

MINUTES OF A **REGULAR MEETING** OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 205, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, HELD ON **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2010** IN THE AUDITORIUM AT THORNRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL, SOUTH HOLLAND, ILLINOIS, BEGINNING AT 6:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams answered. Member Burton was absent. Dr. J. Kamala Buckner, Superintendent; Mr. Tim Truesdale, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and External Funding; 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. Steve Valant and Mr. Al Pearson, Assistant Principals of Thornridge High School; Mr. Tony Ratliff, Principal of Thornton High School; Mrs. Wanda Russell, Assistant Principal of Thornton High School; Mrs. Darcelle Williams, Principal of Thornwood High School; and Mr. John Relias, District 205 Legal Counsel, were also present.

ROLL
CALL

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

EXECUTIVE
SESSION

At 7:00 p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Burton seconded to **Return to Regular Session**. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

RETURNED TO
REGULAR SESSION

Dr. King paused for a moment of silence for the trapped miners in Chile that are being rescued.

MOMENT OF
SILENCE

Mr. Williams moved that the September 15, 2010 Executive Session minutes be tabled until Board members not present at the meeting have reviewed the minutes. No one seconded the motion; therefore, the motion was not on the table and not acted upon.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- The minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 8, 2010.
- The minutes of the Special Meeting of September 15, 2010. The minutes of the Executive Session of this meeting shall be confidential and closed to the public until such time that the Board of Education determines that it is no longer necessary to protect the public interest or privacy of an individual by keeping them confidential.
- 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
- Appointment of Additional FOIA Officer: See Director of Human Resources
- On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; Williams voted nay; motion passed.

MINUTES:
SEPTEMBER 8, 2010

MINUTES;
SEPTEMBER 15,
2010

BILLS

ECHO BILLS

RESIGNATIONS

RELEASE

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

EMPLOYMENT

FOIA OFFICER

Mr. Gress reported that since the last Board meeting, seven Freedom of Information Act requests were received and responded to concerning the following:

FOIA

1. ACT College Readiness letter for the District;
2. Board slide presentation regarding capital improvement;
3. Board slide presentation and capital improvement details;
4. Illinois State Board of Education legal opinions;
5. School Improvement Grant information;
6. School Improvement Grant information, and
7. District and Board goals.

Dr. King stated that Mrs. Elizabeth Ware, former Board member, will be honored at the next Board meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Pamela Moss-Jones (South Holland) asked: 1) for clarification regarding starting time of executive session stating it is disrespectful of the community's time and it was a bold act to exclude students and parents regarding the proposed freshman center; 2) how long have freshman academies been in place at District 205; 3) have scores gotten better, worse or remained the same; 4) are there 4 freshman campuses in District 205; 5) for factual and complete information regarding details concerning the proposed freshman center. Dr. King responded: 1) executive session began at 6:00 and the board meeting began at 7:00 p.m.; 2) Dr. Buckner responded, since 2003; 3) it does not appear they have gotten better; 4) there are 3 buildings in District 205.
- Denise Harris (Dolton) 1) stated that since last Thursday's meeting, no one has been in contact with the Mayor Lewis; 2) what security is being planned for the freshman center; 3) No information was sent to residents about the freshman center. Dr. King responded 1) the Board is meeting with Mayor Lewis tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. 2) Mr. Beilfuss stated that there will be fewer students in the building and security is being addressed; 3) Dr. King apologized and stated the State gave us a small window of time to submit the grant.
- Keith Price (Harvey) asked: 1) was the vote for the freshman academy was taken during the executive session; 2) stated it should have been an agenda item and not discussed and voted on in closed session and it was a violation of open meetings act; 3) has consideration been given to the borders that will be crossed to bring students to one school; 4) the legacy of the district is being destroyed and he is disappointed with the Board. Dr. King responded: 1) no.
- Shelly Taylor (Burnham) stated that the staff was not being fair because her sons took an ACT course at South Suburban College on a Wednesday and because of that, were not allowed to participate in their sport.
- Larry Russell (Dolton) attended a public forum last week. What will happen to upper classmen, athletic teams and transportation? The community has been betrayed and the District did not consider particulars. He is concerned about the air conditioning at Thornridge with additional students and having all freshmen in one building.
- Michelle Westgan (South Holland) had concerns about safety and that there is no measurement for the whole process.
- Peggy Taylor (Dolton) asked 1) which Board members voted to implement the plan once the proposal was accepted; 2) if the Board members read through the proposal before it was submitted. 1) Dr. King stated the vote was taken in April to proceed with the grant. Mr. John Relias, legal counsel, stated that once the proposal is voted on and sent to the state, no further action is needed. Dr. King stated that the Board gave, through voting, the Superintendent the ability to apply for the grant.

