

## DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

March 1, 2010

The Board of the Davenport Community School District in the Counties of Scott and Muscatine, State of Iowa, met for the Committee of the Whole Meeting on Monday, March 1, 2010, pursuant to law. The meeting was held in the Jim Hester Board Room, Administration Service Center, 1606 Brady Street Davenport, Iowa, in said District. President Zamora called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

On roll call the following board members were present: President: Patt Zamora, Directors: Richard Clewell, Nikki De Fauw, Ralph Johanson, Ken Krumwiede, Larry Roberson, and Tim Tupper. Superintendent Julio Almanza and other administrators were present.

#### BUDGET

Superintendent Almanza reported on the administrations' budget recommendations as presented. He also noted that the board was presented with all ideas and suggestions that were submitted to the district through e-mail or the district website. The recommendations were broken down by who made the recommendation, the direct impact on the children, the item to be reduced, the number of positions affected by reduction, and the total amount of the recommended reduction. The recommendations are as follows:

Phase I	
Special Ed 1.0 expenses	\$274,506
Health insurance renewal	\$637,039
Lower Enrollment for staffing formula HS	\$408,000
Hand dryers vs paper towels	\$45,000
Reduce 1 tech position-attrition	\$50,000
Reduction in Specialists-attrition	\$145,000
Recalculate para allocation formula HS	\$189,000
Reduction of Clerical-attrition	\$50,000
Across the Board-Site Budgets-5%	\$153,000
General fund equipment expenses to PPEL	\$190,000
Reduction in Administrators & Counselors-attrition	\$325,000
Across the Board-Department-5%	\$113,000
Intermediate instructional time (50%)	\$544,000
Bus route efficiencies	<u>\$299,144</u>
	\$3,422,689
Phase II	
Reduction in Custodians-attrition	\$112,000
3 Clerk III's at HS	\$150,000
Backfill professional development with stimulus	\$66,000
Tax Rate increase	\$400,000
Intermediate instructional time (50%)	<u>\$544,000</u>
	\$944,000

President Zamora asked the board members for their questions concerning the recommendations.

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Director Tupper asked about the health insurance renewal reduction. Ms. Tangen reported that it would represent 2-3.5% instead of 10% for health premiums contributions. Director Tupper asked for verification from the third party vendor concerning the increase and how it is calculated. He questioned how the lower enrollment for staffing formula correlates to the reduced dollar amounts received from the state because of the lower enrollment. Ms. Tangen and Mr. Almanza explained that the number of enrolled students is based on this year's figures for the dollars to be allotted for next year. That number is represented in our revenue estimate projection for next year. The staffing formula reduction due to enrollment is due to fewer students being enrolled, thus those positions are no longer necessary to accommodate our student enrollment.

Director Tupper asked about the impact of having fewer paras in the classrooms. Dr. O'Melia explained that there is currently 1 para for approximately every 150 students and is based on enrollment. In addition to instructional support paras are used for support in clerical offices, attendance offices, health offices, supervision of labs, etc. Each school currently has the discretion to assigned paras to duties as needed. The buildings will have to reprioritize their usage if the number of available paras are reduced.

Director Tupper asked what feedback there has been from the buildings on the reduction in Intermediate team time from last year. Ms. Reynolds reported that not all levels have team time now because ½ of those teachers have 6 periods of teaching. Teachers are missing that time to get together in grade level teams to have the conversations necessary to coordinate efforts. Our records have not indicated that our test scores have benefited from team time, but the research shows that it is beneficial. Director Tupper is concerned that there has been negative feedback from teachers and yet the board continues to consider cutting in this area. Director Clewell also pointed out that this time may also be used for parents and students. Director Zamora stated that she has heard the time is not used appropriately and Director Krumwiede suggested maybe it should be better defined as to what that time should be used for if we continue the program. He wonders what message we are giving to the community if we eliminate this program. Mr. Almanza agreed that team time should be better defined if we keep this program.

Mr. Almanza noted that there are many districts in the area that are considering massive cuts, letting employees go, increasing class sizes, or increasing taxes. We are not having to consider these types of drastic cuts because administrators and the board have been forward thinking and responsible in our fiscal decisions. He recommends we set aside \$1 million to establish a contingency budget in case of additional state reductions. The district does not want to lay off staff if possible so it is recommended to review retirements for additional reductions. Director Roberson asked if the administration could look into additional early retirements for this year. Mr. Almanza noted we currently have 17 planned retirements. Mr. Almanza also pointed out that the administration is not recommending any tax increase at this time.

