

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 7:00PM on the 23rd day of March 2009.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Tim Shanahan, President, at 7:05PM. 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, Lisa Jay, Michelle Comitor, John Sonnenberg, Donna Gaidamak, Anne Hoffman, Tim Shanahan.

Public Comment period:

Debbie Cotton of 123 Hampton Place told the Board that she attended the February 23rd meeting about the changes in the Arts and Tech rotations. At that time she submitted a letter with questions. There has been no further communications from the administration or the Board since that letter. She wanted to know how the changes were communicated. She questioned where the new rooms will be constructed at Middle North. She has heard through the grapevine that the rooms will be constructed in the PE fitness center; which means PE would be in the lunchroom. She asked about staffing. She has heard that one teacher's position was eliminated, one teacher was transferred, and another will be added. Ms. Cotton stated that she thought our current staff was qualified. All of the communication is by word of mouth. Most of the parents do not know about the changes. She is concerned about the students already in the program. Her child will be expected to do a presentation on cooking or sewing next year, and she has had neither of those classes. Students are currently getting very little in the way of keyboarding, presentation skills, or Power Point. They need these skills in preparation for high school. Tim Shanahan asked her for a copy of her questions. She gave a copy directly to him.

Liza Pappano of 1291 Maidstone told the Board that she has many questions about the Spanish program at Townline that have not been answered. The big issue is the removal of choice at Townline. With the removal of Spanish we are basically back to geographic schools. When she asked Dr. Zook about the differences between Elementary North and Townline she was told that there really is "no difference." She was told by Dr. Zook that geographic schools are back on the table, but yet there has been no word on that to the parents. She wanted to know why there is secrecy. She wanted to know why parents don't get an opinion. She wanted to know why parents are not involved in the decisions that affect our children. We are being treated as if we do not matter. That is how all of us feel. Tim Shanahan commented that as far as the Board of Education is concerned geographic schools are not on the table.

Tony Fraboni of 1932 E. Byman Lane stated that Spanish is being removed because of qualitative observations. There are no notes that state that Spanish was a pilot program. He is very disappointed with how the changes were communicated. The Board is here to set policy and represent the community. He stated that he feels that the Board has failed in their duties. The community should be involved in the changes. The Board needs to hold the administration accountable. The communication should be consistent at all schools. Mr. Fraboni stated that he is glad to see that we are going to have a task force. The community needs to stay engaged, and the Board needs to be held accountable. The Board needs to hold the administration accountable. The administration needs to remember that they work for the Board and the community. He urged the community to hold the Board of Education accountable. We all need to work together.

Micki Froman of 1463 Butler told the Board that she is a teacher, and she grew up in Vernon Hills. She has had a conversation with Dr. Zook. Dr. Zook agreed with the studies that show that the earlier that a foreign language is taught the higher the test scores go up in all academic areas. The dual language program is failing. We are adding a new principal. She questioned why we do not take that money and put it into foreign language at all of the schools. We are not educating our children for the future. She has spoken with many parents, and none of them feel that Rosetta Stone is a viable option. Based on her feedback from Dr. Zook she believes that Dr. Zook is not interested in giving our children the best possible education. The Board is supposed to communicate with the community. She questioned why we were not told about the plans before they were implemented. She read the responsibilities of the Board and the administration from the policy. We have lost goodwill and confidence within the District. We are not getting our questions answered. The Board of Education needs to step up. We want answers, and we are not getting them.

David Oppenheim of 1584 N. Haig Point Lane told the Board that when he and his wife moved from the city they went out looking for the good schools. They decided that when they did not like what was going on with the schools that they would get involved. Now is the time for them to get involved. He is very disappointed with the Superintendent and the Board. The retention of teachers and curriculum issues are administrative issues. These changes could have been made internally. The Spanish is being removed because of the discontinuation of the IBO. Language is beneficial to all ages. He stated that he does not understand why it was offered only to IBO students. One of the reasons given for the removal of Spanish was because it prevented flexibility for some students. Dr. Oppenheim commented that he did not feel that was reason enough to remove the Spanish. We were told that it is an ineffective program, but we were not presented with any quantitative data, only qualitative. We should not rely on gut feelings. We are teaching our students that the antidote to failure is removal, and that is not a good precedent to set. Inequality between schools is a part of choice.