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION

- Darren Robinson (Harvey) stated that the Board President should have made sure everything was done right. After the three years has expired, what will happen to the students? The public needs answers to their questions. Inaudible because of audience noise.
- Mrs. Crayton (Dolton) asked: 1) did the Board take an oath to represent the better interest of those they serve; 2) did the Board state that the teachers union had to be in agreement; 3) did they know a consideration as part of the grant was to close a high school to make it a freshman center? 4) Other schools opened a freshman center because they were overcrowded. Are we overcrowded? Do we have freshman centers in each building? 1) Dr. King responded yes and that public participation is for the Board to hear comments from the public; 2) Dr. Buckner responded that the Board is in partnership with the teachers union; 3) Dr. King stated that several suggestions have been given to the Superintendent; 4) Mrs. Lawrence suggested that the proposal may be amended. The Board needs time to discuss and respond to questions presented tonight.
- Darius Randall (South Holland) is concerned about discipline. His brother was suspended because of a handshake that was not a gang handshake. Suspending students takes away from their study time. Some of the \$18 million should be allocated to address youth violence. Some administrators and teachers should take salary cuts; more young black male teachers should be hired; the curriculum needs to be updated.
- Kenneth Williams, Jr. (South Holland) asked if the parents and students do not want the change, why is it not being stopped. Dr. Buckner responded that if the freshman center is not put into place, the District must do something. Mr. Williams asked if the \$2 million appointed to each school and could be used toward those Freshman Academies. That question was posed to the State; they have not responded. His sister then stated a friend would receive a Scholarship if she graduates from Thornridge, but not if she graduates from Thornton. Dr. Buckner stated that the scholarship will be looked into on a one-on-one basis.
- A parent asked if the grant can be amended. When awarded the grant, do you have to accept the grant? Mr. Relias stated that by submitting the proposal, you are accepting the grant. To amend the grant is solely up to the State Board. The Board can totally reject the \$18 million. The parents should be allowed to have input on how the grant should be amended.
- Nadine (205 alumni) was concerned if the upper classmen will be forgotten. Dr. King stated that the three schools will become college prep. She asked how you can make them college prep when now they are under-achievers. Dr. Buckner stated that we cannot offer enough Advanced Placement classes. Freshman needs more rigorous courses to be stronger to enter upper houses. In January 2011, ACT will become a partner w/District 205 to improve student success. Nadine asked how that will make a difference with the same teachers. Dr. Buckner stated intense Professional Development is being implemented for staff particularly in reading and math.
- Mrs. Williams (Dolton) stated that as a Title I school, there must be parent participation before decisions are made. You cannot transfer from one Title I school in the District that failed to make AYP to another Title I school in the District that failed to make AYP. That is law. The current administration is failing. Attorneys have been hired and are asking for the resignation of Dr. Buckner and the Board. Her daughter needed to attend summer school because of block scheduling. Inaudible.
- Lynette Mayberry asked if single-gender classes are being considered at the Freshman Academy. King responded it will be considered.

- Mrs. Brown-England stated her son was looking forward to attending Thornwood with his sister; does not want to attend Thornridge and he does not feel safe. She thanked Mr. Williams and asked if the Board considered the different gangs that would be brought into one building. She believes students should have uniform and the administration needs to take salary cuts.
- Denise Allen (South Holland) stated that outside agencies are not needed for rigor; teachers are supposed to implement rigor into the curriculum. She is ashamed her daughter is attending a 205 school where teachers are not introducing rigor.
- Diane Davis (Dolton) has 4 graduates from Thornridge; one student remains. She is concerned about what happened to the Fenger student and asked the Board to consider gang warfare against the children who already live in this town.
- A parent from South Holland asked how many Board members have children that attend Dist. 205 schools. Mr. Williams believes the Board should be responsible for all actions that occur at the schools. He asked legal counsel: 1) Have you reviewed the grant. Mr. Relias replied no; but he has read the request for proposal which covers the requirements needed for the grant. 2) Does the grant proposal require that we dismiss a school to make it a freshman level? 2) Mr. Relias could not specifically answer because of the way the grant was structured.
- Board Member Williams stated he was elected by the people and a comment was made to the audience that this Board was somewhat illiterate and dumb. Every Board member has had to learn the process. The Superintendent works for the Board, not the Board for her. He believes the Board failed to represent the community because most things have been brought hastily to the Board. The Superintendent was given permission to apply for the grant and he never saw one inkling of what the proposal was. Dr. Buckner stated the information was in the Board packets; on April 14, 2010 the Board approved moving forward; on April 30 an overview of information was provided. In the following 3-4 weeks this direction was indicated and the Superintendent always stated to contact her if there were questions or concerns.

