

Minutes of the REGULAR Meeting of the Board of Education
Community Unit School District No. 4, Champaign County, Illinois
Mellon Administrative Center, 703 S. New Street, Champaign, Illinois
November 12, 2007 Within the Boundaries of Said District

Regular Meeting

Board President David Tomlinson called the Regular Meeting of the Board to order at 7:03 p.m.

Board Members Present

Nathaniel Banks, Arlene Blank, Kristine Chalifoux, Susan Grey, Scott MacAdam, Greg Novak, David Tomlinson

Staff Members Present

Superintendent Arthur Culver, Deputy Superintendent Dorland Norris, Assistant Superintendent Beth Shepperd, Assistant Superintendent Michael McFarland, Chief Financial Officer Gene Logas, Administrator Joe Davis

Guests

Representatives from CFT, and local media and other interested persons

Approval of Agenda

Scott MacAdam moved, with a second by Sue Grey, to approve the agenda. The motion carried on voice vote.

Superintendent Culver recognized the Board on behalf of the administration, students and community for their dedication and service to Unit 4 in honor of School Board Member Day. The administration honored the Board of Education by donating a book in their name to each school library.

Mayor Gerald Schweighart recognized the Board by proclaiming November 15, 2007 as School Board Member Day in the city of Champaign honoring them for devoting their time and energy for the education of our children.

Bottenfield Student Council thanked the Board for their service and presented thank you notes to each Board member.

Public Comment

Doug West requested equal resources among the schools.

PTA Council

Brian Minsker thanked the Board and administration for attending the PTA Presidents' Dinner.

Board

Greg Novak shared that he visited the Eagle Academy which is Rantoul High School's Educational Alternative School.

Nathaniel Banks applauded the efforts of the Visioning Committee. He also stated that he had requested information on elected districts as opposed to districts at large due to his concern that the district should have representation from all areas in Champaign and Savoy.

Reports

Report from Parkland President

Parkland President Thomas Ramage and representatives from Parkland provided a brief presentation regarding their relationship with Unit 4, specifically what happens to Unit 4 students that go to Parkland. Information was shared regarding the student population at Parkland, tuition and fees, dual credit, the number of CU4 graduates that attend Parkland, outcomes of occupational graduates, average hourly rates for career program graduates, and also to which in-state universities Parkland students transfer.

Academic Spotlight – Edison Middle School: Proactive Approaches to Addressing the Challenges at the Middle School Level (Spotlight on Society of Gentlemen)

Principal Joe Williams provided a report on the proactive approaches to addressing the challenges at the middle school level. The spotlight was on the newly developed club “Society of Gentlemen.”

As a disciplinary/academic support, the administration from Edison Middle School has identified 20 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade boys to join its newly developed “Society of Gentlemen.” This club was designed to provide support in the areas of character development, social skill development, academic achievement, and self-esteem. Students meet once a week, sometimes during lunch, to discuss a variety of topics related to the above themes. On Wednesdays after school, Society members are required to attend a “study table” session where tutors are available to assist students with homework and class projects. Students must abide by academic and behavioral expectations of the Society in order to remain in the group and be eligible to participate in outside Society activities. As rewards and incentives for meeting individual goals, the Society received donations such as Bulls tickets and bowling passes. To date, none of the Society members have been suspended and interest in the club is growing among the student body.

Society members took a field trip to Illinois State University where they were exposed to campus life and college expectations. It is hoped that visits such as these will open students’ eyes to the possibilities that lie ahead if they set and maintain high academic and behavioral goals for themselves.

Early suspension data from Edison is showing a downward trend, in part, to this new initiative. Last year, by the end of September, Edison had accumulated 28 suspensions. This year, there have been four. key staff members involved in the Society. Those staff members are Dean Edwin Wilson, AVID teacher Troy Howard, and sixth grade special education teacher Tim Harris.

