

MINUTES OF A **REGULAR MEETING** OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 205, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, HELD ON **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2011** IN THE CAFETERIA AT THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL, HARVEY, ILLINOIS, BEGINNING AT 6:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. On roll call, Members King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams answered. Members Banks, Bradley and Burton were absent. Dr. J. Kamala Buckner, Superintendent; Mr. Tim Truesdale, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and External Funding; Dr. Betheny Lyke, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Community Relations; Mr. Steven Gress, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations; Mr. Jerry Doss, Director of Public Relations; Mrs. Maria Brunson, Director of Information Technology; Mr. Brad Beilfuss and Mrs. Dorith Johnson, Co-Principals of Thornridge High School; Mr. Tony Ratliff, Principal of Thornton High School; Mrs. Darcelle Williams, Principal of Thornwood High School; and Mr. Brian Crowley, District 205 Legal Counsel, were also present.

ROLL
CALL

At 6:01 p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Williams seconded, to go into **Executive Session** to discuss student discipline issues. On roll call, Members King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

EXECUTIVE
SESSION

At 6:45 p.m., the Board returned to Regular Session.

RETURNED TO
REGULAR SESSION

The Curriculum Committee had no report.

The Finance Committee had no report.

On behalf of the Policy Committee, Dr. King stated that the mandated Allergy Policy requires the District to be responsive to students with food allergies. The Board commented on various issues relating to food allergies.

COMMITTEE OF
THE WHOLE

In the absence of the Secretary, Mrs. Lawrence served as Secretary *Pro Tem*.

SECRETARY
PRO TEM

Dr. Penman moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Approve the Consent Agenda**, which includes the following:

CONSENT AGENDA

- The minutes of the Public Hearing of December 8, 2010.
- The minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 8, 2010.
- The District 205 bills as presented for payment.
- The ECHO bills as presented by payment.
- Resignations: See Director of Human Resources
- Release: See Director of Human Resources
- Leave of Absence: See Director of Human Resources
- Employment: See Director of Human Resources
- On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; motion passed.

MINUTES;
DECEMBER 8, 2010

MINUTES;
DECEMBER 8, 2010

BILLS

ECHO BILLS

RESIGNATIONS

RELEASE

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Gress reported that since the last Board meeting, eight Freedom of Information Act requests were received and responded to within five days concerning the following: District 205 technology expenditures; Faculty Association contract; Feeder district listing; Window bid award; municipalities within district 205 boundaries; and 3 inquiries regarding musicals held within the last 2 years.

FOIA

Mr. Doss reported the following:

- The following Thornridge instructors were honored by the Illinois Directors of Student Activities Association: Barbra Green-Kenan, David Eanes, Sherita Robinson, Al Pearson, Lee Talley and Whitney Brogger.
- Thornton students Richard Bernard, Nile Robinson, Desmond Shuford and Brianna Sullivan were admitted to the Health Profession Recruitment and Exposure Program at Northwestern University.
- Congratulations to the Thornton Basketball Team who won first place at the Big Dipper Tournament.
- Thornwood student, chastity White, won first place at the NFTE (National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship) Regional Competition for innovative product designs. She will move forward to the National Competition.
- The District 205 Academic Enrichment Foundation has been awarded \$50,000 from the AT&T Foundation to support a year-round United Nations Summer Leadership Academy.
- Upcoming events:

