

**GENEVA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 304  
227 NORTH FOURTH STREET, GENEVA, ILLINOIS  
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF A BOARD RETREAT SESSION  
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Board of Education of Community Unit School District Number 304 met in a retreat session on Saturday, April 27, 2013, at 8:30 a.m. at the District's Central Office, 227 North Fourth Street, Geneva, Illinois.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

- 1.1 Roll Call
- 1.2 Welcome
- 1.3 Pledge
- 1.4 Reminder to Sign Attendance Record

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by President Grosso.

Board members present: President Mark Grosso, Mike McCormick, Vice President Kelly Nowak, Policy Committee Chair Mary Stith, Finance Committee Chair Bill Wilson. Late: None. Absent: Matt Henry and Tim Moran.

The President welcomed everyone, led them in the Pledge and reminded them to sign the attendance record.

District administrators present: Jerel Waide, Director Student Services; Craig Collins, Assistant Superintendent Personnel Services; Donna Oberg, Assistant Superintendent Business Services; Andy Barrett, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Patty O'Neil, Assistant Superintendent Curriculum & Instruction; and Dr. Kent Mutchler, Superintendent.

Others present: Leslie Juby, Dave Lamb, Dan Garrett.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

During my campaign, I heard that people are proud of the excellent schools in Geneva and that they are concerned about taxes and the possibility of having to move from Geneva due to high taxes. Technology is a key to the future and is a major part of my profession. I hope that the "TaxFacts" group settles down" and I'm willing to help the Board in any way that I can with the budget and technology.

**3. BOARD DIALOGUE TOPICS**

- 3.1 Goals Discussion

**Learning & Teaching**

A discussion occurred of how goals should be worked toward, what the information is and how the goals can be achieved. Emphasis was on formulating best practices, pulling together data and assessment as key components for setting goals and measuring progress, and on the common core curriculum in regard to both content and process of teaching.

The common core is transformational in its own right because of its potential impact on teaching. The content is a major component in the common core in a developmental way. It is demonstrated through benchmarks and focused more on meaningful learning of concepts.

The process of understanding or concepts is the second major emphasis of the common core. Our district is working toward the heart of what is at the common core which is really good for students. We are trying to keep the focus on beneficial aspects of the common core and to integrate that with the traditional approach.

An understanding of the common core is also at the heart of our professional development in curriculum and could play an important role in hiring educators in the future. We are also engaged with representatives from various schools of higher learning in order to keep connected with the colleges and universities in this area.

Therefore, our goals in learning and teaching will be focused on our process for implementation of the common core standard curriculum.

### **Assessment & Data**

Goals in the area of assessment and data will be shaped along with the implementation of the common core standards. While there are many unknowns at this time, in this area, we are working with different types of assessments and striving to make the assessments more developmental in nature. Developmental from the standpoint of what students need at each grade level and also developmental across the time span of a year in school, or the learning that takes place within a course. Assessments need to determine how and what students are learning and success in that learning. We also are seeing assessments connected to evaluation currently through principals and in the future through teachers. On a little larger scale, the assessments and data will be reported out and be an important part of the school improvement process.

At the basis for assessment and data is the fact that at the end of the day, educators want to know that they do a good job working with students.

Therefore, the goals that we have for assessment and data will be important to the overall educational program within our classrooms, buildings, and district.

This area also includes the collaborative teacher project that is bringing together technology and its use at a higher level for teachers working with students. We are looking at placing an emphasis on differentiated instruction, a balance between individuality and uniformity across the district, building on the strengths of a unit district that spirals curriculum across grade levels and within subject areas, an emphasis on collaboration in curriculum development, and working with assessment and data as part of motivation in education.

### **Special Programs**

A copy of the Response to Intervention (RtI) pyramid was distributed. The key in specifying goals in this area is to identify strengths and gaps and then implement programming with fidelity. Board members were provided samples of IEP goals using the old vs. the new format in math in order to demonstrate the differences in how data is important in the new IEPs, as well as the importance of making IEP goals more specific regarding what students will be able to demonstrate. Along with making the adjustment to the new IEP format, special education is moving more and more to parent involvement, which is vital to the success of the child.

The transition in IEPs and record keeping is the most important recent change in special education as this will impact special education delivery both specifically and in general. This will be the guiding concept in the formulation of any goals in the area of special education.

The areas of English language learners and English as a second language programming were discussed. A growing program in our district is the bilingual program. The goals are becoming more focused as we expand our program in these areas to help students learn English along with the other areas of curriculum in Geneva. We are in the process of making adjustments to our program, and will be focusing goals in this area as well. An important aspect is parent involvement in a collaborative sense in dealing with English language learners.

### **Human Resources**

Shaping goals in our district is one change that has occurred with the evaluation system. This is a federally mandated program, as are so many things recently in public education. Our district is working from the Danielson Framework and working in a very collaboratively manner through our teacher

evaluation committee in an effort to both develop and fine tune our teacher evaluation program. Aspects of this program include ratings, so it is important that we continue to emphasize assurances in our evaluator training program in order to achieve inter-rater reliability. This more extensive program includes a great deal of time in the areas of process which include conferencing, observations, documentation, meetings, and the use of evidence. Another area that will be gaining more importance in the future is the use of assessment of data as part of the evaluation system.

Another area in human resources that will be getting a lot more attention in the future also stems from federal mandates and involves health care reform. We continue to work with our providers to clarify the recent changes in health care reform so we can be as proactive as possible as guidelines are changed in an effort to avoid penalties and to secure the most effective health care for our staff.

#### **Finance**

The Board discussed a variety of issues regarding the Finance Committee which included the composition of the committee, the benefits and trade offs in comparing a finance committee to a finance task force, and the possible schedule for board topics regarding finances and working with the finance committee.

These issues will be discussed further at the committee level following the reorganization of the board and establishment of the new finance committee.

#### **Other Topics**

The Board discussed the examination of all-day, every-day kindergarten as a goal and something that may take place in the next few years in an effort to support the common core curriculum standards and their implementation. It was suggested that we possibly form a kindergarten task force in the near future in order to study the issue and to update the work done by the district committee several years ago.

BoardBook was discussed relative to its usability and the schedule for release of BoardBook materials to board members and the public. This topic will be discussed again in the near future but will be taken first to the Communications Task Force for discussion.

It may be helpful for the Board to consider hosting in district an Illinois Association of School Boards "data first" workshop as a way to use data to further evaluate the district and to provide information to the public regarding our district through data. This will be explored more in the future.

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

At 12:19 p.m., motion by McCormick, second by Wilson, and with unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_ PRESIDENT

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ RECORDING  
Kent Mutchler SECRETARY