

**Meeting of the School Board
David Douglas School District No. 40
June 17, 2010**

A special meeting of the David Douglas School Board was held on Thursday, June 17, 2010, 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:

	Dawn Barberis, Board Chair	
Mike Centoni		Annette Mattson
Frieda Christopher		Mike Price
Donn Gardner		Cheryl Scarcelli Ancheta (by telephone)

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

The agenda included consideration of the following:

Call to Order / Flag Salute

Board Member Reports – Frieda Christopher reported that meetings of the Parks Bureau will be held next Tuesday, June 22, from 6-8pm on the site of the Gateway area park on Halsey Street, then the next day at the East Portland Community Center. A future meeting will be held in November. Annette Mattson participated in the OSBA retreat last weekend. Highlights included an extensive report from ODE by Duncan Wyse on online education, and a session on racial inequity timelines. She reported that recommendations from the 122nd Avenue citizens working group will be released in August. Ms. Mattson announced that she has been appointed to the Lents Urban Renewal Advisory Commission, noting that half of that URA is within David Douglas boundaries. The group has received \$250,000 in planning funding.

Superintendent's Report – Barbara Kienle announced that the summer nutrition program has been expanded to three sites this summer. Earl Boyles Elementary, Floyd Light and Alice Ott Middle Schools will serve breakfast and lunch for all comers up to age 18. Parents will also be served at Earl Boyles and Floyd Light. Sun School sites at Mill Park, Gilbert Park and Gilbert Heights will also be serving 4-6 weeks of summer breakfast and lunch during the Sun program. The superintendent was pleased to announce that *Education Week* named David Douglas High School as an "urban overachiever", one of 21 high schools in the nation recognized for having students score significantly higher on performance testing than expected, given their demographics.

Recommendations from Budget & Finance Subcommittee – Superintendent Rommel said that on May 27, the Governor announced that state funding would be reduced due to the revenue forecast, resulting in across the board cuts of 9% statewide. Our district's share of that funding reduction is \$4.4million. We have already been in a deficit spending situation, where revenue has been less than expenditures. Even after making over \$7million in cuts, reflected in the approved and adopted budget, our revenues will need to be reduced by another \$4.4million. The superintendent noted that every single program and every single person in David Douglas is there to provide the very best for our students. Any reductions at this point are not "fat"; we will be cutting close to the bone. The Budget & Finance committee met on June 9 to discuss how to respond to the funding reduction. After brainstorming a range of options, the committee made these recommendations to address the anticipated \$4.4M shortfall:

1. Reduce the School Stabilization Fund by \$1.2M (half the amount in that fund)
2. Reduce staffing by \$2.2M
 - Assistant Superintendent Position
 - Licensed staff, using an across the board formula, K-12, resulting in about 20 to 25 positions
 - Librarians to half-time, resulting in about 6.5 positions
 - One School Psychologist position
 - Custodial support by 3.4 FTE
3. Do not reallocate the \$1M to support Kindergarten Assistant positions and Middle School competitive sports.

Superintendent Rommel said this is sad news to bring to the Board for their input, but the sooner we know what the Board determines, the better.

Ms. Christopher said she very much appreciated every email she received, and was particularly appreciative of those which tried to come up with solutions. She said she was part of the budget committee discussion of the second tier of cuts, where the group discussed two lists, brainstormed and identified priorities. They set aside furlough days and step freezes because both of those items need to be bargained. She said this list of recommendations involves people, and that nobody wants to lay off people. The committee tried to give buildings as much flexibility as possible in determining staff reductions. She said the Early Retirement benefit was inadequately funded in the past, and costs about \$1million a year to pay for benefits. The Board decided earlier to protect that fund, as only 6-7 years are funded at this time. Funding this program adequately protects the Board's commitment to our retired staff.

Ms. Mattson also expressed appreciation for the emails she received, saying she has read them all. She said she appreciated the well thought out reasoning in supporting the value of our librarians to our students and staff.

Audience Participation – Chair Barberis opened the meeting for public comment, saying that each speaker would be allocated two minutes.

Martha Dechard, David Douglas High School Librarian, advocated for keeping librarians at full time, saying libraries are the heart of our district. Librarians provide access and instruction in busy classrooms serving students and staff at all hours of the day. The high school library is busy from 7:30am – 6pm. She said without full time licensed highly qualified school librarians, our test scores will suffer. The district has invested in programs which librarians are specifically trained to use. In 2009, HB2586 added a new element to continuous improvement plans which include goals to develop a strong library program. We already have that. She said the librarians are an invaluable resource and our students and staff could not continue without full time professional librarians

Lisa Just, Floyd Light Middle School Instructional Coach, said she has been reassigned to be the High School Librarian next year. She said recommended cuts have impacted her very personally as a parent and an employee. Her twins will begin kindergarten next fall at North Powellhurst, and she said she is very apprehensive not to have kindergarten assistants. She said when her position as instructional coach was eliminated, she did not speak up as she thought at least she'd have a full time job. Now her position is being recommended as half time. She asked whether the benefits of various programs are listed on the budget. Schools have higher test scores as the result of Instructional Coaches and full time librarians. She said she sees the connection between cutting reading coaches last year and the decline in writing scores.

