

Construction updates were presented on Jefferson, Harrison, Madison, and Monroe. The climate control should be finished in August for Jefferson/Edison school. We are only doing asbestos abatement as needed now and we do a lot of testing. We are going to a hot water system and will use the same boilers at Jefferson. At Harrison we will have a groundbreaking on April 6. There will be layout work and there will be mobile classrooms brought in for the transition period. Work will be completed by the summer of 2005 at Harrison, and we will get a jump start on some items such as parking. Madison and Monroe will have climate control by the middle of August hopefully. At J. B. Young we have pulled back on some plans and specifics and will start in June after bidding sessions. We will break out some of the work in smaller pieces at this school. Director Zamora asked when concerns at the Kimberly Center would be addressed. Mr. Good said that would be a part of the vision presented through the Local School Improvement Advisory Committee on how to use the remaining money in the Local Option Sales Tax Funds. We have done some window replacement at the Kimberly Center, but we are on hold with other projects until we see the vision.

LINCOLN SCHOOL REPORT

Ethel Reynolds and Jeff Womack presented information to the Board on Lincoln School enrollment and projections. They had concerns about declining enrollment at Lincoln and are beginning to address issues dealing with being a magnet school and balanced enrollment. Mr. Womack explained how the balanced enrollment plan worked with zones, and although Lincoln is referenced, they would like to see Lincoln included and to be considered as an alternative attendance center when other schools are overcrowded. Mrs. Reynolds talked about class sizes and how Lincoln has not really been a part of the other six zones used to balance enrollment at buildings. If Lincoln was considered as a zone, it would address the declining enrollment at this building. Director Guard talked about buildings with enrollments over 500 and how using Lincoln as a zone would be helpful to reduce class size in other schools. There are waiting lists at Lincoln now but only for students of color. President Low suggested that Rachael Mullins do some work with them on promoting Lincoln, and that some people don't apply because they aren't sure of the focus of a fundamental school. Director Clewell said they should look at promotion and find out what would attract people to go to Lincoln School. Mr. Womack talked about parents' involvement at the school and having support with the homework assignments. They have to be more creative now in getting parents to participate. Director DeFauw asked about pre-kindergarten classes and educating parents early. Dr. Blanche also suggested another noninvasive approach by having Karen Farley and Rachael Mullins contacting the preschools about Lincoln. Mr. Womack talked about running advertisements in the paper for Lincoln, but these were not at all effective. Mrs. Reynolds indicated to the Board she wanted to update them on Lincoln just in case they started receiving some phone calls from parents.

SIGN-UP FOR BEHAVIOR PLAN

Director Guard shared a copy of the form used by the 2004 Celebration Iowa Singers and Jazz Band that was a student contract outlining expectations. The students were asked to read and sign the agreement and so were the parents. This way there was a parental understanding up-front on behavior expectations. Director Guard said he had an e-mail from Randy Schrader regarding our code of conduct. It said they were putting together something in terms of a district wide parent/student handbook and the back page might be something that the parent/guardian and student would sign. Dr. Blanche suggested that Mr. Hunigan touch base with representatives from the senior high schools and share the form used by the Iowa Singers as a sample. Director Guard said he realized there would be some management issues dealing with how the contracts would be collected and stored at the schools. Dr. Blanche suggested that Mr. Hunigan get some feedback to the Policy Committee about this at a later time.

BOARD POLICIES

The members of the Board reviewed several board policies and the revisions being recommended. After review of the Travel Policy 303.11, several changes will be made and it will come back to the Board for final approval. The By-Laws dealing with the Board Secretary and Board Treasurer were reviewed and the sample from the IASB was discussed. There were several suggestions for wording changes and the Board Treasurer policy would be deleted and combined with the new Board Secretary/Treasurer policy. The Board also discussed the adoption of a policy dealing with a resolution for payment of bills. This needs to be done once a year in order to cover the bills when the Board does not meet on a regular basis. This will come back to the Board after additional review.

UPDATE ON SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

President Low said the Board has received some information about the superintendent search and upcoming meetings. Director Zamora had been updated about the schedule and activities in the next month or so. There would be several meetings this week with the consultants and members in the community who wanted to give input into the search process and ideas for a superintendent.

OTHER REPORTS – Early Childhood Services

Dr. Blanche congratulated the Children's Village at Hoover for being a FINE award winner this year. We hope to have up to 100 people attend the ceremony in Des Moines at the Governor's Mansion.

Mrs. Reynolds talked about making a report one year ago at Wood concerning an early childhood center. We know that the Children's Village at Hoover is very successful and we need to replicate this plan. Kathy Erickson is serving on a state committee and the philosophy we are using at the Children's Village is traveling throughout the state and they are using us as a guideline for other school districts. We have had hours of conversation about planning and now would like to have the opportunity to talk with realtors in our area to find an existing structure to use for another preschool in the Northwest. There is an urgency to this matter.

