

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT 162
COOK COUNTY
RICHTON PARK, IL 60471
October 18, 2016**

"We take the hopes and dreams of the community and turn them into reality!"

REGULAR SESSION

Convened: 6:30 p.m.

Adjourned: 7:40 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Alicia Rodman McCray, President; Ron Bean, Vice President; Kevin Murphy, Secretary; Evelyn Green; Sandi Gordon; Felix Simpkins; Karen McCray

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Blondean Y. Davis, Lee Stanton, Earnestine Foster, Mark Walczak, Yvonne Williams, Deborah Duskey, Linda Disney, Michael E. Gettings, David Rupert, Latunja O. Williams, Sheloanda Porche-Box, Pat Ransford, Jo Ross, Carl Cogar, Narishea Parham, Lara Reznick, Amanda Godin, Bill Howard, Gail Hartsough, Stephanie Healy, Camilla Covington, Cory Gold, Brenda Calvin, Robert Tomic, Greg Huelsman, Kim McGuire, John Benish, Jr., Erica Walker, Julie Cragg, Tiffany Miles, Charmaine Whitaker, Marsha Green, Amanda Curran, Vanessa Doerr, Ashling Flanagan, Robbin Montero, Andrea Lytle, Tyra L. Coleman, Debbie Szczecina, Lorrie Clayton, Jessica Washington

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mrs. Rodman McCray called the regular session to order at 6:30 p.m. and noted that there was a quorum. Mrs. Rodman McCray directed the Board secretary to make a roll call notation.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Dr. Davis reviewed the “Dates to Remember.” She stated that Illinois School and Richton Square School are hosting Family Reading Nights on October 19 and October 20, respectively. She noted that reading and math are the District’s emphasis this year.

Mr. Robert Tomic, principal of Huth Middle School, discussed the plans for Huth Middle School’s Dads’ Day. He stated that the dads will visit classrooms and create knight shields with the students. He noted that the knight shields will detail the children’s goals. He further stated that National Junior Honor Society students will escort the dads to the Commons where the Huth choir and drumline will perform. Mr. Tomic reported that Mr. John Fountain, author, will be the keynote speaker.

Dr. Carl Cogar, principal of Illinois School, reported that Illinois School will be hosting a Health and Fitness Enrichment Night on November 4, 2016, from 6:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m. He noted that the evening will feature circuit training tied to math, a jump rope contest, and pilates.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS PERTAINING TO AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Nothing at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes

Public Hearing, September 20, 2016

Regular Session, September 20, 2016

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Personnel

Employment

Approve the employment of Amy Schubert, paraprofessional at Sauk School, effective September 20, 2016.

Approve the employment of Elvira Castillo, custodian at Indiana School, effective September 27, 2016.

Leaves

Approve the maternity leave, under FMLA, of Lisa Hurley, teacher at Sauk School, effective January 26, 2017, for up to twelve weeks.

Approve the maternity leave, under FMLA, of Kathleen Considine, teacher at Sauk School, effective February 14, 2017, through June 2, 2017.

Approve the leave of absence under FMLA, of Dina Dale, custodian, effective October 27, 2016, through December 27, 2016.

Retirements

Approve the intent to retire of Joanne Ruder, teacher at Arcadia School, effective at the end of the 2017–2018 school year.

Approve the intent to retire of Jean McBride, teacher at Arcadia School, effective at the end of the 2017–2018 school year.

Policy Matters

Nothing at this time.

Annual Business

Approval of the Agreement with Lifetouch National School Studios for school photography services for the 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2019–2020 school years.

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Bill Listing – Authorization of the administration to pay the schedule of bills payable and authorize the District Treasurer to sign the checks dated October 18, 2016, in the amount of \$942,568.31.

Imprest Fund Reimbursement – Authorization to reimburse the District Imprest Fund in the amount of \$13,165.78

Financial Statement – The September 2016 Financial Statement is presented for review.