Katie O'Dell, Youth Services Director, Multnomah County Libraries, said when she heard about the proposed cuts she knew she wanted to be here, as the County Library has worked collaboratively with the district librarians for over a decade, creating many professional and personal relationships. She said the first group to sign on to joint projects is David Douglas. This was the first district in the county to sign up all students for the summer reading program. She said Riverdale reduced their library/media specialist to half time and it decimated their program. She said that students' research skills were affected, as well as test scores.

Vickie Garvin, North Clackamas sixth grader, said she spent 4th and 5th grade at Mill Park. She compared services at Mill Park and at North Clackamas, where an instructional assistant mans the library. She said she received personal help in doing research and in finding pleasure books from Ms. Wheelbarger. She loved to be in the Mill Park library. She said this year, the assistant has no excitement about being a librarian, and when she asks for help, the assistant tells her to look on the computer. She no longer enjoys the library and only goes there when she has to.

Deb Wheelbarger, Mill Park Library/Media Specialist, said librarians are the very foundation of this district, the pump which drives the heart of the school, with the skills to support both students and staff. The library provides a safe place for kids that don't fit in other places, for kids that need a really smart, caring adult to nurture them to success. Our 14 librarians have a combined total of nearly 200 years of service, and at least one Masters Degree each. She said with the district's operating costs at about \$300,000 a day, she wanted to know if the board is willing to discuss trading days for loss of jobs. Ms. Christopher said "Yes."

Kim Lyons, Mill Park Teacher, said she is completing her 20th year in David Douglas, and her school has been blessed with fantastic librarians. She said a major task of librarians is to promote reading as a habit, to teach students about great books for their reading pleasure, and to empower them to be life long readers. Our population doesn't have those opportunities outside of school. She said student's exposure to the library is not limited to class sessions; many students become library helpers and library leaders. She said she knows we are in financial need, but there has to be somewhere else to trim costs. Librarians are necessary, foremost for our students.

MaryAnn Glazebrook, David Douglas High School Clerical Assistant, shared thoughts on the impact of being bumped from her current assignment, as a result of eliminating positions. She has worked four years at the high school, three of those as a permanent, full time employee. She said she was recently bumped to the position of ESL assistant at an elementary building and was reduced to 5 hours per day, a loss of 60 hours per month. She said she doesn't know how she'll make it with this reduction in her income, and wants very much to remain in this district as a full time employee

Sharon Golden, district resident and private Suzuki violin teacher, said she has been volunteering in our elementary schools and has great respect for this district. She has also worked as a sub teacher, and has met very dedicated people on the staff, all the way to the board level. She said cuts are not the board's fault, this is the state's fault. She said she wants somebody with power to go on television to let the public know where the fault truly lies.

Amber Cowgill, Floyd Light Middle School Teacher, said her students were very upset to hear about the proposed cuts. She shared some remarks from letters written by her students, highlighting the prominent role the librarian plays in their schooling.

Danette Flanagan, district parent of students at Mill Park and Floyd Light, said while she appreciates the difficult choices the board must make, a cost benefit analysis would support the critical role of the library to our educational institutions. Budget decisions should be made with the priority to serve the greatest number of students. Librarians help every student; other programs only affect small groups

of students. She said program cuts should be those affecting the fewest number of students, not the librarians.

Jennifer Clary, Gilbert Heights Teacher, remarked on how other districts are handling their cuts, noting that West Linn/Wilsonville maintains full time librarians. She said it is dangerous to remove these opportunities from socially and economically challenged students, and asked that our librarians be kept full time.

Bob Gray, DDEA President and David Douglas High School French Teacher, said that two years ago, Oregon Trail School District offered incentive retirements to those who wanted to leave, and by doing so were able to have no reductions in their staff. He said DDEA offered the district the same incentive as a creative way to save jobs. Having people retire at the highest end of the salary schedule would be a savings, so DDEA offered that solution along with the use of reserves. He asked board members to consider making necessary cuts away from the classroom, remarking that libraries, gyms, and music rooms are classrooms.

Bill McDonald, Floyd Light Middle School Teacher, said he knows the board has tough choices to make, but he asked that for every cut the board considers, to ask if this is what's best for kids. He said he can't see how this cut is best for kids.

Greg Becker, OSEA President, said he has heard much testimony on various cuts, and has heard about what's best for kids, but said it's all about money. He expressed hope that the board will look at other alternatives before taking from students.