He stated that he does not feel that there are sufficient reasons to eliminate the Spanish. He stated that he feels that there is a hidden agenda. He understands financial constraints. He asked the administration and the Board to be open and honest with the community. He does not feel that Rosetta Stone is the right idea. We do not want to replace our teachers. There is no interaction with Rosetta Stone. Dr. Oppenheim told the Board that he is disappointed in how things were handled. He did not understand that the Spanish was a pilot program. When Spanish is eliminated at Townline the philosophy the school is based on changes as well. He stated that he is very disappointed with the Board of Education. The Board has the opportunity, the power, and the duty to take a stand. The superintendent is an employee. Her tenure should be a pilot program. The board members are entrusted by the community. There needs to be trust in that relationship.

Heidi Kramer of 250 Noble Circle stated that as a parent and taxpayer she is very disappointed with the Board of Education. She does not feel that the parents are being heard. Townline was the only school to not make AYP this year. She feels that with the removal of Spanish students will leave the school for another one. The kids need consistency. No parent is in favor of Rosetta Stone. As a pediatrician, she encourages playtime that is not sedentary. She voted for the referendum to build Townline School. She has committed her children to Townline next year. She is very disheartened that her voice is not being heard. She expects to be taken seriously. Tim Shanahan responded that we are listening and hearing. We are moving forward with the World Languages Committee.

Benita Haberman of 374 Danbury told the Board that she was at a lot of Board meetings last year for a different contentious issue. The main issue is communication. She knows of a parent who worked on the report card committee last year. All of his input and suggestions were ignored. He was made to feel irrelevant. The process needs to be open. There needs to be transparency. Our District is top heavy. She wanted to know why we do not use some of our extra administrator salaries for smaller classrooms and longer days. There is currently no keyboarding for our children. There is always the rush to change. We should pick our three top priorities and go with them. They need to be easily monitored and measurable.

A parent told the Board that he was educated in Taiwan. In his experience time tested methods work. Curriculum needs to be consistent and basic. Parents and the administration are not in harmony. This is not good for our students. The teachers play a large role. He questioned how they feel about the changes. We need to work together, open up a dialogue. The teachers and principals need to be on the same page. He stated that he is a big fan of languages. He speaks three languages. Students need languages. It does not necessarily have to be Spanish. He stated that we want to support the Board.

Jeff Bard asked, as question of parliamentary procedure, where we are going to discuss this issue. He questioned if it will be in "New Business" or "Unfinished Business."

Student and Staff Accomplishments, Recognitions:

Dr. Yomtoob told the audience as a clarification during the Public Comment section that he retires June 30th of this year.

Dr. Yomtoob told the Board that our eighth grade math team at Middle School North came in as one of the top 10. Anna Groh, Middle School North principal, added that they took first place in the Lake County Math Competition and ninth in the State. Russell Lee placed 18th out of 320 students. He has been accepted to a college prep boarding school and has received \$20K in scholarships for that school. She congratulated the Math Team and Russell Lee.

Staff Presentations:

Karen Olker and Lisa Cerauli gave a presentation on the Pioneer Update. Karen Olker told the Board that since the last update the pioneers have been working with Apple. Bruce Ahlborn, an Apple Distinguished Educator, has been to Hawthorn three to four times to work as a coach with the teachers. Lisa Cerauli showed the website that the teachers are using to share information with each other. Goals have been written. They highlighted teacher comments, student interviews, and student projects. Lisa Cerauli told the Board that they will continue to do walk-throughs and complete rubrics on the lessons observed. On April 8th and 9th the Apple staff will return to work with our pioneers. Individual planning and goals will be developed.

John Sonnenberg wanted to know about the standards for these projects for the students. Lisa Cerauli commented that we are building the projects around the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. She added that the Net standards are built in. John Sonnenberg stated that technology is moving rapidly. He questioned if the teachers are locked in. Lisa Cerauli reported that the teachers are able to reflect and adjust. The program is not static. We need to teach our students how to learn the new technology. John Sonnenberg asked about the Pioneer Program at the middle school level. Lisa Cerauli stated that it looks different. There are fewer teams, and they are more independent. They have less equipment, but are using the equipment in a more advanced way. John Sonnenberg asked about accountability. Lisa Cerauli stated that we are meeting with the teams again for their evidence and reflection. John Sonnenberg asked if we are going to do anything differently in the future.

