

Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Synopsis September 2, 2008

The Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Meeting was called to order by President Mark Netter at 7:31 p.m. Board Member Brenda Carter was absent; there were six members in attendance.

The board received a briefing on the revised Urbana High School Restructuring Plan from the Restructuring Committee. The revised plan calls for installing the District Improvement Monitoring Team. The team will be made up of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendent for Special Services, high school principal, middle school principal, and one elementary school principal. This team will replace a proposed administrator. The team will work with the U of I's Center for Education in Small Urban Communities to see if the institute can provide assistance. The Monitoring Team will also work to develop a more comprehensive plan for program evaluation in the future. The restructuring committee recommends that the administration also contract with a facilitator who will chair a community committee that provides input and representation to a variety of building and district improvement planning committees.

Please see <http://www.usd116.org/files/boardmin0708/080415s.pdf> and <http://www.usd116.org/files/boardmin0708/080617s.pdf> for prior board action regarding the High School Restructuring Plan.

While UHS met AYP this year, District 116 still needs to submit an improvement plan, completing a process begun last year.

There followed extensive discussion regarding this plan. Member John Dimit said he would support the plan only if it contained a commitment to move forward to hire an achievement compliance officer for the 2009-10 school year. Member Steve Summers expressed concern about the costs of the revised plan. Summers asked administrators to find out costs of contracting with the U of I and hiring a facilitator. Member Cope Cumpston stated that it was good to start this plan with the District Improvement Monitoring Team. Member Ruth Ann Fisher stated that she wished she could take back her vote of a few months ago against hiring the administrator. She formally apologized for that vote. Netter said this plan is a map that will "get us where we want to go."

Superintendent Dr. Preston Williams stated that the high school restructuring plan is going "full speed ahead" with the exception of the hired administrator. Williams also stated that the proposed members of the Monitoring Team are already working hard each day to make sure students are achieving and those people are "making a difference." Williams noted that the UHS graduation rate is "breaking trends" and that the entire District 116 curriculum has come "light years" without administrators or other resources. Williams said that no matter the board's decision, the work to improve student achievement will have to be done.

The school board reached a consensus to have administrators come back to the board meeting on September 16 with cost estimates, have further discussion, and take a formal vote in October.

The board of education held a public hearing on the FY09 District 116 budget and the FY09 Adult Education budget. There were no comments in either hearing.

The board of education then approved several personnel items. For more questions about the personnel items, please contact Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Gayle Jeffries.

Director of Business and Finance, Carol Baker, briefed the board on the District 116 FY09 budget. The board will vote on the 56-million dollar spending plan at the September 16 meeting. Board members praised Baker for her conservative budgeting philosophy. For more information about the budget or to see a copy of the budget, please contact Baker at 384-3600. A copy of the budget will also be put on the school district's website shortly.

Under board reports, John Dimit reported that District 116 will form a campaign committee for the 1% Sales Tax Referendum in November. Tina Gunsalus will be chairing the effort.

The Board of Education adjourned at 8:55 p.m. The next meeting of the Urbana School District #116 Board of Education will be September 16, 2008, at 7:30 p.m., at 205 North Race Street, Urbana.