

MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING
of the Board of Education
Riverside School District No. 96
held on Tuesday, January 20, 2009
Hauser Junior High School LRC
Riverside, IL 60546

Education Committee Chair Nancy Jensen called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Present: Mrs. Nancy Jensen, Mrs. Linda Bade, Mr. Richard Volpe, and
Mrs. Hareena Wakely

Absent: None

Also Present: Dr. Jon Lamberson, Superintendent; principals Janice Limperis, Vicki DeVylder, Colleen Lieggi, Robert Chleboun and Leslie Berman; technology director, Vern Bettis; staff members Kevin Wolf and Mindy Keller; and approximately 20 parents and interested citizens of the community.

There were no reports or comments from delegations or individuals.

Committee chair Nancy Jensen opened the meeting with a brief description of the work of the Education Committee of the Board stating that their purpose is to hear progress reports and gather information about curriculum initiatives and educational issues from the administrative and/or teaching staff, review the data presented and bring recommendations to the full Board for adoption or revision. The Education Committee does not take action on any items brought before them other than, by consensus, to bring a recommendation to the Board for consideration after thorough review and discussion at one or more meetings.

The following topics were discussed by the Education Committee:

- a. The District's residency validation process as well as the validation process being used by Riverside Brookfield High School will be discussed at the next scheduled Education Committee meeting to determine if changes will be necessary for 2009-10. Riverside Brookfield High School assistant principal John Passarella will be asked to attend the next meeting to explain the process and rationale for the high school's validation requirements.
- b. Dr. Janice Limperis reported that K -5 grade level Curriculum Guides are being developed by the grade level teams. The members of the Education Committee reviewed the guides which are currently in *Draft* form. Once all the work is completed by the teams the Grade Level Curriculum Guides will be available online for parents to reference.
- c. The after school Math Computation Clubs have begun in each of the elementary schools. There are currently 15 teachers involved with the program and class sizes are limited to 20 students. Students' MAP scores are referenced for program eligibility.

- d. The staff will be completing a science curriculum review survey to evaluate the current textbooks and curriculum. Science is the next subject that is due for a formal review and teachers will be given an opportunity to state their opinions on whether or not they would support initiating a formal science curriculum review process in 2009-10 for a new or revised science curriculum and supplemental materials. Another possible option would be to delay the start of the review process until 2010-11 in order to focus on the new writing initiative.
- e. The Education Committee viewed a video presentation by Hauser social worker/counselor Kevin Wolf regarding a proposal for an 8th grade trip to Bradford Woods located at Indiana University in the future that would focus on team building/leadership training, self-esteem and character development. The trip would be the culminating 8th grade event for all students in the class and would be less expensive since the location is closer to home. The student teacher ratio would be about 10:1 with Hauser Junior High staff members and Indiana University staff responsible for the activities. The cost would be approximately \$150 per student and the program topics would be designed around student input via survey. The idea of establishing a partnership with RB High School to allow some freshmen and/or seniors to come along and share their perspectives on making the transition to high school, making right choices, and how to deal with difficult situations over the summer and at the start of the school year based on past experiences. Guest speakers on various topics will be scheduled into the program as well. This event will reinforce the SMART Club philosophy and be aligned with the District's mission and imperatives. The new concept will be brought back to Hauser staff members, Student Council representatives, and parent committee for additional input and ideas to ensure a successful, meaningful experience of all participants. The first trip is scheduled for May 5, 6, and 7, 2010. The Education Committee and Board will be updated as more information becomes available.
- f. The Committee was updated on the progress of the "5 for 4" Program (individual laptop computer for every 5th grade student in 2009-10). Members of the "5 for 4" committee include Colleen Lieggi, Vern Bettis, Janice Limperis, Stacy Westin, Barbara Margolis and Liz Whaley. They have developed a vision statement based on the District's Mission and prepared a job description for a project manager who will oversee the implementation and management of the program. A great deal of research has gone into the project with more questions to be answered and details worked out. The "5 for 4" committee will be conducting site visits to other schools in the area that already have this program in place. The project manager position (instructional technology specialist) is expected to be posted within the next several weeks. This person will also provide staff development opportunities for teachers to help work along side the students. Parent informational meetings will be held periodically to discuss the guidelines for student usage, answer questions, address concerns and keep everyone up to date on the status of the program. Committee member Rich Volpe questioned liability for damage to the units with the students having an opportunity to take them home for homework, etc. Supt. Lamberson noted that most likely it would be the parents' responsibility but the 5 for 4 committee and project manager will develop a set of guidelines for program participation including misuse of the laptop, the issue of damage to the unit, and repair or replacement.
- g. Central School principal Dr. Janice Limperis and Hauser principal Leslie Berman are participating in a cooperative Grant project with North Riverside Komarek School District 94, the police departments from both Riverside and North Riverside, and the Illinois Council for Prevention of Violence focusing on bullying prevention and cyber bullying. This year teachers in grades 5 and 6 are receiving training along with the social workers, special service staff, and administrators. A presentation for parents has been scheduled for February 4, 2009 at Hauser Junior High from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. It is the intention of the administration to integrate the teachers in grades 4, 7 and 8 into the program in 2009-10 and develop administrative procedures for implementation.

