

**Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Meeting Synopsis  
6/17/2008**

The Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m., by board president Mark Netter. All were in attendance.

Connie Minnes and Anne Broom addressed the board asking that substitute teachers be paid \$125 a day instead of \$100. Reverend Doctor Evelyn Underwood spoke to the board regarding the UHS Restructuring Plan wanting the board to include African Americans on the restructuring committee. Devin Chambers asked the board about the district's Response to Intervention Plan. Mark Netter directed Chambers to submit his questions in writing to district staff. Reverend Troy Burks complained about the public comment setup of the District 116 Board. He wants the public to be able to comment on agenda items when the board discusses it. He also called for transparency in public schools. Netter encouraged Burks to call administrators, principals, teachers, and school board members to get answers to his questions.

The District 116 board recognized Thomas Paine teacher Elaine Harmon for winning the Golden Apple Award. Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Gayle Jeffries announced the winners of the first-annual "Unsung Hero Award." This award is for non-certified staff who were nominated by their bosses. The award is for staff that go above and beyond the call of duty. The recipients are:

**Anita Bryant, Teaching Assistant - Beth Anderson, E/BD Secretary - Clark Anderson, Warehouse Coordinator - Danny McCartney, Warehouse Coordinator – Judi O'Connor, ASSIST Program Secretary - Vickey Blaney, Thomas Paine Secretary - Marcia Lerner, Teaching Assistant - Debbie Adams, Teaching Assistant - Randa Davis, Yankee Ridge Secretary - Debbie Adams, Teaching Assistant - Jenny Hawkins-Cooper, Teaching Assistant - Tony Dezell, E/BD Teaching Assistant - Chad Harper, ASCCP Site Coordinator - Justin Lopez, UHS Secretary - Vontay Marshall, UHS Student Relations Supv. - Alberto Gonzalez-Gonzalez, Bilingual Inclusion T.A. - Clyde Wicks, UMS Student Relations Supv. - Gradis Upshaw, UMS Student Relations Supv. - Cheryl Hutton, Interpreter for Hearing Impaired - Barry Johnson, Maintenance - Elaine Windingland, Data Processing Supv. - Darcy Widener, Administrative Assistant - Jill McPike, King Secretary, Breakfast/Lunch Supv. - Sandra Carter, Parent Liaison/Mentor Coord. - Julie Wirth, Leal Secretary - Deb Henry, Leal Secretary - Ann Jordan, Teaching Assistant - Geoffrey Bant, Teaching Assistant - David Gordon, Director of Finance and Bookkeeping - Jacqueline Williams, Job Skills Specialist.**

All winners received a token of appreciation from District 116 and a gift card to a local retailer.

The school board also commended the following people or organizations:

**Urbana High School Athletic Department received a \$1,200 grant from the Urbana Alumni Association. This will be used for weight room equipment.**

**Greg Chew and the Drama Club would like to extend a thank you to Corson Music and F & G Lighting. Due to the damage in the high school auditorium and relocating of the play, these two businesses showed a lot of support for the program. In both cases of work done by them, the labor and material donated was considerable and very appreciated.**

**Urbana Middle School would like to thank CV Lloyd for fixing the amplifier the morning of the UMS Promotion. CV Lloyd went above and beyond what was expected to help prepare for the activities.**

Dr. David Adcock of, Director of Urbana Adult Education, presented a proposal to have the school district partially fund the salaries for the Truancy Alternative Outreach Program workers. Currently the positions are funded by grants but the funding is flat. Adcock estimates that the cost to District 116 would be \$22,000. Member Cope Cumpston says she fully supports making outreach workers an integral part of the school district. Member Ruth Ann Fisher says she's very happy to see something like this come to the board. Member John Dimit says he also supports the idea, but also says the board should consider the collective bargaining issues related to the proposal.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Don Owen, then briefed the board on the response from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) concerning the submitted Urbana High School Restructuring Plan. Owen read to the board the comments from Carol Diedrichsen from ISBE relating to the June 4, 2008 meeting. Owen also said that the administrative recommendation will to be reconvene the Restructuring Planning Committee to "revise this plan to strengthen the governance piece and resubmit' the plan to the BOE for approval and to ISBE." At this point the floor was open for comment from members of the board of education.

Member Cope Cumpston commented that she would encourage the Restructuring Planning Committee to change the plan and include a provision for a more inclusive group that includes administrators, teachers, community members, and students to be a community oversight committee. She feels sure the committee can come up with a plan with "a wider scope."

Member John Dimit said there is a problem in the perception that the administrator to oversee the UHS plan is simply collecting data. Dimit says he doesn't want student test scores being examined by the community or by members who are not employed with the school district. He feels that there are student privacy issues at stake. Dimit commented that he has long been a "skinflint" when it comes to adding administration instead of putting money into the classroom. He also said that there needs to be a highly trained professional to oversee this restructuring plan and be held accountable. He said that "somebody has to be in charge of this."

Member Benita Rollins-Gay said that the school board needs to be complaint with ISBE, but she also said there needs to be members of the community involved.