Mr. Williams said when the process was done, the Board was not asked to participate. The contract stated that Board participation was needed. Mr. Williams stated there were meetings he asked to attend and that he was denied. He asked legal counsel if as a Board member he could attend those meetings. Mr. Relias responded he could not give a specific answer without all the facts about the committee and/or subcommittee. The State does not consider parents to be stakeholders in the proposal. Mr. Williams asked was the grant approved, stating the freshman had to be in a particular building by themselves. Mr. Relias said the proposal to the state board involved a freshman campus and that the Board had authority to establish a freshman campus regardless of the School Improvement Grant if they so desired.

- Rose Tillman (Dolton) stated that nothing is being discussed about curriculum; new books to bring students up to the 21st century. Of the \$18million, how much is allocated for new books as the books are outdated. She stated only things are supposed to be discussed in executive session. Legal counsel said there is a list of items for executive session.
- A Dolton parent stated that because all three schools are Title I schools, there should be an alternative for students to attend. Leadership is not enthusiastic to teach the children. The Board's obligation is to ensure her daughter is educated and desires transfer information be provided to parents early. Has some of the \$18 million already been spent? Dr. Buckner responded yes. The District has called the state and is talking about different models. There are no alternative schools to attend; none in the area are accepting District 205 students.

- Ed Crayton (Dolton) 1) asked for clarification that parents are not considered stakeholders in the grant proposal. Buckner responded that is correct. Mr. Relias stated that the State Board omits parents as stakeholders in the request for proposal. 2) Does the Board consider the parents stakeholders? Response: Yes. 3) Were you aware that the proposal included closing Thornridge as a traditional high school? Dr. King responded that a Freshman Academy was being considered. 4) Why were parents not contacted about closing Thornridge? Dr. King stated again, the Board apologizes but the State only gave a small window of time to submit the grant. Every Mayor is being informed and this Board should have reached out to every Board member of the other communities, PTA's and pastors. 5) When will the public be included in discussions? The dilemma is that for the last 6 years we have not met AYP. Mrs. Lawrence suggested setting up committees with parents from each school and the feeder schools. Mr. Banks apologized and acknowledged that all stakeholders need to be involved and headed in the same direction. Mr. Crayton stated the public would appreciate a timetable about meetings, etc. Mr. Banks suggested the State Board should visit the District and hold a meeting to answer all questions. Mr. Crayton asked if we can give the money back. Mr. Relias stated that a rejection of the grant would entail the government hold or waive whatever monies have already been spent.
- Thomas Steffans (South Holland) stated he moved into South Holland for a reason and asked if the Board moved here because of the schools? Mr. Banks responded that people do move into communities because of the schools and we need to start over fresh to be certain everyone is involved.
- Mrs. Williams (Dolton) commended Mr. Williams for stepping up and stated the same questions he asked this evening you should have asked a long time ago. The Board was elected to read proposals. Title I states that all parents are supposed to be involved before action is taken. This is too little, too late. Mr. Williams did state the schools were no good and that there are no challenges here. Mr. Williams responded that he will represent the community; the Board is learning how to work together, and the curriculum should be more challenging.
- Jeff Coleman (South Holland) is disappointed with the Board and that we need to stick together.
- Timothy Jones (8th grader) stated he wanted to attend Thornridge and now 4 years of high school is being destroyed. He suggested freshman classes to focus on ACT.
- A Thornridge Senior said underclassmen are being affected and 1) asked if the Board has three years to prove the change works. Dr. Buckner stated the implementation begins July 1, 2010. He asked for comments from other Board members. Mr. Burton stated that many changes have been made in 6 years. Academic progress of students is a problem and must change. The Board is trying to find the best way to make a major impact on student success. Too many students are graduating high school and cannot function. District 205 is the only high school district in the State of Illinois that got all 3 schools funded for the next 3 years to make a change. We are trying to look at the best way to impact students. Freshman year is the most critical and the Board needs to improve the freshman year experience. The concentration is on the adjustment from 8th grade to freshman year. One of the biggest problems is with the feeder schools. It is believed that a concentrated first year of high school would prove more successful. Some people believe in sophomore academies as well. 2) Regarding athletics, there will not be the same amount of opportunities for athletes. Dr. Buckner responded that the Athletic Departments are addressing this and realize it is a key issue. 3) After the adjustment of freshman year, another adjustment will be needed for sophomore year.

