

Urbana School District Board of Education Meeting Synopsis April 1, 2008

The Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Study Session was called to order at 7:30 p.m., by Board President Mark Netter. There was one change to the agenda. The presentation by the Urbana Alumni Association will be at the April 15 board meeting.

The board voted all in favor of renewing District 116's membership with the Illinois High School Association. Under citizen statements, Dr. Evelyn Underwood questioned and criticized the Urbana High School Restructuring Plan. John Maloney stated that there are several citizens and groups available to help increase academic achievement in District 116. Jean Ascoli addressed the board inviting members to 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.

Cynthia Hoyle of the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District made a presentation to the Board of Education about the Illinois Safe Routes to School Project and the fact that Martin Luther King Elementary was chosen as the state network's model project site. The project will examine ways to make it safer for students to walk and bike to school. This month there will be a community meeting to discuss the Safe Routes to School Program and begin to build a School Team for the project. The project officially launches this August. The Safe Routes to School Project will provide materials, curriculum, and guidance for implementing the Safe Routes to School Program at King. This project will be community-driven and will not cost the taxpayers any money. Board member Benita Rollins-Gay praised the MTD and King Elementary for winning this competitive grant. John Dimit echoed those sentiments calling this project "a big score." For every 10 requests for a Safe Routes to School Project, only one was awarded. For more information about safe routes to school, please see www.saferoutesinfo.org, or call King Elementary Principal Jennifer Ivory-Tatum.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Don Owen, Urbana High School Principal Dr. Laura Taylor, and Urbana High School teacher Gregory Chew presented the school board with the UHS Restructuring plan. For more information, please see <http://www.usd116.org/files/pressreleases/pr080401uhsrestruct.pdf>. This restructuring plan is mandated by the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. The restructuring plan includes:

- Modify the school day to include additional student support for those who need it
- Have teachers collaborate on ways to increase student achievement
- Survey staff, students, and parents about school climate and student support
- Provide for additional staff development
- Create a Director of Student Achievement and Accountability

Several board members had questions about the Director of Student Achievement and Accountability position and suggested that the job description be modified and clarified. Board member Benita Rollins-Gay expressed concerns about the Restructuring Plan saying it "needs tweaking." The board will formally vote on the plan at its April 15 meeting. The plan will then go to the Regional Office of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education for approval. For more information about the UHS Restructuring plan, please contact Don Owen.

Board member John Dimit encouraged his fellow board members to attend the Champaign-Urbana Schools Foundation gala event April 25. Dimit said there will be some exciting announcements that will impact District 116. For more information please see <http://www.usd116.org/news/newsfolder/cusf08.html>.

The Board of Education adjourned at 9:52 p.m. The next meeting of the Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Meeting will be April 15, 2008, at 7:30 p.m., at 205 N. Race Street, Urbana.