



...from the August 8, 2017 Board of Education Meeting

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Model Schools Conference – early June

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mary Henderson reported that more than 120 teachers were enrolled in D205 University courses. “Not a day has gone by this summer that we haven’t had teachers working, refining their craft,” she said. “The investment in professional learning is something that sets us apart. Our professional development is done in teams; learning in isolation does not bring about change. The end goal is the best possible learning environment.”

Last summer, Dr. Kathleen Kosteck, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, attended the Model Schools Conference. “It is highly valued to us as leaders that the Board supports this,” she said. “Our team comes back full of energy and focus. This year, we kept moving forward with another group and maintained that level of energy and synergy.”

Principal Christine Trendel, of Jackson School, talked about working on school cultures. “It comes down to ‘Achievement of rigor depends on relationships.’ It starts with the whole child and the support of our teachers,” she said.

Dr. Michelle Thompson, principal at Emerson School, said she has a hyper focus on instruction. Presenters talked about the personal skills that students need to be future ready, such as compassion, perseverance and adaptability. “We will be working to embed this in our PBIS work at Emerson.”

Lincoln Principal Jennifer Barnabee shared that “The energy and passion just saturated the conference, and we all returned to Elmhurst inspired to build on what we learned about rigor, relevance and relationships. We learned from other school districts some strategies for creating cultures that support change and improve student engagement, such as:

- Create a comprehensive plan
- Sustain the plan
- Monitor with meaningful student data
- Use a continuous improvement model

Hawthorne Principal Tim Riordan called it “a great team building experience that also reinforced what we are doing in D205 for our students. With the incorporation of common assessments, we will have a variety of data sources when we’re making decisions on what is best for students.”

Susan Kondrat, principal at the Madison Early Childhood Center, sees and embraces the vision that is being put in place for the D205 leadership team. “Without the culture behind our strategies, we won’t succeed,” she noted.

Jefferson Principal Leslie Weber outlined the storytelling piece contributed by speaker Eric Sheninger, author of *Digital Leadership: Changing Paradigms for Changing Times*, calling him “the tech guy, the

guru of branding your school. It was great to have some of those personal conversations with Eric and Dr. Daggett. Sheninger believes we need effective communication skills because if you don't tell your story, someone else will. Our push as a leadership team is that we are going to be proactive about all of the wonderful things happening in our schools."

Field Principal Heidi Thomas noted that "in the absence of that [positive] communication, the negative rhetoric takes hold. Eric gave us specifics about how to accomplish this and build our culture."

Assistant Superintendent for Innovation and Growth Dr. Mark Cohen said, "It's not often you get to sit down and talk with award-winning authors and get their take on your particular situation. That was the best opportunity for professional learning I've had."

"It's critical that we are developing relevant content; we need to implement curriculum in a setting that is engaging. We need to build capacity in our teachers to create students who are college, career and life ready. It's not just students who are learning; our staff is learning too. Follow us using the #IgniteD205."

He went on to outline the plan to use WE surveys, which will help the District get its finger on the pulse of curriculum and culture. "Using these surveys, we will be collecting feedback from parents, staff and students to assess engagement. The surveys are constructed so that the questions are mirrored to each group, which gives a rich perspective from the various points of view."

Dr. Moyer gave a specific example about coherence from Michael Fullan. "The addition of the instructional coaches is huge," said the Superintendent. "Everything we do is directly tied together. The new educator academy is one example of how we transfer this knowledge into direct application."

American Middle Level Education (AMLE) Leadership Summit

Principals and five teachers from each middle school reported on their summer [American Middle Level Education Leadership Summit](#) experience in San Diego, CA. This seminar focused on culture, student and teacher engagement, and the value of co-teaching. Sandburg Principal Linda Fehrenbacher kicked off the presentation noting "We took a highly-motivated, energetic and passionate group."

Dr. Carrie Emrikson, Sandburg psychologist, addressed the AMLE mission statement:

AMLE is dedicated to improving the educational experiences of young adolescents by providing vision, knowledge, and resources to all who serve them in order to develop healthy, productive and ethical citizens.

Three main characteristics guide well-rounded middle-level education:

- Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
- Leadership & Organization
- Culture & Community

Ashley Skinner, Churchville art teacher and Middle School Task Force member, noted that it is critically important to create a positive school culture.

