

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Hawthorn Community Consolidated School District Number 73, Lake County, Illinois, held in the Conference Room at 841 West End Court at 7:30PM on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October 2007.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Tim Shanahan, President, at 7:37PM. Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:** Debbie Limer called the roll, with the following members of the Board of Education answering present: Jeff Bard, Michelle Comitor, John Sonnenberg, Donna Gaidamak, Tim Shanahan.

**Public Comment period:** None

**Student and Staff Accomplishments, Recognitions:**

Dr. Yomtoob told the Board that some of our choral students were a part of the INEA (is this the right acronym?) at Niles West. They were very excited to be asked to participate. The state report card has been released. Our overall student achievement is at 94%. We are way above the state average in every category for ISAT testing. All of our schools have met their AYP. The reasons why we have done so well is that we are focused on learning, and we have good staff development. Dr. Yomtoob pointed out the district and state growth. He stated that the overall congratulations belong to the staff and the students. Tim Shanahan acknowledged the parents as well. He added that with ISAT scores in earlier than usual we can now compare year to year.

**Staff Presentations:**

Dr. Yomtoob stated that the audit report is completed. Alan Hahn introduced Bill Fates, our auditor. He is here to present the audit report and answer questions. Mr. Fates told the Board that the opinion on the audit is presented on page one in the form of a letter. He explained that the District's accounting works on a modified cash basis. The income is recorded when it is received. Expenses are recorded when they are paid out. He went over the sections of the audit report. There is \$32.3M in cash, which is almost the same as last year. The District has \$2.7M in long term debt. Mr. Fates broke down the funds and went over budget to actual. Jeff Bard wanted to know if there are any controls or policies that we should have that we currently do not. Mr. Fates explained that the District does not have a person who is an expert on all of the rules and notes. The District is supposed to have an expert. The options are to hire someone who is or send a staff member to the state government accounting conferences or the CPA organizations who teach on this subject. John Sonnenberg wanted to know if we would comply if we hired a CPA separate from the audit. Mr. Fates stated that would be fine. John Sonnenberg commented that that job can be outsourced. It is not a full time job. He did not think it was necessary, but we may want to look at the costs.

John Sonnenberg wanted to know if E-rate is prone to auditing issues. He wanted to know if Mr. Fates had any suggestions for doing a better job. Mr. Fates commented that it is difficult to audit. John Sonnenberg stated that he is seeing the government audit more school districts. Alan Hahn explained that E-rate has a number of different categories. It depends on how much the District qualifies for. We are at the level where we get a 42% discount rebate on our phone bills and T lines. We apply for the rebate. There is a lot of paperwork. The government works through the phone company. We pay the discounted rate. (The next sentence doesn't make sense.) There is not really a way cause problems. John Sonnenberg wanted to know who monitors this process. Alan Hahn stated that it is done with in house staff. Mr. Fates added that they test the E-rate computation. Jeff Bard commented that our net assets show our financial health. He asked about our tax flow and expenditures versus revenue. Mr. Fates commented that no issues came to mind.

Jeff Bard asked if our common bank accounts should be separate. Mr. Fates explained that that is not necessary. The interest is being shared appropriately. Jeff Bard stated that our long term debt carries a 9% interest rate on the bonds. He wanted to know if that was a normal rate as compared to others. Mr. Fates commented that is higher than he has seen, but there must be reasons. Donna Gaidamak asked about the student activities fund. Mr. Fates explained that it is a fund that the District is responsible for, but does not own. Donna Gaidamak asked why revenue does not match disbursements. Alan Hahn explained that not all of the funds are spent right away. The PTO gives the schools money, but the schools do not immediately spend that money. John Sonnenberg questioned if the activity funds are in separate accounts. Alan Hahn stated that there is one checking account for all of the activity funds. Mr. Fates told the Board that Alan Hahn and his staff do a great job for him and his co-workers.

**Consent Agenda:**

Donna Gaidamak moved to approve the consent agenda with corrections to be made to the September 24<sup>th</sup> minutes. Jeff Bard seconded the motion.