January 17	No School, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Dr. King Celebration, South Suburban College, 10:00 a.m.
January 18	Parent Advisory Meetings
January 22	SAT Test
January 28	Progress 1, Quarter 3 reporting period ends
February 1	Progress 1 grades due and sent to homes Community Meeting, "Understanding Your Property Tax Bill", Thornton High School, 6:00 p.m., T107
February 2	Late Start Community Meeting, "Understanding the Bid Law & How To Submit a Bid", Thornton High School, 6:00 p.m., T107
February 8	Student Board of Education Meeting Thornton High School, 4:00 p.m.
February 9	Board of Education Meeting Thornton High School, 6:00 p.m.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Burton moved, Mr. Williams seconded, to open the Public Hearing of the 2010-2011 School Calendar Modification. On voice vote, all responded aye. Dr. Betheny Lyke opened the public hearing by asking for feedback regarding holding school on Lincoln's Birthday and observing the school holiday on February 21, 2011, Presidents' Day. A question arose regarding public notification of the hearing. Legal counsel stated the posting of the agenda on the website was adequate notice. The hearing was then opened for public comments and questions:

PUBLIC HEARING OF THE 2010-2011 SCHOOL CALENDAR MODIFICATION

- Quianna Belcher (Dolton) asked if this is already on the calendar, why wasn't the hearing already held? Dr. Lyke responded it should have already been held.
- Felita Crayton (Dolton) asked what is the turnaround time to notify the public? Dr. Lyke responded that the school calendar has been on the website with the school holiday of February 21, 2011. Mr. Crowley stated that the requirement for this type of modification is a hearing with notification educators and parents and a 48-hour notice posted. Dr. Buckner added that in 2009 a public hearing was held for a five-year waiver. The law has been changed and the waiver is not valid; a hearing must be held annually. The 2010-2011 calendar had been set last year.
- Kenneth Williams (Board member) asked if this hearing could be held at the next Board meeting. Dr. Lyke responded the next Board meeting will fall after the holiday.

At 7:15 p.m., Mrs. Bradley joined the meeting.

MRS. BRADLEY
JOINED MEETING

- Cathy Bendell (Dolton) stated: 1) the Board should hold the hearing before the calendar is put in place; 2) there is no notice posted on the doors, and 3) next year's calendar should be looked at now. What month is the calendar put out? Dr. Buckner responded 3) February or March and the 2011-2012 calendar will be done in a timely manner.
- Tom Porter (District 205 Area Instructional Leader) stated that on February 11, 2011 the State of Illinois will hold a celebration regarding Lincoln's speech before he went to Washington, D.C., for the 150th anniversary of the civil war. He sent an email to staff regarding this to celebrate the holiday in school on February 11, especially because it is Black History Month.
- Dr. Lyke added that it is State law for public schools to acknowledge Lincoln's Birthday to the students, either the day before or after his birthday. It is the decision of the building principal how they celebrate.
- Jeanita Eaves (Harvey) asked if there is a problem switching the Holiday to Friday instead of Monday. Dr. Lyke said Friday is a non-attendance day for students because it is parent/teacher conference day.
- Dr. King stated there is no Board action this evening. The calendar has already been approved. Dr. Lyke said from this point on, a public hearing will be held before the calendar is set to allow for community input.
- Cathy Bendell (Dolton) stated that decisions are made by the Board before the community has the opportunity to provide input.

PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE 2010-2011
SCHOOL
CALENDAR
MODIFICATION,
Con't.

A discussion took place about the process of setting the calendar. Dr. Buckner suggested that before a calendar is finalized, input is received. Dr. King stated that as much information as possible will be provided before the hearing. Mr. Williams asked if more notification will be given besides the website. Dr. Buckner responded yes.

Dr. Penman moved, Mr. Williams seconded, to close the hearing. On roll call, Members Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Bradley seconded to **Approve the Copier Contract Award** to Chicago Office Technology Group at a monthly rate of \$30,800 for 48 months. Additional services include a service agent to be stationed full time at District 205, 6 additional machines available for use during registration, replacing 45 ink jet printers with laser printers and unlimited free machine moves. The Finance Committee has reviewed the proposals and recommends approval for Chicago Office Technology Group. The Finance Committee will be presented the final contract for review before it is signed. On roll call, Members Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF THE
COPIER CONTRACT
AWARD

Mr. Williams stated that in view of taxes being raised in the State of Illinois, the District must be prudent in spending. He asked the Board to take the responsibility and stop spending within the District budget for the Freshman center until the funds awarded are received from the Federal Government.