Mike Johnson, Bryan English/social studies teacher and Middle School Task Force member, spoke on growth mindset and finding out how to activate all teachers in the building to create leaders. He also described the Acceleration block by saying "Teachers know what the need is and what they want to try. It goes back to the growth mindset that we will continue to adapt and evolve based on our needs."

Bryan math/science teacher Krystin Scaliatine and Bryan social studies teacher Katie Hirsch noted that consistency, shared accountability and incorporating interdisciplinary lessons/units are the keys to creating effective teams and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Effective PLCs are based on collaborative teams, root cause analysis and data charts, they noted.

Chrissy LaPenna, Science Department chair at Sandburg, along with 7th grade math teacher Emily Barnes and 8th grade team leader Kelly Harkins, presented Engagement Strategies, using multiple learning approaches, which were learned through AMLE and support the following characteristics:

- Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning
- Educators use multiple learning approaches
- Learners are committed to and knowledgeable about this age group, educational research, and best practice
- Organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships.

Reading specialists Laura Johnson (Bryan) and Suzanne Creer (Churchville) presented the six different models of co-teaching. In a co-taught classroom:

- Both teachers are responsible for delivering instruction to all students.
- This approach benefits a broad spectrum of students from gifted and talented to at-risk learners.

“We shouldn’t risk-take in isolation; time for co-planning is really important. PLC time is crucial. When we all learn together; we all grow together. Co-teaching is just a really great way to make sure those things are happening,” said Ms. Johnson.

Co-teaching is especially effective for students in special education, bilingual/English Learner and reading/math classes, as well as interdisciplinary work.

Bryan Principal Jacquie Discipio and Churchville Principal Gina Pogue Reeder provided the wrap up. “We’re developing a true middle school model in Elmhurst and are very excited about that. We went in with a mindset of bringing back ideas to our teams. Thank you (Board of Education) for providing us with this opportunity to meet with schools from around the world.

“We want our leaders to come from within the teachers themselves, a diffusion of leadership model. It’s okay to take a risk. We need to continue to support and foster teachers stepping out there and trying something that they think will be best for kids,” they concluded.

Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures Workshop

Edison Principal Jim Pluskota, along with Fischer EL Instructional Coach Lisa Ferraris, reported on the [Kagan Cooperative Learning Workshop](#) they attended for five days in Lisle, IL, this summer. Their big takeaway was “why call on one when you can call on everyone?”

Erin Wedell, a fifth grade teacher at Lincoln last school year, called the workshop non-stop and said it taught her the importance of establishing a safe and welcoming environment for learning. The group also learned class building activities and how to easily pair students according to various Kagan structures.

Laura Ryan, fifth grade teacher at Edison, said it was one of the best conferences she’s attended. “It has energized and excited me, even after 20 years. Kagan structures provide organized classroom

instruction, positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and simultaneous interaction.”

Edison music teacher Jeremy Nemec noted that the over 300 Kagan structures can be used in purposeful ways. He was so happy to be included (as a unified arts instructor) with other classroom teachers. His takeaway was: don't overdo it; focus on one structure at a time with students. Celebrate student success!

Principal Pogue Reeder attended a similar Kagan workshop last year and participated in two 2-day conferences this summer. “Coaching helps transfer knowledge in the moment, which provides immediate and positive correction and leads to an 85% retention rate (versus the usual 10%),” she explained. Field and Jefferson principals also participated last summer and spent the last school year working with their staff on implementing these structures.

Dr. Henderson noted that “Last year our instructional coaches attended the Kagan training as well. They will work with grade-level teams and individual teachers to implement this. Principals are also using these strategies in staff meetings in order to model for teachers how to use this in the classroom. Institute Days have also been, and will be, used to teach and practice some of these strategies. I'm very proud of how all of our efforts are aligning under Dr. Moyer's leadership.”

SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA - ACTION

Approval of Communications Consultant

In June, Elmhurst School District 205 issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Community Engagement consulting. The District is seeking to secure the services of a communications consultant in order to help determine the extent to which the community would consider supporting facility upgrades and what it would prioritize as a part of a long-term Master Plan to enhance District facilities. Ultimately, any potential long-term plan will reflect the additional input that is part of Phase II of the Focus 205 Community Engagement Process.

To that end, the consultant must be able to provide public opinion research, message framework, creative design, web and video support, strategic social media help and assistance with facilitating and gathering input from focus groups/community meetings. Three firms responded by the initial deadline. Following that, and due to extenuating circumstances, the District reached out to additional firms in order to perform due diligence.