Jana Daley, Gilbert Park Library/Media Specialist, said she was formerly a classroom teacher, and thought then that librarians could reduce their schedules easily enough. She has found that as a librarian, she is 70% teacher, and works the rest of the time as the library clerk and library administrator, which requires high skills and considerable time. At half time, she said she won't have time to do that part of the job, which includes shelving books, checking in and out, and repairs to materials. She said Gilbert Park circulated over 27,000 books this year. Next year if she is half time, students won't be able to check out 3-4 books, as she won't have time to get them back on the shelves. The library won't be open every morning. Full time librarians are needed.

Julie Duvet, works as a temporary assistant in Title I at Earl Boyles. She said tomorrow will be her last day. She said she doesn't understand how the board expects to run the buildings without assistants. Children feel safe to talk with these staff members. She said "Team" stands for "together everybody achieves more." She said she worries about the impact of these cuts on students.

Approval of Recommendations to Reduce Expenditures in 2010-11 Approved Budget –
Board Chair Barberis opened the discussion of the proposal presented by the Budget & Finance subcommittee.

Mr. Centoni thanked all for coming and showing their support for students, colleagues and the district. He said he will not vote for any of these proposals this evening, preferring to have a more deliberate discussion during the summer. He said the subcommittee's focus and goal was to generate a more open and transparent budget process, but he believed the discussion was too brief to make this decision now. He said the board hasn't explored all the options, and that he thinks there are other funds we can utilize. Items he feels should be discussed further include what the board wants to maintain in reserves and in ending fund balance, and whether to consider moving to half day kindergarten. Mr. Centoni said the latest revenue forecast and additional reductions have made this budget process really challenging, but that we don't want to rush. He recommended waiting to review the situation with the new superintendent to hear about his priorities.

Ms. Mattson said she disagrees. She said board members earlier identified 5% as their ending fund target, and that the budget process has been discussed for months. She acknowledged that the most recent cuts were a shock, but said that we can't look for relief from the federal level as the votes are not there. She said she attended a meeting of the Portland Business Alliance on Wednesday, where the forecast is for additional cuts statewide. Although the recession has started to end, Oregon won't see improvements until the end of the next biennium. Looking over these recommendations, she proposed that we start restoring librarians by cutting other areas. She said the high school librarian could be restored to full time by reducing extra curricular activities at the high school, where \$470,000 has been budgeted for stipends for coaches for extra curricular activities. Reducing that budget by $\frac{1}{4}$ could be put into the budget for the librarian. As much as athletics are important to students, she said the library serves all students and athletics at the high school level do not.

Mr. Gardner said Ms. Mattson's suggestion about athletics was a good one, but that the board could talk about cutting some areas and restoring others, but won't likely reach consensus. He said he doesn't believe that the financial issues we face are short term, but will extend six to eight years out. He said it does not serve the district well to wait to make some of these decisions, as it is clear there will be reductions in programs until the economy turns around. Other districts have already made cuts in programs and activities. Mr. Gardner said some costs the district is going to bear haven't been discussed, including unemployment costs and PERS obligations, which will double in the next 3-4 years. He said the fourth generation of his family is attending David Douglas schools, and he does not relish the thought of what the board must do, but if the board doesn't do something serious now, next year will be even more difficult.

Ms. Christopher said she doesn't object to Ms. Mattson's recommendation, although sports do keep kids interested and in school. We could not create a community program at the high school level. She said we will have to look at some of these activities, as the district is running out of resources. She noted that not a single item on the list of possibilities is something the board wanted to do, and that some items can't be touched without negotiating. She said the Budget & Finance subcommittee members were thinking about the people impacted and when those folks would receive pink slips, which was part of reasoning in taking action now. Whether the board takes action in June with Mr. Grotting's input, or wait until July, delaying will just prolong the pain.

Ms. Scarcelli Ancheta said she feels compassion regarding the challenging position we are in. She said she appreciated comments of board members saying we do need to move forward and make serious decisions regarding cuts, and do need to face the inevitable. She recommended that the board continue the dialogue to find solutions. She said it is very painful to know that we won't be able to serve our students at the same high standards we have maintained.

Mr. Gardner made a motion to approve expenditure reductions for 2010-11 as recommended by the Budget & Finance subcommittee; seconded by Ms. Christopher. Ms. Christopher said that while the financial outlook looks bleak, if additional funding does come through from the state, the board could consider reinstating positions. She said the board must be fair and let people know how it stands today based on our known revenue. Ms. Mattson said while she knows that athletics are also related to academic performance, they do not serve all of the students at the high school. She said it is unconscionable not to reduce athletics before the librarians.