Lisa Cerauli indicated that we are looking at professional development and other opportunities. Karen Olker added that we are trying to give teachers more planning time. John Sonnenberg stated that the challenge going forward is going to be the budget.

Donna Gaidamak wanted to know if there is a way to assess whether or not students are more engaged the old way or the new way. Lisa Cerauli stated that we have a rubric for engagement that we use during walk-throughs. Karen Olker reported that the kids are more self directed. Lisa Cerauli indicated that the teachers are using technology if it is enhancing the learning. Donna Gaidamak wanted to know if the students are retaining the information. Lisa Cerauli stated that student achievement tests will take a few years to complete. Donna Gaidamak asked about the plans for next year. Lisa Cerauli reported that we are planning now. She added that everyone is expected to integrate technology in the classroom. Michelle Comitor stated that she saw student ownership in the video clips. That is good. Lisa Jay wanted to know when we will see results. Lisa Cerauli responded at the end of this year. Jeff Bard added that it is important to hear how things are going.

Tim Shanahan suggested holding off on the Freshman Preparedness Survey results for the next meeting. John Sonnenberg moved to table the Freshmen Preparedness Survey until the next meeting. Anne Hoffman seconded the motion. The motion was carried by voice vote.

Consent Agenda:

Tim Shanahan presented the Consent Agenda. Jeff Bard moved to remove the release of the closed minutes due to lack of discussion and to approve the rest of the Consent Agenda. Donna Gaidamak seconded the motion. Donna Gaidamak asked about the changes to the calendar for next year. Dr. Yomtoob stated that there will be the same number of school days. Dr. Zook added that there will not be any early release days; which adds six full days to the calendar. Lisa Jay asked about the attendance holiday waiver. Dr. Yomtoob stated it is for Lincoln's Birthday and President's Day. Donna Gaidamak commented that she is glad to see the half days have been eliminated.

03/07.74 Board Minutes, regular session, 12/22/08

03/07.75 Board Minutes, COW session, 1/12/09

03/07.76 Board Minutes, regular session, 1/26/09

03/07.77 Board Minutes, COW session, 2/9/09

03/07.78 Board Minutes, regular session, 2/23/09

03/07.79 Board Minutes, COW session, 3/9/09

03/07.80 Expenditure Report, March

03/07.81 Financial Statements, February

03/07.82 Resolution to retain interest as interest, not principal

03/07.83 Public School Calendar for 2009/2010

03/07.84 Policy Changes: Feb. 2008, June 2008, Oct. 2008, Feb. 2009

03/07.85 Personnel Report

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Bard, Gaidamak, Jay, Comitor, Sonnenberg, Hoffman, Shanahan

Nays: None

Motion carried – 7 – 0

Action Items:

03/09.86 Resolution authorizing non-reemployment of part-time, non-tenured teachers Eileen Conway told the Board that this is an action that we need to take due to a reduction in work force. Both teachers are doing a great job. If a position opens up, we will consider them. Lisa Jay moved to recommend that the Board of Education approve the non-reemployment of the specified part-time, non-tenured teachers, as presented. Donna Gaidamak seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Jay, Gaidamak, Bard, Comitor, Sonnenberg, Hoffman, Shanahan

Nays: None

Motion carried – 7 – 0

03/09.87 Transportation Contract Increase

John Sonnenberg moved to table the Transportation Contract Increase. Tim Shanahan seconded the motion. The motion was carried by voice vote.

03/09.88 2010-2015 HEA Contract

Tim Shanahan stated that the HEA Teachers' Contract will expire at the end of the next school year. He announced that we have had successful negotiation of a five-year contract. It will run from 2010-2015. There were many challenges all of the representatives had to face. They included: the difficult economy, the "Superstep" increase, 20% step increase, and additional sick days. With the new guidelines mandated by the State we faced the possibility of incurring large penalties for the District. With everyone working together we were able to eliminate the "Superstep" and 20% step increase. The average increase is now 2.4% annually. The overall average increase is 4.29% with the step increase.

