

District 301 LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

March 1, 2010 3:45 p.m.

Minutes of Meeting

In Attendance:

HOWARD B. THOMAS:	Pattie Gondek, Dana Rodriguez
COUNTRY TRAILS:	JoAnne Miller, Janice Eilken
LILY LAKE:	Chris Cohn, Jennifer Weibler
PRAIRIE VIEW:	Nicole Dahlman, Paula Evans
CENTRAL MIDDLE:	Zandra McGuire, Mary Wood
PRAIRIE KNOLLS MIDDLE:	Melissa Leisner
CENTRAL HIGH:	Cathy Mullahy, Carri Oslager
CEA:	Jim Conro
TRANSPORTATION:	Bennie Blackward
HUMAN RESOURCES:	
BOE PRESIDENT:	Rose Diaz
BOE MEMBER:	Gary Weigand
ELEM ADMINISTRATOR:	Jan Harnish
MS ADMINISTRATOR:	Lloyd Stover
HS ADMINISTRATOR:	
ASST. SUPERINTENDENT:	
SUPERINTENDENT:	Todd Stirn

Old Business

- A. Minutes from last meeting were approved with no revisions or changes. Discussion of the district mission statement/logo has been tabled until the next meeting.
- B. High School Principal Search
Todd discussed the current status of applicants- about 30. Some are repeats from the last job posting but most are new applicants. The goal is to reconvene the high school interview process the week before spring break, with an approval by the BOE at its April meeting.

New Business

A. State of IL Budget & School Funding

As the state tries to figure out ways to balance their budget, our district is being affected more than anticipated. Todd explained different ideas being floated around Springfield regarding state budget cuts, and included for the group an editorial from the Chicago Tribune which outlined some of the ideas that lawmakers are considering. Currently the state is behind in its payments to 301, and with the possible reductions in General State Aid this could mean much leaner times in the next two years than originally anticipated. Todd, Greg and Gary provided insight into the administration's current focus, as well as how the BOE is working hard to minimize the impact on programs for students. As of right now there is the possibility of staff cuts at all levels (administration, teaching, transportation, buildings & grounds), though the extent of which is not known at this time. Teachers who could possibly be let go have been called to a meeting this Thursday, March 4 at the CHS auditorium. Jim offered some information regarding gubernatorial candidates and their possible effect on education funding. Todd and Jim encouraged the group to tell their respective buildings to call their local representatives in Springfield, and to visit a website that allows you to leave posted comments. (as forwarded to staff in the Central Communicator)

B. Insurance Committee Update

The current goal is to maintain benefits at their current levels for 301 employees. The Insurance Committee is looking to enter a co-op. Our acceptance into the co-op will be decided in the next couple months, with the ultimate goal of keeping insurance coverage as-is. The benefit of the co-op that is currently under consideration is that it would include a cap on expenditures, allowing for a few major medical claims to NOT significantly affect the overall prices.

C. District 301 Budgeting Plan for 2010-2011

D. Reduction in Force meeting

Greg explained that there will be reductions in operating budgets as well as textbook replaceable budgets for the upcoming school year. This will directly impact any discretionary spending provided to teachers. Only required maintenance issues will be handled, though we do not want to put some things off too long in the event it leads to larger expenditures later. The BOE has approved an increase in fees and lunch costs for next school year. To make the most impact on 301's budget, teaching staff must be reduced. This was not the first choice but it has come to this after further discussions in Springfield leads us to believe that further cuts to state funding will occur. Todd told the group that there will not be blanket RIFs, though those teachers in threat of losing their positions have already been notified of a meeting Thursday, March 4. The CEA was given a full list of those called to the meeting. Teachers in this position have not received poor performance ratings, but fall within the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year of teaching in 301. This district will do whatever it can to help those who are let go find other positions. Teachers who are being non-renewed for low performance ratings are being notified separately. The administration is looking from top to bottom in reducing costs, which includes administrative positions at the district office all the way down to maintenance workers in the district. Todd stressed that ALL areas are being affected.

E. Changes to TRS

Jim gave some insight into the proposed changes to TRS that the state is discussing to alleviate their budget deficit. There has been conversations of raising the retirement age and creating a two-tier system for those who have been in education and for those new to education. At a CEA meeting Jim attended, IL Senate President Cullerton told the group that politicians in IL are hearing that people want teacher pensions cut to offset some costs. The perception is a negative one for the general public regarding teachers and their benefits. April 21 is a rally day for funding in Springfield.

F. ELL Delivery Model

Greg first explained to the group that no decisions have been made, but wanted to let the buildings know the administration is considering a change to our ELL programs at the elementary level. The change would mean ELL students would receive services at their home school, instead of being clustered at a central location. They are looking at the balance of cost between transporting the kids verses staff required at each school. Lily Lake will be the only school that would continue to have ELL students transported because there are so few numbers. The district is looking at what best works for the kids involved. Middle schools will remain the same in their ELL delivery. Greg stressed that once this change was made there would be no going back to the original plan. The transporting of kids was done due to the high influx of ELL students when growth was up. Now that growth is flat, these students can be equally served by staying in their home schools for ELL instruction.

Todd left us with a quote from Henry Ford in relation to the current financial situation we, as well as all other districts in the state are in:

"I'm never down. I'm either up or getting up."

301 will be experiencing a tough financial year but we are in MUCH better shape than other districts. Our BOE has been conservative with spending in the past as well as placing money in reserves, which allows us to offset some of the financial pressure caused by the state of IL not making their payments.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45. The meeting was facilitated by Todd Stirn.

Next meeting is Monday, April 5, 2010.

MINUTES APPROVED APRIL 5, 2010