

Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Synopsis
December 4, 2007

The Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Study Session was called to order by Board President Mark Netter at 7:31 p.m. There were no citizen statements.

The board heard the first reading of the "Creative Curriculum" for Washington Early Childhood School from Principal Crystal Vowels and Tara Dawkins. Vowels says the Illinois State Board of Education wants early childhood schools to adopt research-based curriculum. While looking for a curriculum to adopt, Vowels says the goal was to find one that aligned with District 116 standards and ISBE standards. She says they accomplished that goal in "Creative Curriculum." Vowels also says the curriculum puts together a recipe for best practices, is family-friendly, and meets the cultural needs of Washington Early Childhood School. The school board will formally vote to adopt "Creative Curriculum" for Washington Early Childhood School at its December 18 business meeting.

The District 116 board then approved the Urbana School District #116 School Calendar for the 2008-2009 school year. Anyone with questions about the school calendar, please contact Assistant Superintendent Don Owen.

Under study topics, the school board heard from the contracted services to District 116. The board heard from ARAMARK Food Services, The C-U Mass Transit District, First Student Bus Service, and from Environmental Service Solutions.

Piper Harvey and Sara Wagner from ARAMARK Food Services briefed the board on the district's menu, mandates, and pilot programs. There followed several minutes of discussion between board members, administrators, and ARAMARK officials about helping students to "buy in" to the healthy food choices served in District 116 schools.

Bill Volk, Director of the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District then briefed the board on the 20 years of mass transit service to the Urbana School District. Volk says there are approximately 1,000 student trips per day to and from the middle school and high school. He says safety is the number one objective and the MTD continues to work closely with the school district to make sure students are transported safely. Volk also told the board that it is good for middle school and high school students to use the MTD busses and learn a life skill.

Edith South and Norm Mars gave a presentation to the school board about the First Student (Formerly Laidlaw) Yellow Bus Service. Mars says the transition to First Student ownership has been very smooth, and the service uses the best practices of both Laidlaw and First Student. Mars stressed that First Student is not competing with the C-U MTD, but the two complement each other.

Paul Taylor from Environmental Service Solutions (ESS) discussed the cleaning contract with the school board. Taylor says the challenge with his service is to recruit and retain high-quality staff. He also says there is a challenge to acquire "green" cleaning products that are environmentally friendly, yet still clean and disinfect the schools. Right now 80-percent of District 116 cleaning products are "green seal certified." For more questions about the cleaning contract, please contact Ota Dossett at the Central Office.

Under the Superintendent's report Mark Schultz reported to the school board about State Senator Mike Frerichs' tour of District 116. On November 30, Frerichs toured the Student Health Center, Leal Elementary; met with Dr. Williams, met with Title I staff, toured Adult Education, toured Washington Early Childhood School, and toured Martin Luther King Elementary. Schultz said it was a profitable day and the senator looks forward to working with District 116 on education issues.

Dr. Williams reported to the board that District 116, Unit 4, and Parkland College are working to develop a Technical Vocational Center at Parkland. There are transportation and credit level questions, but he hopes that program can launch next school year.

Under Board Reports, board members Cope Cumpston and Brenda Carter reported to the board about the trip to the Illinois Association of School Boards Convention in Chicago.

John Dimit reported that the Campus Land Use Committee will report its findings to the school board hopefully in January or February.

Netter adjourned the school board meeting at 9:02 p.m.

The next meeting of the Urbana School District #116 Board of Education will take place Tuesday, December 18, 2007 at **6:30 p.m.**, at 205 North Race Street, Urbana. Note the time change.