

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 64  
Minutes of the Special Education Board Committee Meeting  
at 6:00 p.m. on September 25, 2018  
Lincoln Middle School - LRC  
200 S. Lincoln Ave, Park Ridge, IL 60068**

Board of Education member and committee co-chair Fred Sanchez called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Board of Education member and committee co-chair Larry Ryles was absent. Other committee members in attendance were: Rick Van Roeyen, Miki Tesija, Amy Brown, Kristin Davids, Barb Spiewak, and Katherine Schneider. Also present were: Superintendent Laurie Heinz, Director of Student Services Lea Anne Frost, and Assistant Director of Student Services Sue Waughon.

Board President Anthony Borrelli and four members of the public were in the audience.

**Welcome and Introduction of Committee Members**

Board member Sanchez invited committee members to introduce themselves. After introductions by all committee members, Board member Sanchez acknowledged there were many great volunteers willing to participate on the committee. He reported that the goal for selection of committee members was to ensure diversity while remaining conscience of the need to limit size so the committee could function effectively. Board member Sanchez thanked committee members for their time and dedication to the committee and improvement efforts within the special education department.

**Review of Purpose, Role and Focus of Special Education Board Committee**

Board member Sanchez reported that the primary purpose of the committee was to re-establish trust that was lost with some of our parents. He shared that he anticipates the committee to function as a conduit to PT3 with the goal of earning back trust from parents so there is a shared belief that District 64 is doing everything it can to make all students successful in their schools. Board member Sanchez recognized that PT3 is a very robust group charged with a number of tasks to tackle resulting from the spring external audit and internal review. He noted that PT3 would be doing a lot of the work to reach key targets. Board member Sanchez noted his perceived vision for the committee was that it would not be a standing committee over multiple years. He suggested that instead, the committee would be dissolved after one year with the expectation that confidence in Dr. Frost and Dr. Heinz had been reestablished to ensure the needs of students with 504s and IEPs were being served appropriately. Committee member Tesija asked for clarification on the expected scope of the committee. Board member Sanchez clarified that the committee would function as a conduit to PT3 with an understanding that work

completed through PT3 would guide the committee. Committee member Tesija shared that many parents have felt very isolated in the past and noted trends in shared concerns among parents. She suggested the committee should also be a conduit to parents to ensure the Board maintains awareness of unresolved issues with parents. Board member Sanchez responded that the committee is intended to be fluid through ongoing feedback with PT3. Committee member Tesija expressed concerns with dissolving the committee after one year, because parents believe there should be a system for permanent oversight of special education services. Committee member Van Roeyen concurred that the committee should be an agent of advocacy for both parents and PT3.

Committee member Van Roeyen inquired about the reason the committee needed to adhere to guidelines within the Open Meetings Act (OMA). Board member Sanchez responded that a Board committee must be compliant with OMA. He explained that all business related to the committee needs to be conducted during scheduled committee meetings. Board member Sanchez emphasized the importance of complying with OMA and reiterated the need for committee members to complete the online training found on the website of the Illinois Attorney General. Dr. Heinz commented that she would invite legal counsel Tony Loizzi to attend an upcoming committee meeting for further elaboration on expectations of committee members within the guidelines of OMA. Dr. Heinz reminded the committee that they should not attempt to address shared concerns or problems by themselves, but instead bring them back to the committee for full discussion. Dr. Heinz discussed the need for two-way communication with administrators so they remain knowledgeable of concerns or problems. Board President Borrelli summarized reasons for development of the committee as the Board's response to the concerns shared by parents. He emphasized the important task of the committee to determine its purpose within the context and understanding of PT3's goals. Board President Borrelli suggested that committee members' experiences may guide the direction of the committee toward identification of its purpose and work.

### **Overview of the Special Education External Audit and 100-Day Internal Review**

Dr. Frost provided an overview of the two audits/reviews completed this past spring through compilation of the findings from both audits. Dr. Frost highlighted four target themes identified throughout the two audits: staffing, professional development, consistency, and message of inclusion. Dr. Frost commented that progress on these four target themes will be reported monthly to the Board. Committee member Schneider asked when steps toward progress on the four target themes will begin. Dr. Heinz reported that steps already began back in January under the direction and guidance of past Interim Director of Student Services Mike Padavic. Dr. Heinz shared that progress continued throughout the summer months when Dr. Frost and Ms. Waughon assumed their roles of Director of Student Services and Assistant Director of Student Services.

### **Review of the August and September Special Education Updates presented to Board of Education**

Dr. Frost provided an update on the recent activities undertaken since the school year got underway. She reviewed the special education updates provided to the Board during their meetings on August 27, 2018 and September 24, 2018. Dr. Frost shared that a staffing needs assessment will be distributed in November, which will provide information needed to begin planning for 2019-20 staffing projections. Dr. Heinz highlighted the new staff hired to provide additional supports for students, including a special education coordinator, board certified behavior analyst, and a psychologist. Dr. Heinz previewed the need for an additional increase in next year's staffing projections to include a half-time special education coordinator. Ms. Brown asked how District 64 is addressing the issue that one instructional teacher is teaching students across too many grade levels. Dr. Frost replied that there has been need to complete deviation applications (waivers) for two schools as a result of this issue. Dr. Heinz shared that the need for the deviation applications linked to building schedules. Dr. Heinz highlighted discussions around building schedules that are currently occurring with middle school teams, but will also be occurring with elementary school teams. Committee member Van Roeyen shared there are regulations from the state that determine class size limitations and age ranges for students. He commented that it seems like proposed actions shared by Dr. Frost will address the need for deviation applications in upcoming years. Dr. Heinz reiterated that building administrators closely looked at building schedules to monitor age differences within instructional classrooms receiving instruction at the same time.