MR. WILLIAMS'
COMMENTS

- Dr. King stated that the Board policy regarding Public Participation will be implemented including a sign-up sheet. Personal issues should be addressed in executive session. Persons repeating comments previously made may be restricted from speaking. Future public participation will require individuals to sign in and include their town of residence and topic. Mrs. Lawrence added that the public has the right address the Board regarding anything related to District 205.
- Quianna Belcher (Dolton) asked: 1) what will happen to the preschool program, and 2) will the District take the responsibility to transport the children to other sites? Dr. Buckner responded: 1) there will not be a preschool program at Thornridge; the children will go to other centers, and 2) there is no answer at this time.

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION
Con't.

- Cathy Bendell (Dolton) stated that if a policy is being changed, you must have an open meeting and let people know you are changing it. You cannot take people out of the audience and say you cannot speak. More time and money will be spent on busing for the Freshman Academy; bringing in 13 communities into one building. Find 10 students and speak to them to see how they feel. Doesn't believe the Board is talking to students. Have an open mind. The students do not want the Freshman Academy.
- Kenneth Wright (Dolton) thanked the Board for letting the public know before decisions are made. Dr. King stated the Board will communicate with the public.
- Evelyn Sorrell (Dolton) stated: 1) public TV channels, newspapers and all media must be used to communicate with parents, and 2) the Freshman Academy should be reconsidered.
- Dennis Thomas (Phoenix) stated that the Freshman Academy is not fair for the students because they should not be moved around. They should be together.
- Jeanita Eaves (Harvey) stated that the community, parents and Board need to come together and not be part of the problem, but the solution.
- Peggy Taylor (Dolton) asked: 1) what plans have been made for boundaries, and 2) what considerations have been made for special need students. Dr. Buckner responded: 1) no boundaries have been made, and 2) Carrie Ablin has been working with parent groups. Dr. Buckner stated a meeting will be held for special education.
- Randy Foulkes (Harvey) stated that it is a difficult transition for freshmen; the community does not want the Freshman Center and is not listening to the community.
- Jason Mutz (Illinois citizen) stated that concerning the contract award for the copiers, all vendors were not given the same information as the vendor that was awarded the proposal. He stated Minolta Konica presented an option that would have saved the District thousands of dollars and the District has not done its due diligence in this matter. Mr. Gress responded, stating that all vendors were provided the same information and terms. Some proposals included more services than required. Mr. Williams added that even though he voted yes, he does not believe a 48-month contract was the best choice.
- Jessica Foulkes (Dolton) stated she graduated from Thornridge in 2001. As a freshman, it made a difference that her brother was there also. Separating siblings is a horrible idea and the majority of students do not want the Freshman Academy.
- Toni Williams (South Holland) asked: 1) what time will the sign-in sheet be removed, and 2) where does each Board member stand regarding closing Thornridge and reopening it as a Freshman Center. 1) Dr. King responded when the Board meeting resumes after executive session, approximately 7:00 p.m.; 2) Mr. Burton responded that he has been a Board member for 6 years. Student achievement is a tremendous problem and if something is not done now, it will get worse. District 205 has one of the worst records in the State of Illinois. Research indicates that if students can be turned around in the first year of high school, there is a better chance of success for the next 3 years. The first year is critical to get off to a good start. Other schools that have instituted freshman centers have been successful. Students are graduating dysfunctional. If the District does not try to do something, it is almost criminal. People must realize the problem must be addressed. The government gave us the opportunity to make new initiatives. The freshman academy will have everything as the upper level schools. The focus is on the students and we must give them the chance to be the best they can be. If I didn't try to do this, I am not doing my job. Yes, I am for it.

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION
Con't.