- 10/07.32 Board Minutes, Committee of the Whole, 8/17/07
- 10/07.33 Board Minutes, Committee of the Whole, 8/18/07
- 10/07.34 Board Minutes, regular session, 9/24/07
- 10/07.35 Expenditure Report, October 2007
- 10/07.36 Financial Statement, August 2007
- 10/07.37 Financial Statement, September 2007
- 10/07.38 2007 School Report Card
- 10/07.39 Personnel Report

Donna Gaidamak commented that she had a few questions on the State report card. Under "Instructional Setting" our average class size in some grades is higher than the State average. Our teaching time in some subjects at some levels is lower than the State average. Our expenditures by function are 38%, while the State average is 48%. In "other" expenditures our percentage is 35.5% and the State is 17%. Dr. Yomtoob responded that in grades 5 through 8 our goal is no more than 26 students per class. This is always an issue. He commented that he would get back to the Board on the rest of the questions. Alan Hahn explained that building expenditures fit into the "other" category. That is why our percentage is so high. Lisa Jay commented that class size is up across all grades. She added that on page two of the report card under teacher information there is a distinction of "not highly qualified teacher." She wanted to know what that meant to our District. Dr. Yomtoob explained that is a No Child Left Behind criteria. Michelle Comitor added that the State is behind in logging the criteria. All teachers have to go online to put in their teaching credentials. She indicated that a year after putting hers into the system she is still "pending." Jeff Bard asked if the Board will be getting an update on goals and planned improvements in the schools. Dr. Yomtoob stated that Dr. Zook will be presenting on that subject in the future.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gaidamak, Bard, Jay, Sonnenberg, Comitor, Shanahan,  
Nays: None  
Absent: Hoffman  
Motion carried – 6– 0

**Action Items:**

John Sonnenberg moved that the Board of Education approve the acceptance of the audit report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007. Michelle Comitor seconded the motion. Voice Vote: 6 ayes: 0 nays. Motion carried

**President's Report:** None

**Superintendent's Report:** None

**Discussion Items:**

Tim Shanahan brought up enrollment projections. Dr. Yomtoob explained that a company in Michigan handles projections for the District. The total number is very accurate, but they cannot predict the grade composition. We are stabilizing. The birth rate in Lake County is down. The next challenge is the composition of our buildings. The Latino population is up on the north campus. The Asian population is up at the south campus. We have always wanted our schools to be balanced. He stated that Dr. Zook is going to present a report on this subject. He added that there are 52 languages spoken in the District. We are doing well with student achievement, but we want to do better. Tim Shanahan reported that our schools reflect the demographic. When Whitehall closed, some of those residents moved into the north boundaries of our school system. There is a large Asian population in the Deerpath area. He questioned what we want to do. We need to bring the community in on this subject because it is going to be a challenge for the next few years. Lisa Jay asked why the report on this subject won't be until January. Dr. Yomtoob reported that he hopes to be ready earlier, but it would mean shifting some agenda items. Donna Gaidamak commented that it is a complex issue. She added that we have two schools of choice and only one has dual language. That is part of the population shift.

Donna Gaidamak commented that the average 5<sup>th</sup> grade class size is 27. That is over our goal of 26. At Middle School North the average class size is 28 to 29. At Townline the upper grade dual language classes are much smaller than the rest of the upper level grades. The average upper grade dual language class is 15 to 16, while the rest of the grades average 26 to 27. She stated that she would prefer that this subject come back to the Board sooner rather than later. Dr. Yomtoob stated that in terms of learning, class size is not an issue. Donna Gaidamak reported that these numbers exceed our stated threshold. Dr. Yomtoob commented it is the same as when he started in the District. It would be a large investment in teachers to bring down class size. Michelle Comitor responded that it would be a great investment.

Lisa Jay added that she could not believe that there is no difference between 1:15 ratio and 1:28 ratio. John Sonnenberg commented that he knows the research that Dr. Yomtoob is talking about, and there are many variables to consider. Tim Shanahan brought up the disparities between second grade at Aspen and second grade at Elementary South. He wanted to know if there is any way for a better balance. Dr. Yomtoob stated that we fill the choice schools first. Tim Shanahan reported that we need a better study that makes things more equitable. Jeff Bard stated that we need to look at the capacity of individual buildings.

