

Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Synopsis
March 25, 2008

The special meeting of the Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m., by Mark Netter.

The board approved the resolution for the annual Reduction in Force notices, or "RIF." This year District 116 "RIFed" a total of 46 employees, due to the fact that most of the positions are funded through federal or state aid and grants. The school district has to wait and see if state and federal aid comes through for the fall before administrators can be sure if they can pay the 46 "RIFed" employees. If the money is available in the fall for these positions to be staffed, those teachers "RIFed" will have the chance to be hired again. Board member John Dimit said that this year the number of teachers "RIFed" is far fewer than in years past. Dimit noted that when he started on the board 20 years ago, hundreds of teachers were "RIFed" each year. Netter said, "Words fail me every year we are forced to do this." Netter and many board members praised the teachers for their hard work and dedication to the school district. Cope Cumpston noted that the truancy alternative positions have been "RIFed" and she hopes the school board can find another way to fund those jobs.

The board then received the Annual EEO/Affirmative Action Report for 2006 and 2007 from Assistant Superintendent Gayle Jeffries. For 2007 a total of 15.2% of school district certified and support staff are minorities—a downward trend. Board member Cope Cumpston said she was "alarmed" at this trend, and asked Jeffries to come up with a list of resources she needs to boost the number of minority applicants and employees in the district. Jeffries says she has been working hard on the recruiting trail and is actively recruiting minorities across the state. Superintendent Preston Williams noted that the competition is fierce with other school districts to have minorities to come to District 116 saying that some new minority teachers are not willing to come to East-Central Illinois. Williams said the school district is working hard to implement incentives to bring minorities to District 116 and he said there is a push for Urbana School District Alumni to come back as teachers.

John Dimit reported to the board that he attended a recent meeting at the Regional Office of Education regarding the sales tax question to fund school buildings. Dimit noted that all Champaign County school districts have expressed support to seriously study the referendum question.

Cope Cumpston announced that there will be a meeting about Green (environmentally friendly) Schools. The presentation will be April 9, 2008, at Faith United Methodist Church in Champaign at 7:00 p.m.

The Board of Education Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

The next meeting of the Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Meeting will be April 1, 2008, at 7:30 p.m., at 205 North Race Street, Urbana.