- Jasmine Turner (Thornridge) asked 1) will it be based on where students live whether they will attend Thornton or Thornwood after Freshman Academy. Dr. Buckner stated that it has not yet been determined. 2) What will be done after three years? Dr. Buckner stated that a plan will be put in place to sustain the schools for future years. 3) What will happen to disabled students who come to the freshman academy? To comply with the American Disabilities Act will put ramps and elevators in all three buildings. It is not part of the \$18 million, but part of the capital improvement.
- Evelyn Sorrell 1) requested to see the grant proposal saying parents are not stakeholders. Mr. Relias said that the request for proposal requirements are from the State Board, not from District 205. 2) Is the meeting scheduled for tomorrow is still scheduled? Also, the matter is the choice of the parents also and they have options. Dr. Buckner stated the meeting for tomorrow is still on schedule.
- Larry Russell (Dolton) 1) stated that his daughter, valedictorian from Dirksen Middle School, was enrolled at Thornridge, in honors classes. She was interviewed by Harvard, Yale, Princeton and attended George Washington University on a full academic scholarship. The teachers at Thornridge are excellent. His daughter was well-prepared by Mr. Sievers and is disappointed that Mr. Sievers is no longer at Thornridge. His children were successful at Thornridge. It's about what parents demand of their children. He does not believe a freshman academy will make a difference. It starts at home. Training should be provided to single young mothers to help their students. All parents should be considered stakeholders. Dr. King said it was never the Board's intention to exclude parents. 2) Is it true District 205 has not made AYP in 12 years? Dr. Buckner said District 205 has never made AYP. 3) What other consequences are there if we do not made this radical change; will the State come in and take over our schools? Dr. Buckner said it is uncertain what the State Board would do; but funding for Title I will be leveled.
- Brenda Jones (Markham) stated that the Board is snatching her son's dream. She tries to provide an example to children. Stated she has not heard anything specific about how the mission of the grant will be carried out. How can you spend the money already when you don't have a plan.
- A Thornridge Junior stated she wants her diploma to say she graduated from Thornridge.

Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Bradley seconded to **Approve the Capital Improvement Projects** as presented by Mr. Gress. After discussion, Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Bradley seconded to **Rescind the Motion to Approve the Capital Improvement Projects**. Mr. Williams requested a specific timeline from the beginning to the end of the project from the architects, which will be provided.

APPROVAL OF
CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENT
PROJECTS

Mr. Burton moved, Mr. Williams seconded to change November 2, 2010 from a late start to a student non-attendance day. November 2, 2010 will become a Teacher Institute Day, replacing that originally scheduled for January 24, 2011. Mr. Banks asked if this change was related to the School Improvement Grant. Dr. Buckner said yes and that we need to train the math and reading coaches and inform teachers of the evaluation model. Mr. Banks said many things must be worked out before we move forward with the School Improvement Grant. A discussion was held about changing the evaluation model; staff must be notified. The late start will include school improvement initiatives. Mr. Burton moved, Mr. Williams seconded to rescind the Motion to Change November 2, 2010 from a late start to a student non-attendance day.

APPROVAL OF
MODIFICATION OF
THE 2010-2011
SCHOOL
CALENDAR

Mr. Banks moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded to **Approve the Modification of the 2010-2011 School Calendar including school improvement initiatives**. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

Mr. Banks moved, Dr. Penman seconded to **Approve the Application for Recognition of Schools for 2010-2011.** Every year, school districts must submit a Board-approved application to be recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education. In response to Mr. Williams, Dr. Lyke recited the questions asked on the application. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
APPLICATION FOR
RECOGNITION OF
SCHOOLS FOR
2010-2011

Mr. Burton moved, Mr. Banks seconded that Rosemary Papaleo, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Thornton Township High School Dist. 205, is designated by Ray Banks, Board Secretary of Thornton Township High School Dist. 205, South Holland, Illinois, and is delegated the primary responsibility of carrying out all duties of the local election authority in his absence for the April 5, 2011 election. The secondary responsibility of carrying out such duties is delegated to Henrietta Bakker, Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations of Thornton Township High School Dist. 205. Also responsible for such duties are Steven Gress, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Leslie Morris, Coordinator of Business Services and Michele Powers, Benefits Coordinator. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

BOARD
SECRETARY
DESIGNATION

Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Burton seconded to **Approve the Agreement between the Board of Education of Thornton Township High School District 205 and the Buildings, Grounds and Maintenance Employees of the Union of Support Staff, IEA/NEA** as presented by Mr. Gress. The Agreement is a five-year agreement. The Agreement has been ratified by the union. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

CONSIDERATION
OF BUILDINGS &
GROUNDS
CONTRACT

None.

MISC/SUPERINTENDENT
REPORT

Mrs. Lawrence moved, Dr. Penman seconded to approve the following disciplinary actions:

STUDENT
DISCIPLINE

Student Case #3A-1011-01(S): **Uphold the Suspension.**

Student Case #2B-1011-1: **Hold the Expulsion in Abeyance** through June 2011 and recommended placement in RISE.

Student Case #2F-1011-4: **Reinstate the student to school with citizenship probation for one calendar year and submit to a daily search until the end of the semester.**

Student Case #2H-1011-5: **Hold the Expulsion in Abeyance** through June 2011 and recommended placement in Second Chance.

On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

At 10:26 p.m., Mr. Banks moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded, to **Adjourn the Meeting.** On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

President

Secretary