Payroll Vouchers – Authorization for the District Treasurer to sign the payrolls dated November 15, 2016, and November 30, 2016, including all bills for payroll deductions and contributions by the school district.

Gifts and Donations

Nothing at this time.

The motion carried by a unanimous roll call vote:

YES

NO

Bean

Green

Murphy

Gordon

McCray

Simpkins

Rodman McCray

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SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Categorical Payments

Mr. Craig Englert, assistant superintendent of business services, addressed the Board regarding an issue of concern. He stated that ordinarily the state remits four categorical payments to the District; however, he noted that the state has yet to remit the fourth payment, which was due last June. Mr. Englert also reported that the state is late on its first quarter payment for the current school year. He stated that the state owes the District more than \$900,000 for the last quarter of the 2015–2016 school year and over \$700,000 for the first quarter of the current school year. He stated that despite the late payments, the District is not experiencing any cash flow problems at this time. He noted that although he is not very concerned about the situation now, he will continue to monitor the status of the payments. Mr. Englert said that he will provide the Board with a monthly update on the situation. He noted that if the state remits the 2015–2016 fourth quarter payment and makes the four payments due this school year, the District would receive five payments this year.

Enrollment

Dr. Davis presented a report comparing District membership by school for September 16, 2016, and October 14, 2016. She also presented an overview of the District's enrollment from May 2007 through May 2017 (projected):

Membership: September 16, 2016

School	Total
Arcadia	434
Huth	554
Illinois	367
Indiana	363
Matteson	333
Richton Square	256
Sauk	366
Out-of-District	43
Total	2,716

*Data from PowerSchool

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Membership: October 14, 2016

School	Total
Arcadia	433
Huth	557
Illinois	371
Indiana	368
Matteson	334
Richton Square	264
Sauk	359
Out-of-District	44
Total	2,730

*Data from PowerSchool

Note: Data for May 2008 and May 2010 are unavailable; the yellow highlighted data are the latest data available for that year.

Schools	May 2007	April 2008	May 2009	Feb. 2010	May 2011	May 2012	May 2013	May 2014	May 2015	May 2016	Projected May 2017
Arcadia	561	527	571	579	556	537	519	477	447	464	439
Huth	660	672	654	645	630	596	603	641	599	552	539
Illinois	473	458	487	490	449	437	424	471	434	402	393
Indiana	501	494	457	434	428	436	430	424	399	378	365
Matteson	561	529	492	540	530	435	444	403	380	352	340
Richton Square	187	196	201	172	213	255	245	260	275	253	268
Sauk	468	464	436	436	477	458	449	378	395	374	367
Out-of-District	72	71	55	52	55	49	46	44	46	56	55
SD 162 Total	3,483	3,411	3,353	3,348	3,338	3,203	3,160	3,098	2,975	2,831	2,766

Dr. Davis stated that she believes that the District's enrollment will close at approximately 2,800 this year. She said that she expects to see a slight increase in enrollment. Dr. Davis stated that she believes that enrollment will exceed projected enrollment numbers.

Transportation Issues

Dr. Davis provided an update on the status of transportation services provided by Kickert School Bus. She began with a review of the concerns that she raised at the September 2016 Board meeting regarding Kickert's transportation services during the first 20 days of the school year.

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Review

Morning Routes

13 Times: The bus did not make the morning/mid-day run because a driver did not show or was running extremely late and Kickert dispatchers were not aware. Another bus had to be scrambled together 30 minutes to an hour after the route was supposed to start.

Afternoon Routes

21 Times: The bus arrived at school to take students home between 15 minutes and one hour after school was dismissed.

Activity Buses

12 Times: The activity bus arrived between 15 minutes and one hour late to pick-up students from school. Kickert has now informed the District that there will be days when they cannot handle the volume of activity buses due to driver call-offs and shortages.