Jeff Bard reported that the demographic of the school report card does not match the demographic published in the Vernon Hills Review. Dr. Yomtoob responded that the published numbers were from last year. Jeff Bard suggested that he take a look at that because the numbers are very different. Donna Gaidamak stated that she noted disparities at the middle schools. Tim Shanahan commented that we will continue further discussion on this subject. We see that there are trends, and we need to decide what is best for our students. Donna Gaidamak asked about a number of Latino students who were enrolled at Aspen. She wanted to know if they are English Language Learners (ELL). Tim Shanahan commented that they are not necessarily ELL students. Donna Gaidamak explained that her concern is that there is no Spanish speaking teacher at that school. Michelle Comitor stated that ELL students do not necessarily need a teacher who speaks Spanish. We have 52 languages spoken at our schools. We do not have teachers who speak all of those languages. We are teaching English.

#### **Committee Reports:**

Donna Gaidamak reported that the Constituent Relations Committee met tonight before the meeting. We discussed the idea of having a town hall meeting at the beginning of next year to discuss the change of demographics at our schools. It would be a meeting where we invite the community to come out for input and feedback. Tim Shanahan stated that it would start a dialogue. Lisa Jay added we would be looking for ideas and suggestions. We want it to be positive. Donna Gaidamak stated that we also discussed communication vehicles such as newsletters, the use of technology and the new emergency notification system. Lisa Gosen, director of technology, explained that we looked at three companies for an emergency messaging system. Safety Net which offers Alert Now was our first choice. We will be running a test with the system next week, if it goes well we will sign a contract with them. Donna Gaidamak asked which phone number the system will automatically dial. Ms. Gosen stated that we are deciding which numbers to use. We may ask parents their preferences. Donna Gaidamak added that the school closing will still be listed on the website and on the news. Michelle Comitor stated that there are many homes where English is not spoken. Ms. Gosen reported that the company offers translation into 12 languages. Tim Shanahan asked how long it takes to make all of the calls. Ms. Gosen indicated that it is instantaneous. John Sonnenberg added that the system uses Voice Over IP.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

John Sonnenberg stated that he went to a library luncheon with Dr. Yomtoob. All of the feeder schools were there. It was a nice event. The architect who designed the updates for the libraries was there. It looks like the library will be choosing the Wickes site. He added that we should discuss with the Library Board how we can integrate with them. They are a tremendous resource. Donna Gaidamak asked if the Library Board is going to decide soon. John Sonnenberg stated that they are. Tim Shanahan suggested setting up a meeting with them, Dr. Zook, and Dr. Yomtoob. Dr. Yomtoob stated that the issue is going to be how to get the kids there safely. John Sonnenberg indicated that we should engage in a discussion with them so that they understand our needs. He added that there is a dementia facility being built right next to Wickes. He has seen a television program where students worked with dementia patients. It is a benefit to the patients and the students. He stated that he could see it working with the facility because it will be so close to the library. Donna Gaidamak added that the schools already participate in programs with the residents at Hawthorn Lakes.

Lisa Jay told the Board that she attended a Hawthorn Student Assistance Program meeting. There is a lot going on. There is sharing between the schools and the community.

Michelle Comitor stated that she wished Snowflake was open to more students. She suggested that maybe it could be more than once a year. It was great for the students and the parents. Donna Gaidamak added that this came up last year as well. Michelle Comitor reported that it was a great message. It is not very often that students and parents get the same message. She commented that she feels it is very important. Dr. Yomtoob indicated that he will look into it. He is glad that others get to see the positive things we are doing.

#### **New Business:**

**Announcements:**

**Informational Items:**

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Tim Shanahan requested a motion to adjourn.

Lisa Jay moved to adjourn the meeting. Donna Gaidamak seconded the motion. Voice Vote: 6 ayes: 0 nays. Motion carried

Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 8:55PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Limer

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Timothy Shanahan, President

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Anne Hoffman, Secretary