Mr. Price said he went through this school system, and agrees with Mr. Centoni that this is a very tough proposal to look at. He said Ms. Mattson's idea is not a bad one, but being a graduate and former student athletic, he thinks there are other budget items to consider. He said it would be a knee jerk reaction to approve these items as presented.

Mr. Centoni said the board did talk about reserves, but he wasn't comfortable with 5%. He said Mr. Gray's point is well taken that we haven't explored retirement incentives, and that post-retirement agreements are not logical when people are being laid off. He said he will not vote for this proposal. Ms. Mattson said post-retirement agreements actually save the district money.

Ms. Christopher said that when the board commits to something that we have offered, the board always should honor that commitment. Post-retirement agreements were agreed to prior to this crisis; she said staff members already approved should not be changed at this point. She said she agreed that no further post-retirements should be approved at this time, as we want to save as many jobs as possible. She said the early retirement program we provide retiring teachers is already an excellent one. The stipend is small, but the medical piece is very important. She said the incentive we already offer is very nice, and she doesn't feel we need to provide an additional incentive.

Mr. Gardner said he concurs with Ms. Christopher's remarks. All of the options will continue to be discussed in bargaining. He said he doesn't believe the board has turned down any opportunities to discuss the issues. He said he will support the motion he made, and will hope in the end that something happens that allows us to make some positive adjustments.

Bob Gray asked Chair Barberis if he could interject a question. He said Ms. Mattson mentioned that the district is willing to go to a 5% ending fund balance. He received clarification that the 5% target applies to next year's budget, and would amount to just under \$5million, based on the \$98million 2010-11 budget total. Mr. Gray remarked there is \$11million sitting there in retirement reserves. Mr. Gardner said that money is there to fund a past obligation. Mr. Gray said it is disheartening that we have money there and that we have to find the best way to use it. He said the recommended cuts are not the best thing for our students.

Board Chair Barberis announced that there has been a motion and a second. Ms. Mattson asked whether Mr. Gardner would accept a friendly amendment to his motion. He replied that any changes would be best dealt with from here forward.

Chair Barberis expressed her concern that Mr. Grotting will not have a full understanding of the district in a timely manner, that to delay would cut into the time we have to notify people of layoffs, and said that she is not sure that it is good for the board to delay these decisions. Having received a motion and a second to approve the recommendations from the Budget & Finance subcommittee, Chair Barberis called for a voice vote on the proposal. In favor: Christopher, Gardner; Opposed: Price, Mattson, Centoni, Barberis, Scarcelli Ancheta. The motion failed.

Chair Barberis noted that failure of this motion doesn't mean we aren't going to lose people. She said trade-offs will bring other things to the table, although there wasn't much controversy in the whole proposal except the librarians. She said she wanted all to be aware that positions identified to this point may still be facing cuts. She will discuss next steps and future meeting dates with Mr. Grotting.

Administrator Compensation for 2010-11 – Chair Barberis presented recommendations for administrator compensation for 2010-11, noting that this will be the second year of a wage freeze for administrators, and there will be no conference or travel funds for this year. The recommendations include an increase in the administrator insurance cap to match other employee groups. Ms. Mattson said she appreciates the hard work of the administration in supporting the teaching staff and students, as well as the sacrifices being made. Ms. Mattson moved approval of the recommendations as presented, seconded by Mr. Price. Mr. Gardner said the administrators do a wonderful job under often difficult circumstances. He said he will not vote to accept these recommendations, not due to

the work of our administration, but because he thinks the administration can give a little more under these financial circumstances. Mr. Centoni said he was part of the review committee which developed these recommendations. He said the committee will meet again in January to review the financial situation. Ms. Mattson's motion carried in a vote of 6-1 (In favor: Barberis, Centoni, Christopher, Mattson, Price, Scarcelli Ancheta; Opposed – Gardner).

Other Business / Future Agenda Items – Superintendent Rommel presented a Personnel Recommendation outlining Lincoln Park Principal Linda Okazaki's intention to retire June 30, 2010. She has requested to work under a post retirement agreement for the 2010-11 school year, which Superintendent Rommel has approved. Mr. Price moved approval, seconded by Ms. Mattson. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Ms. Scarcelli Ancheta thanked Barbara Rommel for her years of service to David Douglas, and wished her the best in her retirement. Mr. Centoni said she has made many contributions to the district and our students over years, and that we are better for it as we move forward. Ms. Mattson thanked Ms. Decherd and the entire Mill Park staff for giving her daughter a great start, saying she is now their second child to graduate with honors from Oregon State University. Both of her girls said they were really looking forward to read for pleasure again after all those years of college.

Adjournment – There being no other business, Board Chair Barberis announced that she would be convening an executive session immediately following the special meeting, in accordance with ORS 192.660 (2)(d) Collective Bargaining. The special session was adjourned.



Dawn Barberis, Board Chair



Barbara Rommel, Superintendent / Clerk