Bus Pick-ups

8 Times: Bus did not stop at all locations on the route causing parents to drive their children to school.

Miscellaneous Issues

- Bus breakdowns four times this year, so far, causing delays.
- Routes assigned to drivers who do not know the route, are not given directions on where to go, and don't know the area. District 162 administrators ride these buses to ensure that students get to the right stops.

General Issues

- Kickert almost never calls to inform the District that a bus is going to be late, despite REPEATED requests to do so.
- It is very difficult to get through to Kickert on the phone. When District officials do get through, they are often on hold for up to 20 minutes.

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Steps Taken by District 162

- Demanded that Kickert management call each morning and afternoon to report that all buses have been checked in (this has not helped).
- Demanded the phone number of a person who will answer the phone and provide answers to questions and issues as they arise.
- Deducted the cost of these late and uncovered routes from Kickert's payments as per the contract. Due to the service issues, Kickert will credit the District \$2,777.80 on its transportation bill.
- Began talks with another bus company to take over activity routes.

Bus Issues Since September 20th Board Meeting

Morning Routes

21 Times (up from 13 last month): Bus did not make the morning run on-time and was late bringing students to school by 15 to 45 minutes.

Afternoon Routes

9 Times (down from 21 last month): Bus arrived at school to take students home between 10 and 50 minutes late.

Activity Buses

3 Times (down from 12 last month): Bus arrived over 25 minutes late to do activity route.

Bus Driver Issues

3 Times (down from 12 last month): Drivers did not know the area and/or tried to drop-off students at the wrong stops.

Bus Break Downs

3 Times (down from 4 last month): Bus broke down causing delays.

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Serious Incident

Bus driver was sent to cover a Pre-k/Kindergarten route without knowing the area and was extremely late. Near the end of the route, the bus monitor noticed a raccoon on the bus causing an emergency evacuation of the remaining students.

General Issues

- Kickert is still not consistently calling the District to report late buses and frequently doesn't know they are running late.
- It is very difficult to get through to Kickert on the telephone. When District officials do get through, they are often on hold for up to 20 minutes.
- Bus videos have not always been available when requested.
- Communication is VERY poor.

Steps Taken by District 162

- A Kickert employee has been placed at District 162 offices to assist in communication.
- District officials have met with another local bus company that stands ready to assist with some routes, if needed.
- Administration has deducted the cost of these late and uncovered routes from Kickert's payments, as per the contract.

Dr. Davis stated that there has been no improvement in service since last month. She remarked that one of the issues that she is most concerned about is the lack of communication from Kickert to the District. Dr. Davis questioned whether Kickert's poor service to the District is due to disorganization or disrespect. She insisted that Kickert place an administrator on-site at the District Office to assist with handling any transportation issues that arise.

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Mr. John Benish Jr., president and chief operating officer of Cook-Illinois, the parent company of Kickert, addressed the Board and Dr. Davis regarding the bus transportation matter. He acknowledged the problems with service and stated that they were due to the company's organization problems. He noted that Kickert is bringing in new management and that the company is hiring a new dispatcher. He also noted that the company has purchased 30 buses and that it is changing the way it manages its bus drivers.

Dr. Davis stated that she had not met Mr. Benish prior to his appearance at the Board meeting. She further stated that Kickert issued a written apology to the District and its families and that the letter of apology is posted on the District's website. Dr. Davis complained that Charmaine, the Kickert employee assigned to be on-site at the District Office, is not a decision maker. Dr. Davis stated that she is looking into the possibility of the District purchasing its own fleet of buses. She requested that Kickert communicate directly to either Mr. Craig Englert or Ms. Debbie Szczecina, the District's transportation director. She further stated that she does not want Kickert to communicate with Transportation Assistant Janice McCoy Robertson, regarding transportation matters. Dr. Davis noted that Ms. McCoy Robertson was remiss in permitting Kickert representatives into the District Office without administrator knowledge or consent.

