teachers, administrators and staff.

Also on October 24th, 2006, there was a request from Mr. Eugene Flynn, Palatine for copies of all emails from Kelly Keenan, Tim Millar and Wendy Rowden to Dr. McKanna from October 1st, 2005 to October 23rd, 2006.

On October 26th, 2006, there was a request from Nan Zane, Palatine for copies of school calendars from the 2000 to 2006 school years.

Information Items for Future Meetings

Salary Study for Non-union Staff

Revised Board of Education Policy Manual

After a five minute recess, the Board went into Executive Session.