President Zamora stated she is glad to see the administration is not recommending increasing class size. She asked how the district could use the money that will be saved from leasing expenses from Children's Village West next year. Ms. Tangen stated that those funds come from Special Education and Title I funds and will be available for other expenses in those areas.

Director De Fauw asked if there is any intention of changing the staffing formulas from the current 1 to 26 at the high school level and 1 to 24 at the intermediate level. Dr. O'Melia answered that those formulas will not be altered, but other staffing formulas (nursing, music, para, clerical, etc) may be looked at that are outside the core class formula. If the district loses someone through attrition those formulas may be changed, but we don't want to redo a formula at this time that would eliminate a current position. Hiring practices will be considered in these areas for maximum benefit. Director De Fauw stated that she is disappointed that we aren't looking at across the board cuts that may make a greater impact. She thinks we should look at a broader spectrum that may be implemented in year two. Mr. Almanza stated that he agrees that a broader

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base will be looked at for the future. She asked if there was discussion on savings from a common calendar. Mr. Almanza stated that there is a minor savings, but establishing that calendar and getting the public on board would be difficult for this coming year and will be looked at for possibly the following year.

Director Krumwiede asked for clarification on some specific positions listed being available for reduction through attrition. He wants to remind the board of the issues of students and be careful about making reductions based on retirement opportunities alone, especially in the counselor area.

Director Johanson questions whether the positions to be eliminated through attrition are actually positions that should be reduced or it is just an easy position to eliminate. Mr. Almanza stated that the staff positions have been reviewed carefully before determining the reduction. Director Johanson asked about the amount to be withdrawn from the fund balance. Mr. Almanza stated that if the board wants to cut more and withdraw less, the administration needs to know that immediately. Director Johanson asked if there is a clear definition from the state about what the 10% across the board cuts mean. Mr. Almanza stated that it is currently being debated by the Department Of Education. Director Johanson feels that their definition may affect our decisions. President Zamora reminded the board that the budget must be submitted by April 15. Ms. Tangen stated that Districts have to set their budgets without knowing what the revenues from the state are going to be. We can only give it our best estimate. We can publish our budget high and then reduce it, but we cannot increase it after it has been submitted. The tax levy rate must also be stated at the time of publishing the budget and cannot be raised after that.

Director Tupper compared the City of Davenport's budget documents to our process. He feels that we should have something more similar in a singular document. He feels we would be well served to have a similar certification budget process in the future to make information more readily available and understandable. It becomes a strategic planning instrument which could be very useful. Ms. Tangen stated that similar costs/revenues have been given to the board for previous review. Expenses were broken down by category: core, standard, or enhanced. She asked in what different manner the board would like that information presented to them. He suggested we look at the city budget document as a sample.

Director Roberson suggested looking at non-educational expense areas, GIS data, and more community college collaboration.

Director Clewell agreed that during times of economic constraint it is imperative that we look for efficiencies. When reducing specialists he wants to make sure that they do not affect programs, specifically arts programs. He would like more information on the exact positions recommended for reduction.

President Zamora asked the board members to state their general opinions about the recommendations made and add additional ideas if they do not approve of a recommended reduction.

Director Tupper: He would like to continue to look at travel costs, professional development, administrative staff costs, and additional special education expenses that could be transferred. He is concerned with changes in intermediate level team time, elementary counselors, para allocations, reduction of specialists, reduction of a tech position, and the lower enrollment for staffing formula. He asks if we are leaving ourselves enough cushion to go forward. He believes we should use less of the fund balance this budget year. He would rather institute more cuts than those recommended.

Director De Fauw: She feels that in addition to making immediate cuts for the current budget, we also need to be more strategic in evaluating how we deliver services to our students in the long term. She appreciates that the administration has made broad cuts and not targeted specific

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programs. She is also concerned about reducing the intermediate instructional time. She would like a report on how they are currently functioning with less team time. In general, she would support the proposed cuts and in using the reserve as recommended by the administration. However, this is the time to re-evaluate long term district goals in increasing student achievement.

