

**League of Women Voters
Community High School District 99 Observers Report**

Board meeting attended: Regular Board Meeting

Date and Location of meeting: 19 March 2018
Cafeteria, Downers Grove South HS, 1436 Norfolk St, Downers Grove

Meeting started: 7:30 pm

Board Members Absent/Tardy: Donald Renner- absent

League Observer: Linda Derrig

Estimated Number Attending (excluding Board and Staff): approximately 30 persons in the audience at the start of the meeting including students and staff

Meetings are taped and posted at:

<http://www.csd99.org/boe/meeting-highlightsvideos.cfm>

Agenda can be found at:

<http://www.csd99.org/boe/Meeting-Agendas.cfm>

1/2) CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ ROLL CALL

3) Approval of Minutes:

- A. Business Meeting- February 26, 2018
- B. Special/ workshop Meeting- March 5, 2018

Unanimously approved

4) Reception of Visitors: None

5) Recommendations and Reports of the Superintendent:

Before going through his scheduled agenda items, Superintendent Hank Thiele addressed the board and the crowd on the recent student walkouts at both high schools in conjunction with the national school walkout Wednesday, March 14. Thiele reported receiving hundreds of communications from individuals both inside the district and nationwide after the district handed out some 1,100 detentions to those students who walked out.

Thiele said the staff responded to every communication received, and while not everyone agrees with the district position they at least understood. The students were given the detentions, for incurring an unexcused absence he said, for not being in their assigned class/leaving without permission. While there are many excused absences, student protest is not one of those and that by providing an excused

absence for the walkout, a precedent would be set. He said there were discussions with students at both North and South and the students were told of other opportunities for voicing their concerns, including the upcoming march scheduled for March 24. He said the district cannot endorse political protest or political action.

Some 1,100 students, about 20 percent of the student body, participated in the walkout and were given a single 1 hour detention which is what is the consequence applied when a student leaves class without permission. It was consistent with school rules.

He went on to say he was extremely proud of the students in the way they planned the event and carried it out. He said it was handled with “class and grace.” And the students were told to expect consequences. He said, “it is not our role to tell them what to think, but to tell them how to think.”

He then thanked the District 99 staff and the community.

There was no board comment or response.

A. 2018-2019 Staffing

Final presentation to the board on staffing for next year.

- An increase of .8 FTE above the line (instructional staff) due to enrollment
- An overall increase, including non-instructional certified staff, of 9.5 FTE from the current year (397.9 to 407.4 FTE). Most of the increased staff would be going to student support positions including counseling, social work and special education. Meanwhile, much of the cost of the increased staff would be offset by bringing students back into the district and not paying tuition for placement of students to other districts.
- Pete Theis, assistant superintendent for human resources, told the board, this is probably where we want to be for the foreseeable future. And that it addresses issues the schools have had. Any additional increase in staff, he said, would be depend on shifts in enrollment.
- The board was also presented with the list of faculty who will be tenured on the first day of next year, as well as those non-tenured faculty being released.
- Board Member Michael Davenport asked about feedback from the Education Association (teacher’s union). Theis responded that there were no concerns by the EA and they were thankful for additional positions, especially the positions being added to student services.
- Board Member Dan Nichols asked about the desire for additional safety staff. Superintendent Thiele said that non-certified staffing would be presented to the board separately and that the conversation for additional resource officers is ongoing within the safety committee.

B. Master Facility Plan Community Engagement Update

NOTE: the District 99 was approved by voters the day following this meeting

- Superintendent Thiele told the board if the referendum is not approved, “we will figure out what comes next”. Election results will be certified on Monday, April 9; and, published on Tuesday, April 10.

- Board President Nancy Kupka recognized the community members and parents who have spent a lot of time helping to educate fellow community members about the facilities plan/referendum.
- Superintendent Thiele said the community has embraced the opportunity to understand the master facilities plan—whether for or against it, he said, I feel they know what the information is.

