

**Meeting of the School Board
David Douglas School District No. 40
March 19, 2009**

The regular meeting of the David Douglas School Board was held on Thursday, March 19, 2009, at 7:00pm in the Board Room of the David Douglas School District Administration Building, located at 1500 SE 130th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97233.

School Board Members present were:

Frieda Christopher, Board Chair	
Dawn Barberis	Annette Mattson
Mike Centoni	Mike Price
Donn Gardner	

Also present were Barbara Rommel, Superintendent/Clerk; and Gail Hunter, Board Secretary.

The agenda included consideration of the following:

Call to Order / Flag Salute

Board Member Reports – Mike Centoni enjoyed listening to the discussion at the Community Forum on March 12. High school conferences are being held tonight. Mr. Centoni and Mr. Gardner visited with parents, students and teachers. Annette Mattson attended the Johnson Creek Water Shed Council Cleanup on March 14th, which she said provided a good opportunity for community service as well as a chance to educate members of the public about school funding. She also attended Rod Monroe’s Town Hall meeting, which provided conversation about proposed ESD consolidations; the MAX open house, which featured information about 122nd and 148th Avenue station changes; and the dedication of the East Portland Community Center swimming pool, at which the District was acknowledged for the exchange of land that made that facility possible. Ms. Mattson said High School Assistant Principal Elise Guest did an excellent job as a panelist at the Oregon Diploma Summit in Salem on Tuesday. Several of our high school students also participated. Dawn Barberis attended Ventura Park’s 50th anniversary luncheon, which honored past and “future” principals, represented by student winners of an essay contest. Board Chair Christopher reported that Educational Foundation discussions are focused on selecting a fundraising “bell ringer” for this spring, and preparation of a new brochure. Bookmarks are also being produced which will be distributed to our school libraries, as well as the Midland Library, to increase awareness of Foundation activities. Ms. Christopher was pleased to see so many people using the East Portland Community Center when she and other members of the Opportunity Gateway task force received a tour of the facility. Discussions are continuing on the Gateway Green park project being planned for the landlocked area between the I-205 and I-84 freeways. The Friends of Gateway Green has been formed to pursue potential grants related to the park’s focus on bicycling and walking. ODOT is being very supportive of this effort to create a major regional park. The Board Chair also attended a meeting of the East County Chamber of Commerce along with Ms. Mattson, to hear a presentation by Jessica Adamson from Senator Merkley’s office, explaining the federal stimulus package.

Student Body President’s Report – Stephanie Lutz was pleased to announce that three David Douglas High School seniors have been named National Merit Scholars. They are Tyler Short, Wyatt Chan, and Amanda Abbott. Linda Nguyen has been selected as this year’s Rose Festival princess from David Douglas. Campaigns for ASB officers kicked off this week. In keeping with holding this year’s event at the zoo, the theme for this year’s Prom will be “Where the Wild Things Are”.

Superintendent's Report – The superintendent thanked the David Douglas Percussion Ensemble, and Music Teacher Tom Mueller, for their performance before the board meeting, in honor of Music in our Schools Month. Cherie-Anne May reported on music events district-wide, highlighting the 16 performances being held over 16 days in March, featuring 1,530 students. She thanked board members for their unceasing support of music in our schools.

Superintendent Rommel remarked that she has heard from several people about how impressed they were by the outstanding contribution our high students made to the discussions at the Oregon Diploma Summit. 19 of our students attended the event. Special Education students from Alice Ott Middle School have raised \$341 selling Italian sodas as a benefit for the Oregon Food Bank. They also collected 500 pounds of food. The Tams are competing in the State Dance & Drill competition this weekend. The superintendent was pleased to announce that 121 David Douglas High School students earned a 4.0 GPA during the last grading period. 240 students had perfect attendance. She attended Rod Monroe's Town Hall last Saturday, which had a respectable turnout. Another Town Hall will be held Sunday, March 22 at Midland Library, 2-4pm, hosted by Jefferson Smith and Rod Monroe. Topics for the meeting will include transportation and transit and safety issues.

The Board Chair announced that Item #8, Russellville Contract Modification, has been pulled from tonight's agenda and will be presented at a future meeting.