The faculty and staff of Edison have taken a proactive approach to dealing with the challenges faced at the middle school level. The early results are both promising and encouraging. The Society of Gentlemen is one of many new initiatives that are designed to create a climate conducive to learning where students feel valued and teachers work collectively toward a common goal within a Professional Learning Community. Teachers and staff are fully engaged in mentorship with students, collaborative planning with colleagues, and celebrations of student achievement. Because Edison staff continues to focus on meeting the individual needs of students by building positive relationships and redefining rigor through collaborative conversations, Edison fully expects the positive trends in discipline and achievement to continue. Rewards and incentives have been donated by community members and

businesses. Principal Joe Williams will conduct an evaluation of the Society's effectiveness after first semester.

Consent Decree Update – Minority Enrichment in Gifted & Talented (Grades 2-8) (Exhibit “A”)

Executive Director Dedrick Martin provided an update on minority enrichment in gifted and talented, grades 2-8. The purpose of the District's Education Equity Implementation Plan is to set forth a comprehensive framework for improving the District's educational programs and opportunities in order to “close the achievement gap” between African American and non-African American students. One of the stated objectives of this plan is to eliminate, to the greatest extent practicable, unwarranted disparities in the enrollment of minority students in Honors or Gifted & Talented classes. In an effort to reduce these unwarranted disparities, the District has actively sought out strategies to increase the number of minorities in Honors or Gifted & Talented classes.

Gifted and Talented children in Champaign Community School District 4 are identified as those children with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at exceptionally high levels of accomplishments when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capacity in at least one or more of the following areas: intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or specific academic fields. They require additional services or activities that need to be provided by the schools. (Adapted from the 1993 Federal Definition – October, 1998)

The Academic Enrichment program provides opportunities for students to develop skills in critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking, technology, and teamwork. Students in this program are put into small groups to work on challenging units. The Enrichment Specialists also go into classrooms to co-teach, design special activities, or work with small groups of students. Enrichment Specialists may also coach individual students on independent study projects. School theme activities vary from school to school.

Minority student enrollment in honors or gifted and talented classes, along with the number of minority students in enrichment classes, are monitored quarterly and documented in the quarterly reports. As indicated on the charts that were shared, the number and percentage of African American students enrolled in Honors or Gifted & Talented classes have increased dramatically over the last six years.

Board of Education Proposed Policies/Procedures (BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS – Public Participation; BUDGET- Financial Support for Special Events/Opportunities; STUDENT WELFARE – Administering Medications to Students)

Director Judy Wiegand presented the proposed policies and procedures which represent the continued effort to update the District's Policy and Procedures Manual.

Policy 270.15 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS – Public Participation was revised to indicate that a member of the audience may speak to each agenda item one time unless recognized by the presiding officer.

Policy 405.06 BUDGET- Financial Support for Special Events/Opportunities was revised to indicate the maximum amount that will be contributed to any one club, team or group will not exceed \$5,000 per year and will not exceed \$15,000 district wide.

Policy 720.14 STUDENT WELFARE – Administering Medications to Students was revised to indicate that certified and non-certified personnel are not required to administer medication to students.

Procedure 720.14R STUDENT WELFARE – Administering Medications to Student was revised to indicate that certified and non-certified personnel are not required to administer medication to students.

Driver Education Fee Increase (Exhibit “B”)

Director Judy Wiegand presented the following information regarding the increase of fees. The driver’s education program consists of two main components; safety (classroom instruction) and behind-the-wheel training. Classroom instruction (safety) is a required course for graduation and is offered at both high schools at no additional cost to the student. Behind-the-wheel instruction is offered before and after school hours for a fee. Currently the district charges \$50.00. This fee has been at this rate since 1996-97, when it was increased from the fee of \$33.00. An analysis of driver education costs and revenues for the previous two years (2005-06, 2006-07) was shared.

