

## **Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Synopsis August 15, 2007**

The Urbana School District #116 Board of Education met August 14, after not meeting in the month of July. This was the first board meeting that Dr. Preston Williams participated in as Superintendent. Williams also introduced several new members of the School District team, including Don Owen, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Gayle Jeffries, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, and Susan Baker-Ory, Assistant Superintendent for Special Services.

Assistant Superintendent Gayle Jeffries briefed the school board on the revised retirement policy for the Urbana School District. Many of the changes were the result of discussions between District 116 and the Urbana Education Association. The school board will be asked to approve the changes at its August 28, 2007 meeting.

The board also approved the hiring of several new teachers and a new Public Relations Specialist.

The board also signed off on a request to purchase a John Deere end loader for \$27,744 and approved the advance payment for August bills.

Board member Cope Cumpston reported that the school board received several donations and gifts including:

- \$200 to the Urbana High School Cross Country Booster Club from David Marrone of Urbana
- \$1,000 to the Urbana High School Activity Account from Jeff and Terry Facer of Champaign
- A food donation valued at \$99.14 from Kentucky Fried Chicken in Urbana to the Urbana Middle School Summer Achievement Program
- A clarinet valued at \$499.00 to the Urbana High School Music Department from Beverly Hillmer from Fisher, IL
- \$134.00 in matching funds from Motorola Foundation to the Urbana High School drama club

Director of Facilities Ota Dossett gave an update on the summer maintenance work and invited the board to go on a tour of Thomas Paine and Prairie Elementary Schools during a later segment of the meeting.

Preston Williams asked Director of Business Carol Baker to brief the board on how a lack of a state budget will impact the functioning of Urbana School District #116. Baker said there is enough cash-on-hand to cover School District costs for "several months." However she informed the board that the District usually invests the cash-on-hand at this point of the year, but that can't happen this year, due to the budget stalemate in Springfield. Board member John Dimit asked how the budget situation impacts employees who were RIFed in the spring. Baker and Williams said since government grants are in limbo, the District can't hire back several teachers, and some school programs will also be impacted. Dimit commented that he is afraid the lack of a state budget will cause the School District to lose many quality people. Baker also reported that the lack of a state budget is hindering the preparation of next year's budget. Williams said the public needs to "harp on the powers that be" to break the impasse and pass a budget.

Assistant Superintendent Don Owen briefed the school board on the second annual centralized registration program at Urbana Middle School August 7-9, 2007. Owen said that two-thirds of the district's parents took advantage of the registration period and he reminded the public that the

make-up day for centralized registration is August 16. He also said that if parents miss the make-up day, they would have to go directly to their child's school to register.

The board then took a brief recess to travel to Thomas Paine School for a building tour. The board then traveled to Prairie School for a similar tour. The board members complimented school district workers for the brighter, newer, and more inviting appearance of the two schools.

The school board then adjourned at 9:05 p.m. The next meeting of the Urbana School District #116 Board of Education will be Tuesday, August 28, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. at the Jean F. Burkholder Administrative Services Center, 205 N. Race, Urbana.