In all, six firms presented proposals. Interviews were held with two finalists and references were checked. A rubric was used to determine final scoring.

Superintendent Moyer, Assistant Superintendent for Finance Chris Whelton and Executive Director of Communications Melea Smith were all involved in the process and decision. Following careful consideration, it has been determined that the proposal from Strategies 360 (S 360) of Seattle, WA, proved the best combination of value and qualifications.

Strategies 360 is a large, full-service research, public affairs and communications firm with offices in 12 western states and Washington, D.C. The lead on this project would be Lesley Rogers, who brings more than 20 years of communications experience to her role as senior vice president at Strategies 360. She worked for S 360 from 2007-2011, then re-joined the firm in 2014, after serving as the Chief Communications Officer for Seattle Public Schools. With hands-on K-12 district

experience, Lesley understands the need for school districts to authentically engage with both internal and external audiences.

For their work with District 205, S 360 will partner with a local firm called *Marcia Sutter is Minding Your Business*. Ms. Sutter provides quantitative research, meeting planning, project management and business solutions for educators, entrepreneurs and non-profits. This work can be capped at a given dollar amount.

S360's depth and reach, in partnership with a local professional who has "boots on the ground" knowledge of and experience with area school districts and communities, will provide the full spectrum of support we seek. Both firms come highly recommended and were very competitively priced.

"This is the process we should be using to hire firms," noted John McDonough.

Approval of All-Day Kindergarten Feasibility Study Consultant

Last school year, All-Day Kindergarten consistently emerged as a community priority throughout the Focus 205 process. It was second only to STEM programming in the Thoughtexchange survey. People are interested in what the specifics might look like. The results of this study will drive many of the other decisions that will be made.

The District is launching Phase 2 of Focus 205, and part of that is an in-depth feasibility study to confirm the community's desire to move in this direction, and, if so, the options for implementation the community would be willing to support. The study will include three parts: a detailed comparison analysis of the highest performing unit school districts in the state, focus group meetings, and a survey. Cost, staffing and facilities implications will be included in the final report with a recommendation on next steps. The attached contract is structured such that the consultant will be paid at an hourly rate with a not to exceed number of \$5,000.

The District administration is recommending Dr. Steve Cordogan to conduct this study. Dr. Cordogan has significant related experiences as his attached resume clearly indicates. His doctorate specialized in statistical research. He is widely respected locally for his 11 years as the Director of Research and Evaluation in District 214. In addition, he has worked as an instructor at the university level and consulted with the state on various assessment-related matters. Dr. Cordogan has earned numerous awards for his work and has been published extensively.

Karen Stuefen voted no because of the timing. "First we need to understand what will be required to do this, how it will affect neighborhood schools, class sizes, etc. I'd like to know from a wider net of the community what they would support," she said.

Mr. McDonough noted that this might be the largest transformation District 205 has undergone in a long time.

Shannon Ebner said she looks at all-day kindergarten as "the cornerstone of a larger process."

Dr. Moyer explained that the study will be the study. "It will help us understand what we need to do moving forward." Margaret Harrell asked that the study include private kindergarten providers and noted that its outcome will not commit the District to a particular path.

ACTION ON CLOSED SESSION ITEM

With two members absent, the Board voted 5-0 to approve a settlement with the Elmhurst Teachers Council. Jim Woell explained that this was in response to a grievance filed regarding the implementation of the new middle school schedule which was recommended by the Middle School Task Force.

The ETC filed a demand to bargain as a result. Leadership changed and new parties joined the table. All of the issues surrounding the concerns were resolved with the help of a federal mediator.

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMUNICATION

Dr. Moyer reminded everyone that on Monday, August 14, at 7 PM in the York Commons, internationally renowned education guru Dr. Bill Daggett is scheduled to present *Why the Future of Education is Now!* to the community.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Board President Shannon Ebner talked about working on a Board calendar to help plan the work for the upcoming year. She asked for Board input before making a draft copy public.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

August 22 - Board of Education Meeting - 7:30 PM - District 205 Center

September 4 - Labor Day Holiday - no school

September 12 - Board of Education Meeting - 7:30 PM - District 205 Center

NOTE: Video footage of all Board of Education regular meetings are usually posted on [205TV](#) within 48-72 hours. Audio is posted within 24 hours at <http://www.elmhurst205.org/Audio> (please click on appropriate meeting date).

Past editions of Board Highlights are posted/archived at www.elmhurst205.org/BOE_highlights.