The analysis indicates that for the District to break even, a fee of \$442.00 would need to be charged. This is not a reasonable expectation for our families, but an increase to help off-set the costs of the program is warranted. It is recommended that the fee for behind-the wheel instruction be increased to \$200.00. This increase is in line with the fee charged by similar districts:

- Danville (\$200.00)
- Bloomington (200.00)
- Urbana (\$200.00)
- Normal (\$200.00)
- Mahomet (\$300.00)
- private companies (i.e. M&M Driving School charges \$300).

The additional revenue would be used to upgrade the driver education equipment and would also allow the district to reallocate funds to improve academic achievement. Students that qualify for free/reduced lunch will have the fee waived.

Planning Process for Long-Range Facilities & Infrastructure Plan

Kristine Chalifoux stated that the Unit 4 Board of Education has begun its long-range planning process by bringing together a Vision Committee. Two facilitators were added to the process and will assist in working with the Vision Committee, working groups, and the community. The first Vision Committee meeting will be held on November 28, 2007 and a schedule is underway for community outreach.

Columbia Alternative Center

Assistant Superintendent Michael McFarland shared the following information regarding the Columbia Alternative Center. According to the theory of action for Unit 4 alternative schools, alternative school programs will operate from the perspective of providing all students with educational choices that increase their opportunities for success. The District will develop and maintain alternative educational programs of high academic quality, based on the assumptions that high expectations for student achievement, access to a rigorous and age-appropriate curriculum, frequent monitoring of student progress, strong instructional leadership, active parent-community partnerships, access to community-based services, and the maintenance of a safe and orderly environment will play significant role in increasing the likelihood of student success in these alternative school settings.

Through a number of new initiatives, Columbia Alternative Center seeks to improve the culture of hopelessness that has permeated many of their students' attitudes towards school, work, and life goals. The Department of Achievement and Pupil Services has been engaged in collaborative discussions with the leadership team at Columbia to develop responsive systems, purposeful programs, and focused interventions that will allow us to better serve the needs of students assigned to Columbia.

During the first quarter of the 2007-08 school year, District and campus leaders spent time interviewing students about specific issues relating to their placement and their future, analyzing data as it relates to student assignments, and developing systems and programs to meet the needs consistently expressed by students. The analysis revealed that many of our most challenging students are in need of academic acceleration to regain lost credits, character development to improve decision making, and career exploration opportunities that will make education relevant to their future lives. Many students have gotten off track and have simply lost hope. The Columbia Improvement Team has focused on removing barriers and building bridges to hope. As a result, the Hope Academy at Columbia has been created to serve students age 16 or older who are classified as repeating ninth graders. The Academy will be structured so that students will spend a portion of the day working on technology-based curriculum with teacher support, a portion of the day engaged in structured character development, and a portion of the day working on a job site and/or engaged in career exploration activities. The Academy will serve from 10 to 12 students maximum. All students will be required to maintain internships, employment, or be enrolled in a skill development program in order to participate in the program. A job outreach coordinator will be assigned to work with students in the Academy to help them identify internships and employment and to monitor compliance. The Urban League will also be a partner working in the character development and career exploration areas. Many other local businesses have already committed to being a part of this innovative program.

Two other pressing issues at Columbia are dealing with negative influences from older students and conflicts between students during unstructured time at the end of the day. In an alternative school setting where the age span ranges from 12 to 21, it is imperative that the school take action to mitigate the negative influences from older students on the younger, more impressionable students. The older students are often experiencing a sense of learned hopelessness and are role models to younger students. In an attempt to address this situation, the unstructured time of the older students will be reduced by modifying their class schedule so that minimal interaction between the two groups will occur.

The Columbia Improvement Team has redesigned the bell schedule and operating parameters so that high school students will now begin classes at 8:15 a.m. and conclude at 2:00 p.m. This change will reduce the interactions that occur between middle and high school students and the amount of unstructured time that high school students have at the end of the day. The instructional minutes and time requirements for teachers will remain as is; however, the start and release times will be 15 minutes earlier. The adjusted arrival and departure times will be more closely aligned to the MTD bus arrival and dismissal times, thus reducing the amount of unstructured time at the end of the day and alleviating the need for middle and high school students to ride the same bus daily.