C. Freedom of Information Requests: 3 received and responded to.

6) Consent Agenda:

- A. Personnel Report - 2018-2019 Fifth Year Full Time Renewals; 2018-2019 Non-Tenure Full Time Renewals; 2018-2019 Non-Tenure Part Time Renewals; Appointment-Certified; Appointment-Classified; Transfer of Position-Classified; Leave of Absence-Classified
- B. Personnel Report - Retirements-Classified; Resignation-Classified
- C. Financial Pages
- D. Acceptance of Donation - District 99 Education Foundation Grant
- E. Illinois High School Association (IHSA) Membership

The consent agenda was unanimously approved

7) Recommendations for Action:

- A. Motion to adopt the Resolution Authorizing Notice of Honorable Dismissal of Non-Tenured Teachers Other than Final Year Probationary Teachers and that the President and Secretary be authorized to sign same
 - Certified staff being dismissed were generally long term substitutes or teachers for which the school will no longer have the same level position, e.g. a .6 FTE position now a .5 FTE. Superintendent Thiele told the board that many of these individuals/teachers will be brought back next year in some capacity.
- B. Motion for the Board of Education to approve the Theatre Craft and Acting Classes department change from English and Communication to Fine Arts
 - The board expressed concern that teachers for these classes will now straddle two departments and report to two separate department chairs.
 - Assistant Superintendent Gina Ziccardi responded that there is precedence for this within the district and that the issue is being discussed.
- C. Motion for the Board of Education to approve the 2.5 percent increase in service rates proposed by First Student, Inc. for the 2018-2019 school year and authorize the Administration to execute all necessary documents to continue this contract
 - It was noted that the district had anticipated a 2.1 percent increase
 - It was also noted that bus service has been smoother this year... "We've thrown a lot at them this year...and they've done a great job responding," the board was told.

All items were unanimously approved

8) Old Business: Policy Committee Second Reading

9) New Business

10) Reception of Visitors- Public Comment:

Approximately 25 Downers Grove South students were on hand to address the board regarding the recent walkout and a recent school forum on the issue of school violence which was held the previous day at South during which students served their detention.

Most students expressed frustration that although the forum had been billed as an opportunity for students to address or discuss the issue with school staff, they were never given an opportunity to speak. Instead, students said, the focus was on what students can do, e.g. being friendly and supportive to all fellow students.

Multiple students expressed dismay that the words/phrases, “gun” and “gun violence” were never expressed. And, felt they had been lectured to...rather than participating in a dialogue. One student said she felt their voices were not being heard, but were being suppressed.” Another student said she felt “betrayed” by the forum. Another commented, “our administration has failed us as both educators and leaders”. Still another student referenced Downers Grove South’s “Mustang Way” which focuses on respect, saying, “we haven’t felt that... we’d like that reflected by our administration”.

One student acknowledged the students present were proud of their actions during the past week (walking out on National Student Walkout day), and believe the punishment of a single detention was justified, saying it was because the detention event was billed as a forum that students felt betrayed by the event.

Superintendent Thiele told the students, “I’d have to be deaf to not hear that we missed the mark by a wide margin.” He asked DGS Principal Schwartz to address the concerns. Schwartz indicated he and the DGS staff are already working on this.

Thiele went on to say, “We are not trying to shut down student voices.” “We want to hear from you,” he told the students. He also said the students who spoke made him proud by their ability to express their beliefs well and succinctly.

Board President Nancy Kupka then told the students, “We have heard you,” and said, “we are going to do better.” She told students that their safety is at the forefront of the board and staff’s concerns. She also encouraged the students, many of whom had referenced their power to vote, to vote in the primary the following day.

11) Communications and Announcements:

- a) **Report on Legislative Education Network of DuPage (LEND)- No report:** Don Renner absent
- b) **Report on School Association for Special Education in DuPage County (SASED)-** Nancy Kupka

- c) **Report on District 99 Education Foundation- Terry Pavesich:** The recently completed Pizza Wars was the largest to-date with approximately 650 guests. The Foundation is still looking for volunteers. The next teacher grant applications are due April 1.
- d) **Report on Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB)-** Michael Davenport: Davenport, Paveisch and Assistant Superintendent Gina Ziccardo recently attended the spring meeting where they were challenged to be “reinventors”

12) Upcoming Board Meetings:

- **April 9, special workshop meeting, 7 p.m.**
- **April 16, regular business meeting, 7:30 p.m.**

13) Parking lot: no action/discussion

14) Adjournment- 8:33 p.m.