- h. Twenty K-8 language arts teachers are participating in professional development opportunities for the new writing curriculum and have expressed positive feedback on the Regie Routman program. The focus is placed on purposeful writing for students in collaboration between the elementary schools and the middle school. Writing is part of the district's language arts curriculum and integrated across all content areas.
- i. Planning surveys for 2009-10 enrollment were distributed to more than 10 area preschools asking for information on prospective kindergarteners for 2009-10 and beyond. Dr. Limperis noted that the data received will assist in planning for kindergarten classes before the end of the school year.
- j. This year's kindergarten students will be participating in a mid-year and end-of-year assessment process on the concept of print writing and vocabulary usage to assist in determining placement and needs for first grade. These students do not take part in the MAP assessments.
- k. Feedback on the newly initiated Parent/Teacher/Student conferences was very positive at all schools. The administration will be looking into the feasibility of extending the amount of time for each conference now that the students are included in goal setting. Exit surveys were distributed to all parents following the conferences for suggestions and/or comments on the new addition to the conferences with teachers.
- l. It was reported that Hinsdale District 181 has begun a withdrawal study for pulling out of the LADSE special education cooperative of which District 96 is a member. Hinsdale is the largest district in the LADSE cooperative and if this were to take place, it could have an impact on District 96 administrative costs for LADSE services. The study is the first step in the process and is required and a public hearing must be conducted. A formal request to withdraw from the cooperative must be submitted to the Regional Office of Education, forwarded to the State Superintendent of Schools and finally the Illinois State Board of Education. The entire withdrawal process will take several years to complete.
- m. The Education Committee reviewed the 5-year Curriculum Cycle plan and discussed the possibility of introducing world language for the elementary schools. Dr. Limperis was asked to look into researching other districts that have a program in place to help guide any decisions regarding which language would be offered and at what grade level.
- n. The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme was discussed with regard to the possibility of starting a program for our students. An extensive list of criteria must be met in order to be approved by the IBO for inclusion in the program but the members of the Education Committee felt it would be worth the time to investigate the program given the number of high achieving students who would be eligible. Dr. Lamberson was asked to make the initial contact and provide the committee with a more detailed report on a four-year study proposal. If the district received approval from the IBO, implementation would take several years to put in place. Supt. Lamberson indicated that he would be asking for volunteers to serve on the study group.
- o. The Committee discussed the current flexible boundary policy, whether or not it is working to bring class size equity across the elementary schools or is there a need to revisit the policy in light of increased enrollment. Also discussed was the notion of using a class size "range" rather than a hard cap maximum number of students per class. Discussion will continue following kindergarten registration in March. However, it was the consensus of the committee that the policy is working to promote overall lower class sizes across the district. Supt. Lamberson was asked to survey other school districts in the WSCAE consortium to find out what is being done in other areas. Board member Hareena Wakely expressed concern

over the possibility of a wider spread in class sizes in the elementary schools if the policy was given more “flexibility”, i.e. hard cap vs. range and the impact on the teachers and the other students if there were no limits in place. Under the current flexible boundary policy there are 51 students (5.5%) attending an elementary school outside the home attendance area. The District Leadership Team will discuss the concept of hard cap vs. range in class sizes for providing the optimum instructional environment for students.

- p. Education Committee chair, Nancy Jensen, reported that the Board is currently working with the Illinois Association of School Boards to update Board policies and make them available online. A new policy is being developed regarding communication with the members of the Board of Education, i.e., written communication, e-mail, etc. Completion of the project is expected by early April 2009.

A motion was made by Mr. Volpe, supported by Mrs. Wakely and committee approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Judith Novak, Board Secretary

Nancy Jensen, Committee Chair