We looked at pay freezes, but pay freezes would have incurred \$1.5M in penalties that would have to be paid to the State. Tim Shanahan explained that we want to keep that money in our District. He thanked everyone involved for their collaboration and dedication to the process. John Sonnenberg moved to recommend that the Board of Education approve the HEA contract for the school years 2010 through 2015, as presented. Michelle Comitor seconded the motion.

John Sonnenberg thanked the HEA and the team. This is a strong statement that we care about our kids. The repercussion will be felt for the next six years. Anne Hoffman added that the administration and HEA worked to do away with sizable penalties. John Sonnenberg explained that the penalties would not have gone to the teachers or the District. Tim Shanahan added that we wanted to make sure that we could afford the contract. We are very financially sound.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Sonnenberg, Comitor, Bard, Jay, Gaidamak, Hoffman, Shanahan
Nays: None
Motion carried – 7 – 0

Dr. Yomtoob stated that it was a team effort. He thanked John Langlund and Katie Wagoner. John Langlund, president of HEA, thanked the Board and administration for their collaboration. We also appreciate the parents of the District and their comments. We can now focus on the kids until 2015. Tim Shanahan thanked Dr. Yomtoob, Dr. Zook, Eileen Conway, Alan Hahn, and our District lawyers.

Michelle Comitor moved for a five-minute recess. Tim Shanahan seconded the motion. The motion was carried by voice vote.

The meeting recessed at 8:50PM.

The meeting reconvened at 9:00PM

President's Report:

Tim Shanahan thanked the administration, the Board of Education, and HEA for all of their help during the contract negotiations. We should all be proud.

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Yomtoob thanked the Board for all of their work on the contract.

Discussion Items: None

Committee Reports:

Jeff Bard told the Board that he attended the SEDOL meeting. They are progressing on their construction. The bids have come in under budget. All funds not used will be refunded to the member districts. SEDOL is very active with obtaining grants to help support them. Jeff Bard held up two name tags for himself and Michelle Comitor, the other District committee member, which were made by SEDOL students. He added that SEDOL is working on the lease for the Lake Forest campus.

Unfinished Business:

Jeff Bard brought up the work with the community on the Spanish program at Townline. The Board has told the administration to take action with the World Languages Committee. He questioned if the Board needs to take any further action. Anne Hoffman commented that the Board has directed Dr. Zook to create an Ad Hoc Committee at the last business meeting. Dr. Zook stated that the committee will make a plan for what Spanish would look like at all of the buildings. Donna Gaidamak listed the people who would be on the committee. Jeff Bard asked about a motion for the committee. Tim Shanahan stated that the item has to be on the agenda to be voted on. Donna Gaidamak explained that Dr. Zook is proceeding with the committee. We might have to have a discussion with our attorney about the motions, consensus, and direction. Tim Shanahan stated that there was a consensus on the Ad Hoc Committee. Dr. Zook listed all of the members of the proposed World Languages Committee. It will consist of 26 to 30 people. Jeff Bard asked about a time frame. Dr. Zook explained that the process of selection of committee members will take place from April to June of 2009. The work will begin in the fall of 2009. She hopes to have a plan for spring 2010 with long term and short term goals that align with State standards, is for all students, promote respect for others, and have criteria for assessment. The evaluation will be done by an independent group, ECRA. The Board consensus on the World Languages Committee set up was unanimously in favor.

Michelle Comitor suggested that Spanish at Townline stay as status quo for next year. She stated that she still doesn't understand how the program is ineffective. She feels that we are throwing something together for Townline for next year. The community feels that the program is working; they do not understand how it is ineffective. The program should stand until there is a new plan. Dr. Yomtoob responded that direction we are going in is Rosetta Stone with a human element. Dr. Zook explained that there are new variables. We are now working with a 0 base budget. We are looking at the Rosetta Stone classroom programs and two other language programs. We also need to look at the master schedules.

Tim Shanahan asked for a consensus on status quo for Spanish at Townline for next year. Michelle Comitor voted for status quo. Anne Hoffman abstained. Donna Gaidamak stated that she is reluctant to spend \$100K on a program that is deemed ineffective by the administration. She has voiced that she will only consider Rosetta Stone if it is used in a scheduled period during the school day. Going forward she wants this to be a better process. Tim Shanahan stated that he believes that the current program is ineffective. We need to find something to replace it. Status quo is not going to get us anywhere. We need to move forward.