Report from Facilities / Enrollment Task Force – Mike Stout reported that the Board requested last August that a task force be formed to consider possible responses to address the District's continuing enrollment growth and the related pressure on our facilities. Meetings began in October with the presentation of background information about the district and review of the report from Innovative Partnerships. Subcommittees were formed to focus on four areas: capital solutions, policy solutions, scheduling solutions, and facilities usage solutions. Each group brainstormed, then used the SWOT process to narrow their list of recommendations by analyzing each for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Reporting for the Policy Considerations subcommittee, Dan McCue said this group reviewed four possible solutions. Bussing students to less crowded schools doesn't solve problem as all of our schools are crowded. Reinstating Grade 6 at some elementary schools comes up against capacity issues; restricting approval of inter-district transfers into the district would not have a significant impact on enrollment and would result in loss of revenue. The group eventually narrowed their recommendations to one – considering a return to half-day kindergarten. From a purely practical standpoint, this change could make 20 additional classrooms available at the elementary buildings. It was noted that disadvantaged students benefit most from an all day program, and the suggestion received a very negative response at the Community Forum.

Charles Rynerson, parent of students at Menlo Park and Floyd Light, reported for the Facilities Usage Group. They identified the two most immediate needs as classroom space at Alice Ott and the need for additional kindergarten classrooms, many of which are currently at North Powelhurst. Recommendations for 2009-10 included minor boundary changes to move some neighborhoods from AO to RR (about a 20 student shift per grade level); moving preschool and possibly day care from NP to free up space for additional kindergarten classes, and considering use of modular classrooms at AOMS to temporarily locate programs or sixth grade classes.

Recommendations for two to five years from now included moving District Office to free up space for high school classrooms and provide a staging area for Alice Ott students during expansion; adding a two story wing at Alice Ott Middle School; adding elementary capacity by expanding Earl Boyles Elementary; and considering creating a permanent kindergarten center if we are unable to build a

new elementary school. It was also suggested that the board consider using modular classrooms where needed.

Patti Walker, parent of students at Cherry Park, Ron Russell and the High School, reported on behalf of the subcommittee considering Scheduling Solutions. They found that double shifting or using a flexible schedule modeled on colleges at the high school were not practical due to sports and activity schedules and the impact on families with students at other levels. A year-around schedule district-wide was seen as the best alternative to the current model, although it would require a lengthy implementation period and would not relieve current overcrowding.

Christine Fitch, Gilbert Park parent, reported on Capital Considerations. It was felt that another bond measure was insupportable. They recommended study of the district-owned inventory of land and buildings that could be sold or leased to generate income. It was recommended that the district research and pursue all possible grants available for capital improvements. The district's grant writer provided the committee with a list of possible opportunities. Partnering with other organizations to meet mutual goals would also be a benefit.

In summary, the task force said the current practice of providing all day kindergarten may need to be reevaluated. Additional space at Alice Ott could be provided immediately with a minor boundary change; and moving preschool and possibly day care from North Powelhurst would open up additional kindergarten classrooms. Modular classrooms would provide flexibility and the district office should be relocated in the next two to five years. Mr. Stout said there are no easy answers; the subcommittees started with 33 ideas, and feel they have provided several practical recommendations including continuing facilities planning.

It was mentioned that TriMet and the City of Portland are looking for a partner to create office space on the corner of 122nd and Burnside to optimize use of that space. That project could provide a potential partnership opportunity. Early Head Start and Head Start are being awarded a portion of federal stimulus money for adding infrastructure, another partnership opportunity. There are also grant opportunities tied to sustainable construction. Mr. Stout said that Gladstone School District has opened a new Kindergarten Center, partnering with Head Start and other social service agencies. He will be touring that facility.

The Board Chair thanked members of the task force for an excellent report and for all their time and thoughtful discussions. Mr. Stout said they have been wonderful people to work with, and would like to continue to be involved.

Workshop: Facilities and Enrollment Discussion – Chair Christopher opened up an informal discussion of the task force's recommendations and other thoughts regarding facilities and enrollment.

It was suggested that short term options be the first area of focus going into budget discussions. Short term options recommended for further consideration included making the entire North Powellhurst site available for additional kindergarten classes by relocating all other programs from that building. The response was also favorable to investigating a minor boundary adjustment to permit some students currently attending Alice Ott MS to attend Ron Russell MS, which would also permit all of Lincoln Park's students to proceed to Ron Russell, rather than the current situation which splits the school's fifth graders between those middle schools. The change is projected to increase each of Ron Russell's grade levels by 20 students per year over the next couple of years. It would provide temporary breathing room at Alice Ott while a future wing of classrooms there is considered. Information was requested on the costs of each of these recommendations as the discussion continues at the March 31 board budget workshop.

It was noted that the teen parent program needs to be sited near the high school. Mr. Stout said there has been discussion regarding the idea of buying a house between North Powellhurst and the high school for the preschool and teen parent programs.