The administration at Columbia has taken a proactive approach to addressing the complexity of challenges faced by students, teachers, and staff. Upon Board approval, the Academy and adjusted bell schedule, two initiatives identified during the Columbia Improvement Process, will be implemented in an effort to remove systematic barriers to success and build bridges of hope for the students Columbia

serves. Selected staff will be trained in implementing technology-based curriculum, character development activities, and career exploration curriculum.

The school has elected to allocate Title I funds to offset costs related to the Hope Academy. TAOEP grant funds will also be applied to expenses associated with students who meet the qualifications of the TAOEP grant.

Due to the timing of the initiative as it relates to the 2007-2008 budget process, additional funding was requested; however, it is likely that the career exploration component could benefit immensely from a small contribution to offset potential personnel costs relating to coordinating the career exploration piece. The program will be assessed by the evaluating the number of students who regain credits and remain in school and employed compared to other students with similar characteristics.

Action Agenda

Proposed Board of Education Policies/Procedures (INSTRUCTION – Education of English Language Learners/Limited English Proficient Students; DISCIPLINE – Substance Abuse - Secondary)

Sue Grey moved, with a second by Kristine Chalifoux, to approve the following proposed policy and procedure. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

Director Judy Wiegand presented the proposed policy and procedure which represent the continued effort to update the District's Policy and Procedures Manual.

Procedure 710.14R DISCIPLINE – Substance Abuse (Secondary)

Procedure needed to be updated to correspond with the Student Code of Conduct.

Policy 630.06 Bilingual Education

This policy was revised to more clearly define and articulate the District's ongoing commitment to the education of English Language Learners/Limited English Proficient Students. This revision provides assurances to stakeholders about the integrity of the programs and the District's efforts to continuously review and strengthen these programs.

Academic Alternative Evening Academy

Nathaniel Banks moved, with a second by Sue Grey, to table and re-evaluate the Academic Alternative Evening Academy. The administration will bring back to the Board, at a future Board meeting, a proposal that includes a facility. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

Assistant Superintendent Michael McFarland presented the proposal for the Academic Alternative Evening Academy. The plan regarding the creation of an academic alternative school for Champaign Community Unit #4 students in grades 10-12 or age 16 is in response to the findings and recommendations found in the following documents or sources:

- Educational Equity Audit: Findings and Recommendations - June 30, 1998 (p.17 and Chapters 4, 7, and 8)
- Court Monitor's Report #1 and #2
- Champaign Unit #4 Strategic Plan (p. 25, item 2.5.1-2.5.10)
- Alternative School Education Plan for Champaign Community Unit #4 School District
- Recommendations of Alternative School Restructuring Task Force
- Consent Decree Collaboration Plan

The Academic Alternative Evening Academy will be designed to provide all students with educational choices that increase their opportunities for success. The District will develop and maintain alternative educational programs of high academic quality, based on the assumptions that high expectations for student achievement, access to a rigorous and age-appropriate curriculum, and frequent monitoring of student progress will result in a an increase in student achievement.

Staffing will consist of four content area teachers (math, science, English, and social studies), a coordinator, a counselor, career planner, an IT technician (on call), and a secretary. Classes will be taught by secondary certified teachers, and preference will be given to staff trained in Project-Based Learning and Differentiated Instruction. Staff members will take advantage of District staff development opportunities.

Estimated Costs:

Instructors/Counselor/Career Planner:	\$35,438
Benefits:	6,474
Plan and make-up time	9,828
Benefits	1,796
Secretary:	6,829
Benefits	1,754
IT Technician	6,829
Benefits	1,754
Materials:	10,000
Coordinator:	76,000
Benefits:	16,720
Food	2,000
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Projected Costs	\$175,422

Student attendance, assessments, progress reports, and graduation rates will measure the success of the program. An annual evaluation, as well as evaluation through the STEP process, will be completed. The administration requested Board approval of the Academic Alternative Evening Academy at an estimated cost of \$175,422 with implementation to begin January 2008.