Director Roberson: He feels that the proposed positions/programs recommended for reductions had usefulness when they were originally implemented, but trusts that the recommendations made by the administration will have the least student impact possible while still reaching our reduction goals. He would like to see more detailed information on Phase II recommendations and their impact.

Director Clewell: He has concerns about the reduction of specialists, counselors, and intermediate team time. Overall he feels the administration has done due diligence in providing recommendations that have the least impact on our students. He feels we may want to look deeper at cash reserves than to eliminate some of these programs. Student achievement is what we are here for and we may need to take some risks with cash reserves to achieve that.

Director Krumwiede: He applauds the administrations' recommendations in finding areas that have the least impact on students. He continues to have concerns about elementary counselors, and reducing intermediate team time. He would like to know how the schools have been affected in already losing some of that time. He is supportive of using the fund balance as recommended.

Director Johanson: He generally supports the recommendations made for Phase I. He feels it is important to try to have some dedicated resources for Phase II and beyond. He does not agree with the idea of using more reserves at this point. He would support looking at more efficiencies for the future budget years.

President Zamora: She congratulated the administration in listening to the board and their concerns in developing these recommendations. She is glad to see that class size was not increased as a suggestion. She reminded everyone that student achievement is our goal. She feels that intermediate team time may not improve student achievement in the way it is currently structured and she is not concerned about that reduction. She agrees that we should use reserves sparingly so we have enough for future use. She acknowledged that these cuts are difficult because they must be made from only about 15% of the budget since about 85% is used for district salaries. She wanted to emphasize that we are not promoting any tax increases or increasing class size at this time.

Superintendent Almanza: He stated that this budget process was approached by looking at this coming year as well as 2011-2012 and he appreciates some of the issues that were raised tonight for continued discussion about future years. If the board chooses to leave intermediate team time he believes some serious thought needs to be given to the most efficient use of that time. Breaking down the expenses was enlightening and helpful in planning for future years. Given the board's support, we can manage the crisis with wise use of our revenues.

Director Tupper commented that as we look at how we allocate our resources going forward we need to develop ways to evaluate student achievement and student development to directly relate expenses to these areas. Mr. Almanza stated that we have those standards in place to evaluate for our newer programs and that we can look at those standards that could be used for older programs.

## **RACE TO THE TOP**

Mr. Almanza reported that a time will come when the board will be asked to take a position on the second round of RTTT. The 1<sup>st</sup> round is finished and the 2<sup>nd</sup> round will come some time after the legislative session has adjourned in late March or early April. If the 1<sup>st</sup> round is not successful, the Department of Education would like as many districts as possible to support the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.

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That application is due in June. The UEN position will be important in the next round. The concern about the current legislative language is the inclusion of “negotiating” with teachers in improvement plans. Bargaining units are in the welfare of employees and school boards are in the welfare of students. Mr. Almanza explained that File 2033 deals with the persistently low achieving schools. It is geared to creating a turn around system for those schools. It is intended to make radical changes. The ISEA views the language as that it not only includes the models to be used, but all those items within the models that must be negotiated. The DOE has added to the confusion by saying that if any future funding is available from the federal government for turnaround schools, districts that apply for and receive those funds must comply with File 2033. President Zamora notes that the federal statute did not call for this language; it has come from the state level.

Director Tupper stated that all groups (teachers, BOE, DOE) are tied together and that all groups must work together to implement the necessary reforms to reach student achievement goals. He feels we will be mandated to follow the rules from File 2033 regardless and we should try to apply for the available money for future use if necessary.

Mr. Almanza stated that our own union did not sign on during the 1<sup>st</sup> round and they have their own concerns. The role of the union is to protect its members. Student achievement has never been part of Chapter 20. The question is should it be? If we are directed to do a turnaround school, we will work with our union to get that done. Director Tupper stated the union was originally formed as a collective of teachers and administrators in the advancement of education. Ultimately administrators broke off, but the history is such that it has advocated for the advancement and achievement of students. Mr. Almanza stated that historically we haven’t tied student achievement and evaluation of teachers. Director Roberson stated that in his role on the Negotiations Committee that during the negotiation process there is no time when they talk about student achievement. He hopes we do get to that at some time in the future, but it is not currently a function.

The meeting was adjourned by President Zamora at 7:15 PM.

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Lynnette Carver, Board Secretary