Member Mark Netter commented that to add the proposed new administrator duties to a current District 116 administrator will "cause something else to drop off the platter." Netter said he'd like to have someone at the district level to understand the various school improvement and restructuring plans and see how they all mesh together. He said that this proposed administrator position is "an investment," and to try to cut the proposed \$70,000 salary or cut the position to half time will hamper the effort of the administrator.

Dimit said that this restructuring plan has very strict rules and regulations with "no wiggle room." He added that when the time comes to carry out the plan "constituent groups must be involved."

Member Steve Summers said that he is against adding administrators, but he is concerned about further sanctions from ISBE. He said he supports hiring the administrator "with regret."

Superintendent Dr. Preston Williams commented that the original plan would have been approved by ISBE. He said the implementation of the plan is the time where the community takes part, not in coming up with the plan. Williams said he takes full responsibility for the lack of clarity. He advised the board to "think in terms of who will be accountable," which will be the administrator, the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

Dimit said the timing of this is unfortunate stating that the administrator position is not one to post in August and have in place at the start of the school year. He says this delay means the district has lost one more year. He noted that other school districts are in the same situation as District 116 the administrative talent needed will be "harder and harder to find."

Brenda Carter said if the district hires an administrator, he or she should come from outside the district.

Cope Cumpston and Brenda Carter will represent the BOE at the Restructuring Committee. Don Owen stated that it will be hard to try and get the committee back during the summer break. He anticipates there will be only one or two meetings needed before the revised plan comes back to the BOE.

Preston Williams stated that this administrator position will be a "district position, not just a high school position."

Member Ruth Ann Fisher stated that in her mind hiring the administrator is already a done deal. She expressed frustration that she hadn't heard about this situation from the beginning and she stated that if this situation comes up again that the school board "had better be involved from the beginning."

Dimit stated that "this was not a surprise." He said there were open meetings about the High School Restructuring Plan and all were invited. Cumpston stated that she was not informed of the meetings.

The Board of Education then voted all in favor of the consent agenda. The agenda consisted of:

- Minutes from the May 20 and the June 3 BOE meetings
- The Bills and Checks
- Interfund Loans
- Various Personnel Items
- The Prevailing Wage Resolution
- Approval of the June and July Bills for Payment
- Xerographic Paper Bid
- Confirmation of the 2008 UHS Graduates
- Charge of the Facilities Committee
- Charge of the Balanced Calendar/Feasibility Committee
- 2008 Working Cash Bond Funded Projects
- Approval of Board Policy 6.414 regarding Internet Safety Policy
- Pre-School Head Start Program agreement between Washington Early Childhood and Head Start

The board voted to accept and send thank you notes to the following for their gifts to District 116:

- The following was donated to Washington Early Childhood School Carnival: Elle Lindsey & family, two autographed Illini basketballs, two footballs autographed by the Illinois Rose Bowl team, and an autographed t-shirt; First Federal Savings Bank, Champaign, \$100 saving bond.
- Robert Biehl, Champaign, donated a 2000 Chevrolet S10 with topper (less than 50k miles) to the Ag/FFA Program at Urbana High School. This donation was valued at \$4,000.
- Elsa and Carl Gunter, Urbana, donated \$250 to Leal Office Trust Account and another \$250 to the Urbana Middle School Education/Donation account.
- Terry Niblack, Champaign, donated an Englehardt ¾ cello in good condition to the Urbana Middle School orchestra room. This donation was valued at \$500.

The school board voted to approve the District Workers Comp Excess Insurance Rates. For more information, please contact Carol Baker, Director of Business and Finance.

The board then adopted the tentative budget for fiscal year 2009. The 54 million dollar spending plan has to be approved now so the district can operate after July 1 and is subject to change as the state budget is passed. Carol Baker says the budget is balanced in total. District 116 will hold a public hearing on the budget September 2 and will approve the final 2008-09 budget on September 16, 2008. For more information about the budget or to see a copy of the spending plan, please contact Ms. Baker at the Central Office.

Board members then voted to approve the Adult Education Tentative Budget for 2008-09. For more information, please contact Dr. David Adcock.

The school board approved a resolution to purchase property at 104 West Iowa, approved an intergovernmental agreement between the U of I and District 116 regarding educating students at Orchard Downs, and approved hiring a third party administrator for 403(b) Compliance.

In the Superintendent's Report, Dr. Williams stated that the district needs to take a look at more recreation and programming for the elementary and middle schools. Williams says he would like to see more activities such as chess, speech, debate, and other interscholastic programs at the elementary and middle school level. Williams says he will be working with building principals and other parties (including Urbana Park District) on this project.

The Urbana School District Board of Education will not meet during the month of July. The board approved its meeting schedule for the 2008-09 school year.

The Board of Education adjourned at 9:39 p.m. The next meeting of the Urbana School District #116 Board of Education will be **August 5, 2008**, at 7:30 p.m., at 205 N. Race Street, Urbana.