Board members had a number of concerns regarding the proposal that was presented. The Board preferred a daytime program in a separate facility, a nutritious meal for the students, and the opportunity for students to participate in athletics and after-school programs. The Board was receptive to providing additional funding to meet their recommendations.

Resolution for Proposed 2007 Tax Levy (2008/2009 School Year) (Exhibit “C”)

Greg Novak moved, with a second by Arlene Blank, to adopt the “Resolution Regarding the Estimated Taxes Necessary to be Levied for 2007” and publication of the “Notice of Intent” to adopt the same. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

Chief Financial Officer Gene Logas provided the following information. The Truth-in-Taxation Act requires that when a school district’s proposed tax levy, as extended and less debt service, reflects an increase of more than 105% of the prior year’s extension, the school district must publish a notice of

such intent and hold a public hearing on the matter. The notice of proposed aggregate tax levy and the public hearing was provided to the public not more than 14 days or less than 7 days prior to approval by the Board of Education and was published, in a format prescribed by law, in a newspaper of general local circulation. The notice of such intent was printed in the *News-Gazette* on November 28, 2007.

The public hearing on the proposed tax levy will be held on Monday, December 10, 2007. The Certificate of Levy must be filed with the County Clerk on or before the last Tuesday in December.

Related cost of publishing the notice of increase in Tax Levy in the local newspaper was approximately \$800.00 and was within the amount budgeted for legal notices in the Education Fund. Approval of the levy in December will provide the maximum allowable receipt of local taxes under the tax cap in 2008-09 of \$72,944,953.

Selection of Demographer

Arlene Blank moved, with a second by Kristine Chalifoux, to approve McKibben/Cropper to provide demographic services. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

Chief Financial Officer Gene Logas presented the recommendation on the selection of a demographer. As you know, the District sent out eleven invitations to respond to our RFP for Demographic Services. Two firms responded; McKibben/Cropper and Applied Population Laboratory from the University of Wisconsin. A committee made up of Sally Scott, Nathaniel Banks, Scott MacAdam, Carol Ashley, Imani Bazzell and Superintendent Culver interviewed the two firms on October 18, 2007. Since that time, references were check and were very favorable. In addition, all committee members reviewed two samples from each firm. The amount budgeted for this item was \$35,000. McKibben/Cropper submitted a proposal for \$36,300 and Applied Population Laboratory submitted a proposal for \$36,000. On November 8th, the six member committee met to make their selection.

Consent Agenda

Sue Grey moved, with a second by Arlene Blank, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

The Board of Education approved the following Consent Agenda items:

Donations (Gift Certificates)

The Board of Education accepted the donation of gift certificates from Za's valued at \$7,500 for staff appreciation. This donation is in need of approval by the Board of Education as it is \$5,000 or more in value.

Grant – 2007/2008 Tepper Electric Arts Endowment Grant

The Board of Education approved the monetary awards totaling \$11,315.67 provided through the Tepper Electric Arts Endowment. This school year, 34 grant requests totaling \$30,010.67 were submitted. Of those grant requests, 20 monetary awards totaling \$11,315.67 will be provided through the Tepper Electric Arts Endowment. This endowment, funded by the Tepper Electric Supply Company, provides Unit #4 with an annual donation of \$10,000 for student activities and/or educational experiences that promote student exposure to and involvement in the fine arts. The carry-over from 2006-2007 school year is \$1,315.67. Including this year's grant total, the Tepper Electric Endowment has awarded grants totaling approximately \$200,000 over the past nineteen years.

On October 17, 2007, the selection committee met and reviewed applications for funding which teachers and administrators submitted. Members of the Tepper Review committee consisted of Edward and Nancy Tepper, George Stanhope, Director of Elementary Education, Trevor Nadrozny, Westview Elementary principal, Shauna Carey, fine arts teacher, and Marian Wyatt, fine arts teacher. A listing of the grants submitted and the amounts funded was shared. All grants are available for review upon request.