Ethel Reynolds, Betty Long, and Kathy Erickson reported on services that could be provided for early childhood. The Board learned the District was presently serving 441 students—149 with special needs; 197 general education students within title and tuition classrooms; and 95 general education students within shared vision classrooms. There were 26 classrooms supported by Title funds, tuition, and special education. Four and one-half classrooms were supported by Shared Visions funds. Kathy Erickson talked about where the classes were being held throughout the district including Blue Grass, Buchanan, Jackson, Hayes, Madison, Wilson, Lincoln, and the Children's Village at Hoover. The Board learned more about the Shared Vision funding source and how schools wrote grants for specific buildings that had criteria for preschool services. At some of the buildings the funding is in the negative and if there isn't more money from the state, the costs have to come out of the building budgets. Mrs. Long addressed questions about Title funds. The Board saw data on where the students came from and distances to the preschools. There was information about the educational impact of the preschool classes, and the Board heard about the needs of the community which show 222 children on waiting lists now. The administrators truly believe that we can't have any child start behind and hoped to promote early childhood services.

Director Clewell said schools were looking at the Children's Village and what distinguishes it from others. Mrs. Reynolds said it was the center's philosophy and the clustering we use. Mrs. Erickson talked about the environment and how students were mixed and integrated. There was information about self-contained classrooms and general education services for children six weeks old to five years of age.

Mrs. Long explained the support funding: Title Funds 55.75%, Special Education Funds 38%, and other funding 6.25% came from tuition, Headstart, or partnerships. Director Guard talked about the costs for children to attend day-care and that our program offered much more for students. Mrs. Erickson said over 10% of the students pay tuition to attend. Board members talked about some funding needed to come from parents also, and Mrs. Erickson said there are tuition slots in each program offered. At the Children's Village there are 112 students served in nine classes. There will now be an additional nine classrooms with the addition at the school, which will free up space in the rooms. There are students with disabilities who can benefit from the new classrooms. Parents are responsible for transportation, but there are always exceptions because of IEP's done for some children.

They would like to look for an existing space in the North or Northwest with approximately 30,000 to 33,000 square feet they could rent for an additional early learning center. The funding allows them to rent space but not to purchase or construct a facility. They believe the community needs another center soon. Director Guard said it shows about 700 kindergarten students coming into the district and he would like to see children start earlier with preschool education. He felt we could turn around our open enrollment if parents had an opportunity to start with us sooner. Board members talked about numbers of children in various grades and projections for the future. Director Clewell felt these ideas lined up with UEN and their priority of early childhood education. He hoped to see more emphasis on this along with community groups getting involved with lead abatement programs, eye glass services, and dental care appointments.

Director Tupper expressed some concerns about costs involved and what we would have to give up in order to operate additional preschool classes. Mrs. Long talked about the Title funds and how they have held back on some funds up to this point. Now the funds have to be expended and they can use the money for leasing spaces for early childhood programs. There are carry-over funds that can be used for this work. It would cost about \$1.15 million for five years to lease and open the doors of a center. This would not include salaries, but would include materials and furniture. We can use Title 1, Special Education, and other funds for this operation such as Headstart and tuition fees. Mrs. Long felt there would be money available to cover the staff in addition. Director Tupper talked about having to lay off teachers in the State, but now we are starting a new program. He would like more information to understand this concept. Mrs. Long asked what she could prepare for the Board to help them better understand. Mrs. Reynolds said they will get addition information to the Board and Director Tupper can talk with them further. Mrs. Long explained how the money available can be used to lease a facility and someone can remodel it. We can't contract to do remodeling, but we can budget this into the plan for leasing. President Low asked if there would be any additional costs to the general fund with this program or would it only come from the Title and special education funds. Mrs. Long agreed that is where the money would come to fund the program, and she talked more about criteria and qualifications for spending funds she has available. Mrs. Long said the elementary schools will not lose staff and there is always fluctuation for the free and reduced lunch students. Director Guard talked about doing everything we can now with the money we have available at the Title 1 buildings, and now this carry over money can be used for the preschool program. Mrs. Reynolds said if they don't make a commitment to early childhood, the money could be used for something else, but we hope to make this commitment to early childhood because we know how important it is for our community and we have research to support this work.

Director Tupper wanted to make sure we could afford this and we would not need to give up something else in order to have the early childhood center in the future. Mrs. Long said they would do a spread sheet that might help with the funding specifics. If three years from now Washington says there would be no more money, then that could be a problem. We have to be prepared and we don't want to do this without planning. Director Zamora said if we do well with the preschool age children, then we will spend less on the children as they get older because they are better prepared. Mrs. Long said in five years, these children will be in kindergarten and we hope to see big results. Director Zamora explained she had been involved with Title 1 and people have to account for everything they spend. Mrs. Reynolds recapped that

she felt there was support to move forward and start the negotiations for a center to lease for an early childhood center in an existing structure. We will be updating the Board on this in the future. It was suggested that some type of formal approval come back to the Board some time in April at a Regular Meeting. Mrs. Reynolds said they need to move ahead as soon as possible because it might take two to three months for construction and remodeling also. They didn't think this required any type of public hearing before continuing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Low talked about the Teacher Mentors' appreciation reception that would be held at West High in the cafeteria on April 19 at 4:00 PM. Invitations would be coming out to the Board soon.

ADJOURNMENT

President Low declared the committee meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Linda Smith Kortemeyer, Board Secretary