

SYNOPSIS
URBANA SCHOOL DISTRICT 116
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
MARCH 28, 2006

Urbana High School has a new assistant principal, Tim Staples. The board of education officially approved his appointment last night and also had the opportunity to meet him since he was in the audience.

Staples comes to us from Bolingbrook, where he is serving as a dean of students. Bolingbrook's high school has a student population of about 3,500 students. He is an adjunct faculty member at both DePaul University and the University of St. Francis. His academic strengths are in enrichment programs and gifted education. In addition, he's working on his doctorate. He said he's excited about coming to the community. He's checked out our web site and observed that we are a school district of accomplishments. He told the board he's not interested in a career stepping stone, "I'm interested in helping students to achieve."

Also last night, the board went through the annual ritual of Reduction in Force (RIF). This year the RIF'ing had little to do with economics, but more with legally required processes. We are required to give notice 60 days before the end of school to anyone who may not be employed for the next school year. However, the state of Illinois doesn't let us know how much money we'll be getting until June or July – depending on how the General Assembly's legislative session is going. So, by law, we have to give notice to numerous people that they may not be rehired next year. This is a difficult process for not only the employees involved, but for the board. As board member Mark Netter said just prior to the vote, "To all of you, I am sorry."

A total of 69 staff were RIF'ed last night. This includes 17 teachers (part-time and non-tenured) and 52 support staff. Most of the support staff positions are grant funded and some of those people have been on the annual RIF list for years and years. We make every effort to rehire those who were RIF'ed in good standing with the district, although the tenuous job situation leads some of those employees to take positions elsewhere. Last year there were 81 on the RIF list, 26 certified and 56 support staff.

In other business, the board approved a \$5,000 contribution to the Urbana High School choir. The choral group will travel to New York City next month for a performance at Carnegie Hall. The board has given gifts in previous years for trips like this, but several board members commented that there needs to be a consistent policy on these gifts, the amount, and to whom they are given.

Last night's board meeting was not televised, nor was it taped, due to some problems with camera equipment. There will not be any rebroadcast over the weekend either. We hope the issues will be resolved by next Tuesday's regular board meeting on April 4.