



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 Oswego East High School – Room C213 Monday, January 11, 2016 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 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, Tracy Collander, Anne Elwood, Melissa Woolever
Superintendent: Dr. Matthew Wendt
Board Member: Brad Banks
Board Member: Greg O'Neil

Guests in Attendance: Representative Mark Batinick

Members Absent: Amanda Mancke, Jamil Nichols, Brian Valek, Natalie Winkfield

Recording Secretary: Ursula Coan

II. Approval of Minutes from November 30, 2015 Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. O'Neil to approve the minutes from the November 30, 2015 meeting. All members in attendance agreed unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

III. Guest Speaker – State Representative Mark Batinick

- Representative Batinick stated that he is a proponent of a two year budget. Everyone that is depending on money from the State needs to know what their budget is in order to plan. It is an inefficient system to not have a two year budget.
- What is the sentiment on alternative school funding?
There are different plans that have been brought forward. The biggest issue is that Chicago Public Schools get a disproportionate share of the funding. If that was dealt with, it would open up dollars for the rest of the State. I am concerned about overall

taxation in Illinois. When you retire in our State, you still pay property taxes; when you are a new business starting out, you are paying property taxes, even if you are not turning a profit yet. The way we fund education is just not what most States do. The tax rate that we have is killing businesses. They are more likely to go where the tax rate is lower. There are many issues in the city of Chicago that are hurting the whole State.

- Some of the things I am focusing on in order to move this State to a better place: Workman's Comp really needs to be looked at in order for any entity in the State to run cheaper.

There is a lot of money that could be saved with Unfunded Mandates. Some of those expense might not seem big, but putting it together really adds up. We also have a bad procurement process, the way we make state agencies buy things. We put rules on everyone instead of focusing on our inefficiencies.

I'm also looking at the issue of substitute teachers; lowering the expectation on their education requirements would increase the pool. In my opinion, the school districts should be able to decide for themselves, the State should not dictate what education they need to have.

Our committee expressed concerns on lowering that expectation, especially for long term subs.

- When will we have a budget?
I have no idea.....now they are saying after the primary or even after the next election in November. I wish we had a room with a white board or an easel, where we could all sit down together and draw up some ideas. I expected to go down there, roll up my sleeves and say, we have a big mess, what are we going to do about it. Instead, everything seems to be on hold.
- Representative Batinick is on the following committees:
Veterans, Higher Education, Online Learning and Insurance and Business Funding.
- Mr. O'Neil shared our three biggest issues with the Representative; GSA, Unfunded Mandates and our Construction Grant. The 49 million were promised over twelve years ago and we are still waiting.
- Representative Batinick informed the committee that he just submitted the Pension Reform Bill that would save the State 10 billion. It is constitutional because it is 100% optional. Right now we have about 80 billion in assets and 190 billion in liabilities, which leaves us about 39% funded. Every single person has a number attached to them. When someone retires, they figure what that number is, by taking your life expectancy and your salary into account. This new bill would allow you to take your pension in a lump sum. You could roll it into your own IRA and only take out as much as you need and the rest of it could grow tax free. By giving retirees this added option, the State could save a good junk of money. Potentially saving 10 billion would not solve all of our issues, but it would certainly be a step in the right direction. I try to come up with ways to change the pension gap and this is one option. The new bill, "Pension Option Exchange 4427", was filed this afternoon.

- Representative Batinick was a member of the Unfunded Mandate Taskforce. The link to their recommendations will be provided to the Legislative Committee after tonight's meeting. He provided his cell phone number to our committee and invited the members to contact him with any issues.
- Dr. Wendt's comments:

The Facility Referendum most likely would not have passed if the voters would have known that the State would back down on paying that construction grant to our district. It is fundamentally a big blow to SD 308. We can't change the formula fast enough to fund certain programs, like our technology plan or our maintenance plan. That 49 million would go a very long way for several different purposes. Another issue is the school consolidation plan. We don't need this many school districts in this county, it is simply an inefficient way to educate. We have districts with 300 students and a BOE and of course a superintendent and administrators just like a larger district. That system has a direct adverse impact on our system and we are seeing that debated more and more in the Superintendents' ranks. Even us Superintendents feel that this is becoming harder and harder to defend. There are 857 systems and 86 districts in DuPage County alone. How many districts do we need? It just is an inefficient way to educate. I will continue to champion that school consolidation piece. I'm running out of words to defend a 1 billion dollar school district with 322 students. They have the same levels of administration, the same layers as the seventh largest system. We have more units of local government than the next five states combined.

A committee member suggested that if a school district is meeting or exceeding, we are automatically off the list with some of the unfunded mandates, because we are doing what we are supposed to be doing. If you are falling below, there would be mandates in place that you need to follow. The state should back off in districts that are doing well.

Looking at the cost of higher education; Stop measuring the small items, rather look at the graduation rate, are they good citizens and how many kids are from the State of Illinois. Don't micromanage, look at the big picture.

Some of the unfunded mandates of course don't have to do with education.

The committee briefly discussed how difficult it is to obtain an Illinois License. The TAP test is extremely difficult to pass and by the time a teacher pays for tutoring, it can cost them \$ 3,500 just to get their license. Why do you need to have the ability to teach algebra II as a second grade teacher. There is something wrong with this system.

IV. Planning: Springfield Trip

Date for Springfield Trip is April 5 to 6. Breakfast would be planned for Wednesday April 6. The next couple of meetings will be spent on planning our presentations and bringing our new members (recommended February 8 BOE meeting) up to date.

V. Public Comment (3 minutes each)

There were no individuals present for public comment.

VI. Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. Greg O'Neil to adjourn. All present were in favor to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Next Meeting: February 22, 2016