Dr. Penman stated that many parents have expressed concerns about the change. The world our students are in is not the same we grew up in. We believe our children should have better opportunities than what we had.

Mrs. Bradley stated that she is for the change because something must be done. Freshman year is a difficult year. If a system is focused on freshmen, there is no focus on the other grades. If a principal is dedicated to a group of freshman, it is a good thing.

Mr. Williams stated he is against it because his daughter is a freshman who did not want to go to Thornwood. She wanted to go to Thornton because her cousin was a senior at Thornton. By taking away a 4-year high school from Dolton, home sales will not increase. All 3 schools have freshman academies already. Taking children from their community and separating the high achievers from lower achievers will create chaos. Teachers want to present programs and are not given the opportunity. District 205 lacks in technology for the students. Change needs to start at the top.

Mrs. Lawrence stated she is against the Freshman Academy because from her personal observation at meetings, it is apparent many parents are against it and 8th graders are fearful. For something to be successful, parents and students cannot be excluded. If the Board had talked to the parents a year ago, they would have known the parents were against it and would have taken a different route. For safety reasons, parents are concerned about bringing students to one high school from 13 communities. The sophomores, juniors and seniors will be moved around. It is the duty of the Board not to go against the community.

Dr. King stated that part of leadership is making hard decisions; even though the majority may not always appreciate the decisions. Decisions sometimes are made on information the general populous does not have. The future of the children is gloomy given the current economic situation, job market, etc. It is not a promising time. It would be a disservice to the children not to prepare them for tomorrow. He is in favor of the Freshman Academy.

- Felita Crayton (Dolton) asked: 1) is there a deadline for the boundaries; 2) where will summer school be held; 3) has the State paid the transportation funds owed to District 205; 4) how is the District paying for transportation; 5) explain the fund balance; 6) On December 28 the lawsuit was sent back to the State court. The Board has not represented the community effectively and she prefers that the State take over District 205. When will the plans be shared? The community is being shut down by not having a 4-year high school, and 7) the Board does not have the right to limit the opportunity or time to speak during public participation. Dr. Buckner responded: 1) the Board has not given instruction; 2) Thornridge; 3) Mr. Gress responded no; 4) from the District's fund balance, 5) the fund balance is like a savings account; the money spent from it is in anticipation of funding coming from the State in the amount of approximately \$7 million for regular and special ed transportation; regular ed funding for transportation was decreased from \$3.4 for 2009-10 to approximately \$2 million for 2010-11; 6) Dr. King responded that the accountability system is different. Dr. Buckner added that the State, not District 205, selected providers and is holding them accountable. Over 600 students are entering the District below fifth grade level and the number continues to rise.
- Patricia Jones (South Holland) asked: 1) that the Policy be placed on the website; 2) instead of making Thornridge a freshman center, why not improve the teacher program at the high school and feeder schools; 3) they must work together to improve AYP; 4) it is important for students to have siblings in the same school and is opposed to the freshman center. Dr. Buckner responded: 1) it is on the front page of the website; 2) permission must be given by feeder schools to partner with them. District 205 has made attempts but not all are in agreement.
- Elizabeth Foulkes (Dolton) asked: 1) could this have been brought to voters before the implementation of the grant, and 2) Dolton's police force will be strained because too many officers are at the school.

- Mrs. Lawrence (Board member) stated that that she is in favor of keeping all freshman at the three schools and focusing more on freshman academies; working with reading and math coaches, and bringing in parents and community to help plan the program. Everyone must be agreeable with the plan.
- Darryl Driver (Thornridge graduate) stated: 1) the Board meeting is not posted on the marquee; 2) the legacy of Thornridge should not be stopped and asked that the Board listen to the community.

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION
Con't.

None.

MISC/SUPERINTENDENT
REPORT

None.

STUDENT
DISCIPLINE

At 8:45 p.m., Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded, to **Adjourn the Meeting**. On roll call, Members Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

President

Secretary *Pro Tem*