Grant – FY07 State School Library Grant

The Board of Education approved the proposed school library grant in the amount of \$6,634.50 with permission to submit the same to the Illinois State Library via Lincoln Trail Libraries System. A grant, intended for qualifying school libraries, has been included in the legislation for the Illinois Library System Act. The grant funds are being made available at seventy-five cents (\$.75) per capita based on the September 30, 2007 enrollment.

School districts must be members of a regional library system or meet the requirements and have applied for membership in a system. A qualified school library is one which has a centrally accessible and bibliographically organized library and has one employee whose primary duty is to serve as a librarian. Columbia Center Middle and High Schools do not meet the qualified school library criteria.

Based on the district's September 30, 2007 enrollment benchmark, the district is applying for \$6,634.50 (8846 x \$.75). The actual funding will depend on the number of school districts which apply for the funds. The funds will be used to purchase materials to support the District's balanced literacy initiative and to purchase reference materials. The grant covers all costs.

Central High School Trip to France

The Board of Education approved Central High School's request to travel to France. Debbie Black, Central High School's foreign language content area chair, plans to take a group of Central High School French students to Paris during spring break in March 2008. This intercultural learning experience will provide students with opportunities to experience situations that teachers cannot possibly create for them in the classroom. The invaluable occasions to interact with native speakers will lead to improvement in the students' communication skills and increased understanding of people. The visits to museums, monuments, and other places of interest will deepen their knowledge of French history and culture, as well as inculcate a passion for foreign language. Five adults, including two parents, will chaperone 15 students. Students will be responsible for their own funding. A substitute teacher, at a cost of \$75/day, will be needed for two days.

Extension of Independent Auditor Contract

The Board of Education approved a two-year extension of the auditor contract with Virchow Krause & Company. Three years ago, Interim Business Manager Lee Fabri recommended a three-year contract for auditing services with Virchow Krause & Company. The three-year agreement covered FY05, FY06 and FY07. As the contract has expired, administration recommends that we negotiate a two-year extension of their contract.

While it is in the Board's best interest to periodically switch auditing firms, the administration does not believe that this is the time. First, their knowledge of the District's financial records should allow us to negotiate a favorable extension. Second, with a change in auditing requirements as mandated by the

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the publication of eight new auditing standards, it would be best to continue to implement the new requirements, some of which were instituted in the audit of 2006-07, with the existing firm as opposed to a new one.

The audit fees for the last three years were \$18,000 in FY05, \$25,000 in FY06 and \$26,500 in FY07. It is anticipated that the auditing fee for 2007-08 could be substantially higher as the result of the new auditing standards. Again, starting the process of implementation of these new standards fresh from the start with a new firm will only drive the cost higher.

Minutes – September 17, 28 & 29, 2007 Board Meetings

The Board of Education approved the minutes as presented.

Bills & Treasurer’s Report (Exhibit “D”)

The Board of Education approved the Bills and Treasurer’s Report as presented.

Human Resource Changes (Exhibit “E”)

The Board of Education approved the leaves of absence, resignations, reassignments, and staffing allocations as presented.

Executive Session

Scott MacAdam moved, with a second by Greg Novak, to adjourn into *Closed Session* in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2c) to consider Personnel 120/2(c)(1), Student Discipline 120/2(c)(9) and Pending Litigation 120/2(c)(11) related to Johnson, et. al. v. Board of Education of Champaign Community Unit School District #4, Case No. 00-1349 (U.S.D.C. Central District of Illinois. The motion carried on roll call. Ayes 7. Nays 0.

The Board convened into *Closed Session* at 10:47 p.m.

Open Session

The Board convened into *Open Session* at 11:55 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Arlene Blank moved, with a second by Greg Novak, to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 p.m. The motion carried on voice vote.

Board approved: January 14, 2008

