



Board of Education

Racine Unified School District
3109 Mt. Pleasant Street, Racine, Wisconsin 53404

WORK SESSION MINUTES

Robert Wittke, Jr., President

Dennis Wiser, Vice President

Racine, Wisconsin

August 30, 2017

Robert Wittke, Jr., President of the Board of Education of the Racine Unified School District of Racine County, Wisconsin, called to order a Board Work Session at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 30, 2017.

The following Board members were present: Michelle Duchow, Michael Frontier, Matthew Hanser, John Heckenlively, Steven Hooper, Julie L. McKenna, Dennis Wiser, and Robert Wittke, Jr. Absent: Brian O'Connell.

Also present: Lolli Haws, Superintendent; Eric Gallien, Deputy Superintendent; Marc Duff, Chief Financial Officer; Dave Hazen, Chief of Operations; Rosalie Daca, Chief Academic Officer; Julie Landry, Chief of Human Resources; Stacy Tapp, Chief of Communications and Community Engagement; Tim Peltz, Chief Information Officer; and Elizabeth Tobias, Recording Secretary.

Mr. Wittke made opening comments regarding to the Omnibus Motion that was placed into the state budget by the Joint Finance Committee on Monday of this week. Everyone should realize this is a very serious issue for the community and District.

Mr. Jeff Pertl, Senior Policy Advisor from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, explained the Opportunity Schools Partnership Program (OSPP) timeline to the Board via conference call. The OSPP was designed as an intervention and was created for the 2015-17 state budget. The Omnibus Motion fundamentally does the following: 1) allows the implementation of OSPP to be delayed by one year, should the District be identified and certified by the Department of Administration (DOA) as being in compliance with Act 10; and 2) creates an entirely new provision that did not exist before, specific to Racine, that would allow for the creation of a new school district by villages (secession).

Discussion and Questions

- It seems those voting on the new district would only be members of the village that may want to leave. The City of Racine would have no say. Are there any safeguards against a village having all of the assets and the city left with all of the liability? (Only the voting members of the new school area would be able to vote, not the City of Racine. This is a very complicated process, but there will be a share between assets and liabilities between both the new school district and RUSD.)
- What would be an example of a financial liabilities the new district would be responsible for? (This would include pension fund, debt service, outstanding loans, etc. All of the debt would have to be allocated proportionately. This would be dependent on the relative ratio of taxable property, not the land value.)

- Is there any language within the DPI statutes about creating disproportionality around race or poverty to help ensure we don't end up with disproportionate districts? (DPI has historically had programs like Chapter 220, which promotes integration. Throughout the country, much of the litigation around this is happening at the federal level.)
- What happens to the OSPP process if there is litigation? (A lawyer would have to file an injunction with the court in order to halt the process pending the outcome of the litigation.)
- The District is represented on the Joint Review Board, which deals with Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) and Tax Incremental Districts (TID) and many exist in this community. If they separate the school district out, which in many cases is the majority contributor to TIF and TID, the funding would not be available to the outlying areas. This would create complications, especially with Foxconn possibly coming to the area. Has anyone thought of that in the legislature or is it an unintended consequence of the OSPP? (We are not sure if this was addressed or talked about.)
- The legislature could adjust the law during the time of litigation to deal with any issue they see fit, correct? (Yes. Traditionally after a budget there is often something called a trailer bill, which goes back and fixes things, but because the timeline is so tight, it will need to go into effect due to the October 15 determination date.)

Dr. Haws gave an update of what administration has been doing since the Omnibus Motion was received. The Department of Administration (DOA) has to review the District's handbook and say that it is satisfied in terms of being compliant with Act 10. The District must also improve student achievement and report card. Administration has been working very hard with DPI to make sure all data is accurate for the report card.

Continued Discussion and Questions

- When will the Board know the status on the handbook? (The Joint Finance Committee meets on Monday, would suggest the Board meet early next week to vote on the handbook.)
- Discussion on proposed resolution from the Board to legislature.
- Are all district employee handbooks required to be submitted to DOA for review? (No, not at this time.) Is it fair to say what is proposed in the Omnibus Motion a reaction to the Board's action last month? (Cannot say for certain.)
- Discussion on talking points document shared with the Board. Perhaps these points could be placed into the resolution. The Board needs to reaffirm they are willing to do what it takes to get the District compliant. The Board needs to make sure that we are all on one page when speaking to elected officials – one voice. Consensus amongst Board members to send out a resolution with everyone's name at the bottom.

Next Steps

- If there are any other questions, please contact the Board President or Dr. Haws.
- The Board President and administration will continue to work on talking with individuals and elected officials over the next few days.
- The talking points/resolution will be send to legislators.
- A special business meeting may be held next week to vote on the proposed employee handbook.

Mr. Hanser moved, Mr. Heckenlively seconded, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Motion passed and the session ended at 8:48 p.m.