



Community Unit School District 308

SERVING ALL OR PARTS OF THE COMMUNITIES OF
AURORA, JOLIET, MONTGOMERY, OSWEGO, PLAINFIELD, AND YORKVILLE

LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

East View Kindergarten Center – Room 30

Monday, September 21, 2015

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

I. Roll Call

*Meeting called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Board of Education Member and Committee Chair
Mr. Greg O'Neil*

The attendance sheet was used in place of an official roll call

Members in Attendance:

Alexa Backus, Anne Elwood, Amanda Mancke (arrived late), Jamil Nichols, Melissa Woolever
Dr. Matthew Wendt, Superintendent
Board Member: Brad Banks
Board Member: Greg O'Neil

Guests in Attendance: Representative Stephanie Kifowit

Members Absent: Michael Blaylock, Tracy Collander, Kevin Harris, Brian Valek, Natalie Winkfield

Recording Secretary: Ursula Coan

II. Approval of Minutes from April 27, 2015 Meeting

*A motion was made by Mr. O'Neil to approve the minutes from the April 27, 2015 meeting.
All members in attendance agreed unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.*

III. Guest Speaker – State Representative Stephanie Kifowit

- We got a little extra money from the State, increased from 88% to 92%.
- Property Tax Freeze is coming up for vote, it has not passed yet. The Governor is pushing it very hard. Residents are taking a bigger portion of the tax levy with more retail space not being used. It is not based on the individual property taxes, but rather on the levy.

- General State Aid Finance Formula - It has not been presented to the House, still has to go through the Senate. SB1 would impact us less than SB16. It is still a passion of Senator Manar's and this bill will come up for a vote at some point.
- Construction Grant passed the house unanimously and unfortunately it died in the Senate. At some point the IEA was opposed to it, Representative Kifowit is not sure why. There was a lack of communication from Senator Holmes regarding the bill. Representative Kifowit suggested that we pick a different sponsor from the Senate for that bill. Some Legislators voiced concern that it was an unnecessary bill and they did not want to handicap any other school districts. The House vote does not stand, we will have to start all over on this. IEA claimed that they talked to someone at 308, but did not call Representative Kifowit. She voiced her disappointment about that. It is expected that the bill can be reintroduced in January.
- We are in limbo with the budget. It is a first for the State of Illinois to not have a budget. The Governor did sign an education bill, but rejected all the other proposals.
- We have many pending lawsuits (on behalf of Medicaid, Meals on Wheels, Child Care Assistance Program, AARP and the ComEd Energy Assistance Fund, etc.)
- Over 90% of the budget is already being decreed by the court and the Governor has not come back with any more budget proposals. There needs to be a group meeting to hash this out and that has not happened. Everyone is in agreement that the Governor needs to work on a budget. Funding for things like cervical cancer and victims of domestic violence, are falling through the cracks.
- PARCC is important, but scores come out very late, almost a year after they have been taken
- What other big issues are you working on? How can we help? Biggest issue for the school district is the collapse of the social service industry. Early intervention is a very important component for students and childcare is another issue. Do they go to a safe environment or are they home alone watching TV.
- What would be the best way for us to get the ball rolling on the construction grant? Find out what the concerns are of IEA.
- The Governor is in charge of the checkbook and decides what gets paid out.
- The bill passing the house and the senate does not mean that the grant will be paid. The budget is just a plan on how we would like to spend the money.

- Representative Kifowit suggested to host the Legislators in our district instead of planning a trip to Springfield. Not most effective use of our time right now.
- Most likely there will be no sessions on a Monday or a Friday.

Questions Raised:

The extra 4% that the State paid out, how much does it translate into dollars
How much is our budget

IV. Discussion: Committee Goals and Priorities for 2015-2016

- The committee suggested that a Senator or a Representative is scheduled for each meeting. They can inform us what they are working on for SD 308.
- Some progress was made on our three issues, General State Aid, Unfunded Mandates and 2004 Construction Grants.
- Greg suggested that we may want to add another topic to our subjects. There are many issues that affect the district.
- We need a list of all the initiatives that are in Springfield that affect our school district.
- Lottery winnings not being paid out.
- PARCC Assessment fiasco that took place last spring. Various attempts within the legislation to change what tests were given and to opt out. Also, how much time that kids can be engaged in an assessment. Everything that falls underneath that.
- Property tax freeze, that not only affects schools but all other government entities as well. It is a big deal for the Village of Oswego. Pose some of these questions to Representative Kifowit. For example, is the tax freeze part of the overall package for writing the new finance formula.
- Finance Formula, we have the oldest finance formula in the Country. This might be the year we reach out to other districts. We have partners close by that we can team up with. Maybe it's time to reach across boundary lines and take this to the next level. Our goal with these topics is to reach out and be heard. We can send letters to send to our Senators and Representatives or we can schedule a visit. We will try and go to Springfield earlier, probably March.
- We could bring in Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant to update the committee on the unfunded mandates. She would be good to come in next month.
- Our goals with these topics are to somehow reach out and be heard.
- We can send out letters to all parties or make phone calls – Is there any other way we can have an impact?

- We could have a joint meeting with other Legislative Committees from other districts to team up at least as far as the General State Aid and the Unfunded Mandates.
- Team up with districts that have similar demographics.
- Use our time with Senators and Representatives as an idea session.
- Partner with Plainfield, both Aurora Districts and Yorkville
- Do we want to host something here in the district?
- We don't know what ideas to present because we don't know what has the biggest impact on our district.
- Reach out to districts out of this state for some ideas?
- It is hard to find us in Illinois outside of Plainfield. Neighboring districts have very different issues.
- Do we want to spend time on the solution to the Finance Formula?
- Would we be better served to just narrow our focus, so that we have just one specific goal with other districts? Are we asking for too much? We definitely don't want to add anything.
- Hopes for the 49 million are not real high right now with the climate that they have in Springfield right now.
- It will be hard until a budget gets approved by the Governor.
- The question was raised if the district needs to do a better job at raising the awareness of the public on what issues we face (being owed 49 million, not receiving 100% of the GSA etc.).
- Ask DrWendt column or Brian Graves put an article together for us to educate the public. Maybe add a website link for our community on our legislative issues.

V. Update on Unfunded Mandates, 2004 Construction Grants and General State Aid

VI. Discussion: Upcoming Meeting Dates and Times
Meetings should be held on a monthly basis. Next meeting the week of October 19th, when Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant is available.

VII. Public Comment (3 minutes each)
There were no individuals present for public comment.

VIII. Adjourn
A motion was made by Mr. Greg O'Neil to adjourn. All present were in favor to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Next Meeting: October 26, 2015