Dr. Zook commented that the budget became a concern just recently. We have limited resources. Our budget needs to be based on needs. We need to do what is in the best interest of our students. Jeff Bard thanked the Board for the discussion. He feels that there are growing pains with any new program. He is in favor of keeping the existing program during the year that the committee is working. He offered his services to help. Lisa Jay stated that "successful" does not have concrete methods to measure. Without hard data she is not confident saying that Spanish should be taken away. She feels the same way as Michelle Comitor.

She feels if it is hard to get everything in a day, and with the federal government mandate of RTI, then maybe those kids who need RTI time should be pulled out of the Spanish program so the children's time can be used to help them with their basic needs. John Sonnenberg stated that he does not agree with Michelle Comitor, but we do need to move to something better. That has not happened. He supports virtual learning with an interactive environment. The real issue is communication. We need to leave the door open to something at Townline. Eliminating the program does not address the other issues. Michelle Comitor explained that she keeps going back to the fact that, according to policy, the Board approves the curriculum. Dr. Zook commented that with a 0 based budget, we may determine that Spanish is a "want" and not a "need." Michelle Comitor responded that there is a possibility that there will be no Spanish at Townline next year with the exception of the Dual Language Program. Dr. Zook stated that could be true. Michelle Comitor indicated that with no clear vision she feels that things should stay the same.

Donna Gaidamak wanted to make it clear that she is not against virtual learning. She agrees with Dr. Kramer that our children get enough sedentary time as it is now. She has a bias toward teachers teaching. She does not feel that one school should have foreign language and not the rest. We have a fiduciary obligation to the taxpayers. Dr. Zook stated that she will continue to look at the schedules for an affordable option. She wants to look at this for all students. She appreciates the opportunity to talk to people in the District. She values community input. This is a difficult transition. She got a lot of input before making a decision. She told the audience that she apologizes if she has given the impression of having a hidden agenda or being arrogant. She would never harm a student, but it is also not possible to please all people 100% of the time. We need to be respectful of our limited resources. She encouraged people to contact her. She is proud of our District. Tim Shanahan stated that the direction is that Dr. Zook will look into other options for Spanish instruction and continue with the World Languages Task Force.

Lisa Jay left the meeting at 9:50PM.

Jeff Bard commented that a date for a decision on Spanish needs to be made. Dr. Zook stated that she will have a plan for next year by the end of this school year. She will keep the Board informed as things develop.

New Business: None

Announcements:

Anne Hoffman announced that she has new employment starting April 1st. She will be working for ED-RED, and educational advocacy for the northern Cook County and Lake County areas. For that reason she must resign from the Board of Education. She thanked everyone that she has worked with. She stated that she honored to be a part of the Board. It was an incredible privilege and journey. Tim Shanahan stated that he regrets, but accepts Anne Hoffman's resignation. Jeff Bard commented that he wishes her luck and success in her new position. Anne was his official mentor when he came on the Board, and she taught him a lot. Tim Shanahan moved to accept Anne Hoffman's resignation from the Board of Education. Michelle Comitor seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Shanahan, Comitor, Bard, Sonnenberg, Gaidamak,
Nays: None
Motion carried – 5 – 0

Donna Gaidamak commented that she came onto the Board with Anne Hoffman. The welcome was not warm. Anne Hoffman has been of great support. We have changed some of the process to make the transition onto the Board easier.

Michelle Comitor nominated Lisa Jay as secretary until the next election. John Sonnenberg seconded the motion. Anne Hoffman asked that the public not vote for her even though her name will be on the ballot next month. If she is elected, she will have to resign again and then the Board will have to appoint a new member.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Comitor, Sonnenberg, Bard, Gaidamak, Shanahan
Nays: None
Motion carried – 5 – 0

Dr. Yomtoob presented Anne Hoffman with a plague and eagle statue in appreciation of her work with the Board of Education.

Informational Items: None

Adjournment:

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

Michelle Comitor moved to adjourn the meeting. John Sonnenberg seconded the motion. Voice Vote: 5 ayes: 0 nays. Motion carried.

Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 10:05PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Limer

Timothy Shanahan, President

Lisa Jay, Secretary