Mr. Simpkins questioned whether Kickert's problems are the result of an over-commitment to other school districts or a shortage of equipment. He said that he believes that Kickert is shorthanded. Mr. Benish disagreed with Mr. Simpkin's assertion, reiterating that Kickert's problems are due primarily to the company's disorganization.

Mr. Englert stated that the District experienced similar problems with Kickert last year but not to this extent.

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Mr. Murphy commented that the health and safety of the students is of the utmost concern. He asked if the bus drivers have daily checklists that they follow. Mr. Benish responded that the drivers perform a daily pre-trip exam of their buses to check for problems. Mr. Murphy asked how drivers are held accountable. Mr. Benish responded that the drivers are written up for infractions. He also noted that the company uses a point system, which tracks driver infractions and assigns points/demerits based on the severity of the infraction.

Dr. Davis distinguished between minor cause infractions and major cause infractions. She noted that the raccoon incident is a major cause infraction.

Mr. Bean mentioned that Wal-Mart recently raised the salaries of their employees, and as a result, the employee talent base improved. He noted that many of Wal-Mart's problems with customer service and productivity self-corrected. Mr. Bean commented that this might be something for Kickert to consider.

Mrs. Green questioned Mr. Benish about Kickert's parent company and its subsidiaries, Cook-Illinois. Mr. Benish responded to her query confirming that Cook-Illinois is a family-owned business that owns 14 subsidiary bus companies, including Kickert. Mrs. Green commented that Cook-Illinois has "bought up the competition."

Mrs. McCray asked whether Kickert is having problems with delivering service to other school districts. Mr. Benish responded that District 162's routes are connected to other local districts' routes.

Dr. Davis reiterated that she wants Kickert to assign an administrator to the District Office—someone who will communicate with the District and act as a liaison between the District and the bus company.

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Dr. Davis stated that she does not believe that Kickert cares about the District. She questioned why this was the case. She stated that she met with 12 other local superintendents from different areas in order to gauge their experiences with Kickert. She noted that, based on these meetings, it appears that the school districts in the south suburbs are the only ones experiencing difficulty with Kickert's bus service. Dr. Davis remarked that Kickert bought up all of the competition and is taking advantage of the District. She noted that Kickert has exhibited a lack of concern, offering an apology for the bad service with no improvement.

Dr. Davis stated that she "insists on better service." She noted that the District is considering joining other districts to go out to bid for other transportation services or to develop an alternate transportation plan.

Mrs. Rodman McCray remarked that there has been no difference in the subpar level of bus service that the District has been receiving from last month to the present. She stated that the poor service that the District has been receiving is "beyond the pale." She noted that the District serves 1,000 fewer students than it did in the past due to a drop in enrollment. She queried, "How did service get worse?" She stated that Kickert is providing unacceptable service.

Dr. Davis suggested that Mr. Benish meet with Mr. Englert after the Board meeting.

Illinois School Graduate Qualifies for State Tennis Finals

Dr. Davis announced that Ashley Meeky, Illinois School graduate and current Southland College Prep freshman, took first place at the tennis sectionals. Miss Meeky will now represent Southland at the state competition.

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Math Video

Dr. Davis presented a video created by District 162 staff, based on Carpool Karaoke and featuring District 162 teachers singing about math facts. She issued a challenge to the District's parent-teacher organizations, parents, and families to create their own two-minute videos about teaching math facts. She noted that contest rules and instructions will be posted on the District website. Dr. Davis announced that the winning school(s) will receive \$500 and prizes will be awarded to the families with the best videos at the November 2016 Board meeting.

The Board members were challenged to produce a math video of their own. They accepted the challenge and will produce a video for exhibition purposes only. Mr. Daniel Evans, technology director, will assist them in producing their video.

Mrs. Gordon thanked the PTO representatives for attending the Board meeting.

LEGISLATION

Nothing at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Nothing at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Nothing at this time.

BOARD MEMBER ISSUES/REPORTS

Nothing at this time.

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AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

Nothing at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Rodman McCray adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.


President


Secretary