Committee member Tesija inquired about the consistency of practices across schools specific to availability of a teacher certified in the Wilson Reading System for students. Dr. Frost replied there is not a teacher certified in the Wilson Reading System in all buildings. However, Dr. Frost commented that many teachers are piloting various curricular resources in multiple buildings. They have received training specific to the curriculums they are piloting with the intent to expand curriculum options for use with students across the District. Dr. Heinz emphasized that a specific methodology and use of specific curriculum should not make its way into IEPs with understanding that curriculum decisions are made through influence of the teachers' expertise about students. Dr. Heinz reported that curriculum decisions are made by District 64 based upon the needs of students. Dr. Frost emphasized the goal is to develop a menu of curriculum options to align with those offered through tiered interventions that are part of the District's Multi Tier System of Supports (MTSS). Committee member Tesija asked for clarification of steps taken by administrators in discussions with parents who really believe they have researched the best curriculum for their student, but it differs from the proposed curriculum of District 64. Dr. Frost responded that while the curriculum choice may differ, it is important to recognize there are

multiple curriculum choices that embrace very similar methodologies. She emphasized it would be impossible to sustain implementation of all curriculum choices brought forth by parents. Dr. Frost again shared the goal is to identify a menu of quality curriculum options with intent that teams can determine the best one based upon students' needs. Committee member Tesija suggested the importance to provide parents research to support curriculum decisions made by District 64. Committee member Van Roeyen reminded the committee that all curriculum options available to students who are non-disabled are also available to students who are disabled. Dr. Heinz suggested that development and participation in the process of facilitated IEPs will help foster open conversations with parents that include discussions about curriculum options. Dr. Frost provided response to a question from the public to clarify that the curriculum pilots are inter-dispersed across schools. Dr. Frost reported that all teachers involved with curriculum pilots have received training to implement the curriculum pilots.

Dr. Frost reported that the department is focused on creating and ensuring consistency with procedures and processes through documentation of references for use by all schools. Further, Dr. Frost emphasized the expectation for communication with buildings and indicated that a bi-weekly department newsletter is sent to all student services team members, including teaching assistants. Dr. Heinz acknowledged that a similar newsletter for parents would be a goal for the committee in that committee members could provide feedback on potential topics for a parent newsletter. Committee member Van Roeyen commented that a parent newsletter would be very informative to parents. Committee member Brown suggested need for direct communication with parents of students who have IEPs or 504 Plans, possibly through an email blast. Dr. Heinz agreed on the need for parent communication and suggested that some parts of the newsletter sent to student services team members would be helpful for parents as well. Dr. Frost acknowledged overlap with responsibilities of PT3, because communication with parents is already a prioritized goal for PT3. Dr. Heinz summarized a discussion with District 64 PTA/PTO Presidents about creating a special education PTA/PTO that is an extension of each building's PTO/PTA. She commented that building PTA/PTOs will be asking for a representative to serve as the liaison for special education parents. Committee member Brown emphasized the need for communication with parents to be across the District versus within buildings. Board member Tesija shared agreement with development of a special education PTA/PTO. Dr. Heinz will continue to work with District 64 PTA/PTOs to identify building representatives who are willing to serve as special education liaisons. She will also share upcoming meeting dates of building PTA/PTOs. Committee member Tesija will contact the informal parent support group for discussion about the possibility for them to be merged with a special education PTA/PTO.

Board President Borrelli complimented Dr. Frost on her presentations. He acknowledged identification of the four main target themes and inquired about development processes to ensure

parents are informed of responsive steps taken to align practices and procedures with the four main target themes. Dr. Frost referenced the Student Services website, where many documents and resources can be found by parents. Board President Borelli suggested need of a special education manual for parents. He further inquired about the possibility to develop a chart that can be easily referenced to document responsive steps taken to align practices and procedures with the four main target themes. Dr. Frost previewed a document that includes all responsive steps taken thus far that is categorized by the four main target areas/themes. Board President Borrelli asked if it could be shared with parents. Dr. Frost responded that all accomplishments are included in her monthly reports to the Board. Dr. Heinz shared that the document Dr. Frost previewed is a component of Dr. Frost's goals. She stated that while Dr. Frost includes all accomplishments in her monthly Board reports, a compilation of them will be presented to the Board at the end of the school year. Dr. Heinz shared the website for the committee where all referenced documents and presentations will be maintained for quick reference by committee members.

### **Scheduling Upcoming Meeting**

Board member Sanchez proposed scheduling meetings to coordinate with PT3 sessions. Dr. Heinz suggested the next agenda for the committee should be focused on the opportunity for committee members to gain a better understanding of PT3. In addition, she suggested the need for members to complete the OMA training. Committee member Tesija asked for a brief overview of OMA so that committee members could better understand appropriate actions and expectations outside of committee meetings. Board member Sanchez suggested members create a separate personal email solely intended to be used for communications with committee members. Committee member Van Roeyen concurred with the suggestion. The committee agreed to table scheduling of upcoming meetings until PT3 determines its meeting schedule.

### **Public Comments**

Board member Sanchez invited public comments; none were received.

### **Adjournment**

At 7:50 p.m., it was moved by Board member Sanchez and seconded by committee member Van Roeyen to adjourn, which was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Submitted by Sue Waughon, Secretary for the Meeting