



Racine Unified School District
2220 Northwestern Avenue, Racine, Wisconsin 53404-2597

RACINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

WORK SESSION

William S. Van Atta, President

Gretchen L. Warner, Clerk

Racine, Wisconsin

March 15, 2012

A Special Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Racine Unified School District of Racine County, Wisconsin began at 5:32 p.m. on Thursday, March 15, 2012, with the following members present: Pamala Handrow (via conference call), Melvin Hargrove, Julie L. McKenna, Don J. Nielsen (via conference call), Julie McKenna (arrived at 6:14 p.m.), Kim Plache, William S. Van Atta, and Dennis Wisner. Absent: Susan F. Kutz, Gretchen L. Warner.

Also present: Ann Laing, Superintendent of Schools; Steve Hejnal, Executive Director, Human Resources; Dave Hazen, Chief Financial Officer; Marc Duff, Budget Manager; Patrick Starcken, Supervisor, Transportation; and Darlene Gallup, Executive Assistant.

The purpose of the meeting was a work session. The subject of the work session was:

- 1) Discussion on Redistricting
- 2) Public Comments

No action was taken by the Board.

Dr. Laing reviewed the information and data which she brought forward to the Board of Education to assist them in their deliberations about sibling preference and redistricting. The following major information points were presented by administration:

1) Sibling Preference

Sibling Preference (Ann Laing)

- Administrative Regulation 5127.1a (Desegregation – Integration) Review
“All magnet school principals are directed to engage in activities designed to enhance the recruitment of minority students to their schools.”
- Administrative Regulation 5127.24 (Magnet School Enrollment) Review
“Preference will be given to incoming kindergarten siblings of students continuing through fourth grade. At Jefferson Lighthouse Elementary School, preference will also be given to siblings of those students presently enrolled district-wide in the gifted and talented program.”
- Enrollment and racial balance statistics (Bull Fine Arts, Jefferson, Red Apple)
 - Magnet School Enrollment Procedures and Demographics
 - RUSD is out of balance at Jefferson Lighthouse only

Recommendation by administration is to not act on eliminating sibling preference because administration believes they can work with the principals to insure a population balance is met for compliance in all three magnet schools through use of the processes currently used at Bull Fine Arts and Red Apple.

Ms. Plache asked that this be reviewed again at a Board business meeting prior to the beginning of the new school year to make sure everything is working appropriately in keeping an appropriate balance.

Administration provided data and information regarding the following major points involved in the redistricting issue. This information is included in the packet provided to the Board of Education and the audience present at this work session.

- 1) **Budget Supplement (Marc Duff)**
- 2) **Staffing (Steve Hejnal)**
- 3) **Budget Overview (Dave Hazen)**
- 4) **Transition to Schools (Jeff Weiss)**
- 5) **Meeting the North Star (Ann Laing)**
- 6) **Discussion (Board of Education)**

The Board discussed the information provided this evening. Comments, questions and concerns included:

- What ideas is administration talking about for meeting the remaining budget deficit? (Possibly have further staff reductions; already have reduced transportation costs, lowered consulting fees, possibly an additional round of staffing, finding ways to make savings sustainable, etc.)
- Requested – A rough handle on total number of students moved disaggregated by ethnicity and socio economic status.
- Requested - What will it cost to close Goodland and not reopen it as an EC center?
- Requested - An estimate of the class sizes if we do the redistricting with the understanding it may differ from the following year?
- Concern - Expenditures in health benefits – not comfortable about having a \$10M sitting in the fund. Any ongoing dialog about that with the unions? (This is up to the Board of Adjustments. Right now, it is an unknown.)
- Request - Page 4 of the Budget Supplement shows how the Wind Point and Goodland spread of students would be but does not include ethnicity information.
- Request - 5 year budget projection – should be done now with this redistricting information prior to the vote

2) **Public Comments**

Members of the public addressed the Board of Education regarding the following concerns:

Joanne Balestieri - Spoke regarding concerns on early childhood program moves and services for students with disabilities

Jeff Longsine – Spoke regarding concerns on closing Goodland School

Jean Wasik – Spoke in opposition of closing Goodland and in favor of making it a STEAM school

Sonali Knotek – Spoke regarding concerns on closing Goodland School

Pete Knotek – Spoke regarding concerns about the need for consistent standards across the district for decisions on budget reductions, redistricting, and school closings

Kathy Hovorka – Spoke regarding concerns about closing Goodland

Derrick Hovorka – Spoke regarding concerns about closing Goodland

Carey Singsank – Spoke in favor of sibling preference retention and opposition to the redistricting plan; budget concerns; transportation cost concerns.

Kristen Kaprelian – Spoke in favor of the sibling preference retention.

Ruth Ann Smithers – Spoke in favor of the sibling preference retention and concerns about redistricting only because of the two school closings rather than a more complete redistrict.

Rebecca Sorenson – Spoke in favor of the sibling preference retention and concerns about the redistricting affect on Red Apple and education across the District

Brian Dey – Spoke regarding concerns on closing Wind Point and the need to change boundaries around schools and consider additional redistricting ideas

Kelly Highman – Spoke regarding concerns about expanding the Red Apple program and concerns about creating more STEAM schools.

Mr. Van Atta talked about the importance of everyone's input and the difficult decision to be made.

The work session was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.