Looking a few years out, there was discussion regarding the possibilities for relocating the district offices. Partnerships with other agencies and developers provide some flexible options in several locations around the district, in both the immediate and long term. Superintendent Rommel said that given the economic situation, opportunities will increase in terms of available property. She said she expects that LUBA will issue its ruling regarding the Deardorff property very soon, possibly as early as month's end. If we are able to build with urban renewal money, that project would provide a 600-student school. A question was asked about possible next steps for opponents, if LUBA determines that the City's arguments are valid. Superintendent Rommel said they could pursue their opposition through the courts. Funds have sometimes been made available temporarily through the City for urban renewal projects. Information was requested from the district's architect regarding what's needed at North Powellhurst as well as preliminary costs on a classroom wing at Alice Ott. Estimated costs and a sample timeline for modular classrooms were also requested.

Audience Participation / Break – Board Chair Christopher opened the meeting for public comment. As there were no remarks from the audience, she declared a brief recess. The meeting was reconvened.

Superintendent Selection Criteria Recommendations – Board Chair Christopher Frieda introduced this agenda item, saying a public review of community recommendations regarding the criteria for a superintendent search is required before board members continue the discussion during this evening's Executive Session. Superintendent Rommel presented a vision statement regarding selection of a new superintendent: The Superintendent of David Douglas School District possesses the qualities, leadership abilities, and skills to ensure our students become productive citizens of the 21st Century. Objectives include engaging the community in articulating leadership priorities, identifying a process for selection, establishing a timeline for succession, and allowing for a seamless transition.

To engage the community in setting criteria, a web-based survey was put in place to generate responses from parents, staff, students and district residents and local business people. Articles about the survey were highlighted in school newsletters and in the David Douglas News which was mailed to every household in the district. Information has also gone out via the key communicator network and has been shared by board members as they have engaged with community groups. A Community Forum was held on March 12, facilitated by private consultant Carol Turner.

Characteristics identified as "must haves" during the community forum included high integrity, a leader who is visionary, proactive, and charismatic, a person who is an exceptional communicator and listener, and one who is transparent in focus on district interests. Also identified as important were experience in multicultural, diverse settings; in urban settings; in closing the achievement gap; as a school principal; and in understanding finances. Input was split on whether it was important that the new superintendent live within district boundaries. Political leadership was another desirable characteristic.

Responses to the web survey were also reviewed, 229 of which had been received by today. The web survey will continue to be accessible through the end of Spring Break. Under Essential Characteristics, trustworthiness was identified as the highest priority, followed by a strong commitment to students and staff, always doing what's best for students, strong leadership skills, an understanding of school funding, and strong listening skills.

Essential priorities were identified by survey respondents as the ability to manage finances responsibly, hire excellent principals and administrators, ensure student safety, provide support for teachers and staff, to prepare students to succeed at college or work after high school, maintain a positive relationship with labor unions, to work well with the school board, and to reduce class size.

It was noted that responses received to the survey, whether staff or parents or community members, all shared very similar ratings and priorities. Experience with diversity was mentioned several times during the community forum, and board members recognized that as increasingly important.

Chair Christopher reviewed next steps, saying that the board would vote to determine specific criteria at a board meeting in April. She said that the suggestions from both the survey and the forum were all valid. Obviously, it would be difficult to find one person with all of the suggested attributes, but those core values certainly will be required. Selection priorities to be determined will include the level of required education, types of previous experience, whether the new superintendent must live in David Douglas School District, and whether in-district experience will be required. Superintendent Rommel said, in reviewing the timeline used by North Clackamas, beginning the search in September gives adequate time to complete a thorough process and make an announcement next spring.

Personnel Recommendations – Mr. Centoni made a motion to approve the Personnel Recommendations as presented, seconded by Mr. Price. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Other Business / Future Agenda Items – Mr. Centoni said that every four years, OSAA and its 250 member high schools reclassify and redistrict. This year's decision should be announced before December, and could be as early as the end of the school year. He requested periodic updates on discussions and how they might impact our high school athletic program, as boards and parents are sometimes left out of the process. Chair Christopher said the legislature has presented a bill regarding disclosure requirements for educational employers where teachers have been dismissed. A companion bill requires districts to contact at least three prior school district employers for reference checks. She asked whether the reference check requirements go beyond what we are currently doing. Susan Summers said we currently check three prior employers, but have not necessarily contacted three different school districts. It was noted that few of our finalist candidates have experience with multiple districts.

Adjournment – There being no other business, Board Chair Christopher announced that the Board would reconvene in Executive Session immediately following the regular meeting, in accordance with ORS 192.660 (2)(a) Employment. She then declared the regular meeting adjourned.



Frieda Christopher, Board Chair



Barbara Rommel, Superintendent / Clerk