

District 181 PTO President Meeting Minutes
Provided by Bridget McGuiggan, Director of Communications
October 3, 2017 • Location: Clarendon Hills Middle School

Call to Order

9:07am

Introductions

PTO Presidents, CHMS PTO Executive Board, CHMS Principal Levi Brown, Board of Education PTO Liaison Jennifer Burns, Superintendent Dr. Don White, and Director of Communications Bridget McGuiggan

Special Guests: Dr. Bruce Law and Karen Warner from Hinsdale Township High School District 86

Minutes (September 7, 2017)

Approved as presented.

Guest Presentation - District 86

District 86 Superintendent Dr. Bruce Law was a guest presenter at the PTO President meeting. He explained that their Board of Education and administration have been discussing solutions to resolve their "enrollment imbalance problem." Hinsdale Central High School is overcrowded while Hinsdale South High School has space. Dr. Law has been visiting feeder school PTOs and speaking with community members and said he has been hearing consistently that the District's focus should be on facilities, not enrollment. He made a recommendation to that effect during the D86 Board meeting on October 2, 2017. The D86 Board agreed that the administration should not send the mailer that had been prepared on enrollment issues. Specific next steps for the District have not yet been determined, but related discussion will take place during their Facilities Committee meeting on October 10, 2017.

PTO President meeting attendees then shared questions with Dr. Law. In regard to whether a scientific poll or community survey would be sent, Dr. Law said he anticipates a survey on facilities and the community's desires for D86 schools would be sent in the future, but nothing is planned at this time. Dr. Law described the District's Facilities Master Plan development and continued efforts to definitively answer questions about capacity and utilization, which he described as complicated issues. PTO Presidents then individually shared their perspectives on whether D86 should consider a referendum, when a referendum might be placed on the ballot, the challenges of building support among all groups of voters, and ideas for doing so. Dr. Law commented on the importance of hearing from community members before a second referendum question would be presented. Dr. Law also said that the D86 Board can take action to address immediate facility needs should they arise, but discussed the benefit of having a long-term, proactive facilities plan in place. Per a question, he has suggested creation of a strategic plan for D86, but their Board indicated the District's focus should be first on addressing the enrollment and facilities issues. He then addressed the ideas that have been discussed around creating a Magnet School or International Baccalaureate (IB) program in the District, and the need to not only serve students who are struggling or advanced learners, but those "in the middle," as well. A meeting attendee commented on the need for D86 to learn from similar facilities issues happening in like districts around the nation. Per a question, Dr. Law said the concept of "trailers" to address over-crowding has been discussed but commented on the cost for rental and the concern that once in place, it can take time for them to be phased out of use.

Per a question, Ms. Warner shared information on how community members can sign up for D86 news. Ms. McGuiggan said she would work with Ms. Warner to provide text to school newsletter coordinators with that information so it can be shared with all families.

Other D86 Topics

- In response to a question, Dr. Law said there is a committee discussing the topic of final exams and how to assess students in other ways. The committee has not yet formed a recommendation. He commented on the District's focus on the "whole child" and students' well-being.
- In response to a question, Dr. Law explained issues related to P.E. exemptions for varsity athletes and marching band members, as well as recent legislation which allows districts to have P.E. required three days a week instead of five days a week.

District 181 Report

- There is an Academic Success Committee meeting on October 5. Topics include:
 - Grade 5 Accelerated Math - After reviewing data and hearing some concerns from staff and parents, the administration is "regrouping" on the plan for curriculum / pacing for these students.
 - Securing Assessments - We are discussing how to balance the need to communicate assessment information to families while maintaining the security of test questions.
 - Extended School Year Update, Special Education Procedural Manual, Procedural Manual Frequently Asked Questions, Special Education Speech Rubric
 - Summer Learning Update
 - November Institute Day and Professional Development Planning
 - 2017-18 PSAT - It was noted that Hinsdale Central High School is no longer using this test for placement, and so the question has been raised about whether the test should be given to provide students exposure or not administer it to reduce the amount of testing for students. It was clarified that students could still opt to take it elsewhere on their own. A comment was shared that D86 is now providing freshmen and sophomores with the opportunity to take the National Merit exam, so that may address the need to give them "exposure" to advanced test questions once they get into high school.
- Dr. White said Digital Learning implementation and the transition to Skyward are going well. Per a question, he said there has not been discussion about moving to 1:1 in Grades K-2. He said we need to "get better at what we're doing now" and need to "assess where we are academically and financially" before such conversation. Ms. McGuiggan confirmed that communication will continue to be sent to parents about tips and tools related to Skyward use. In regard to Canvas, Dr. White said we have a strong three-year phase-in plan, however implementation is not going as well as we had hoped, in particular because it is not aligning to Skyward as well as the company had indicated it would. In the meantime, he said tools like Google Classroom are working well.
- In Human Resources, Dr. White said staffing is going well and positions are filled. There is a substitute staff shortage in D181 and throughout the state. In Business, Dr. White noted that the 2017-18 Budget was adopted.
- In Communications, Ms. McGuiggan said she welcomes feedback on the District's new e-newsletter format. She also noted that she plans to show PTO Presidents a preview of the D181 mobile app at the November meeting.
- In regard to Board activities, Dr. White commented on improvements being made to the flow of communication and information with Board Committees under Board President Burns' leadership. He also noted that the Bond Referendum Review and Accountability Committee has produced a report with conclusions and next steps (posted on the D181 website) and said that group is meeting next on October 16. He also remarked that the Board has a Request for Proposals open now for legal services.
- Ms. McGuiggan commented on the recent rail safety tragedy in Clarendon Hills. She and Dr. White applauded social workers, administrators, and other staff, as well as emergency responders, for their efforts in response to the situation. Ms. McGuiggan said the D181 Safety & Crisis Committee would be discussing rail safety and student training on that topic during their next meeting. Mr. Brown commented on the upcoming Safety Day at CHMS, which will have rotations on different topics; rail safety will be one of the stations.

PTO-Foundation-Board-Admin Partnership

Ms. McGuiggan said development of the previously shared document is nearly finished, and the only anticipated change is with the timeline. Based on conversation with Foundation leadership, she anticipates their focus for 2017-18 will be the continued development of their "Community Connections Database." Ms. McGuiggan said she will be working to reconvene representatives from the four groups to continue discussion around partnerships and working together.

Open Enrollment

Per a question, Ms. Burns and Dr. White noted that the topic of Open Enrollment (which was brought up at the September PTO President meeting) was discussed at length by the Board during the September 25, 2017 Business meeting and will be a continued discussion point, as there may be changes to policy and procedure.

For easy reference, the text below is from the 9/25/17 Board Summary regarding open enrollment:

...Mr. Munch and Superintendent Dr. Don White then presented information on open enrollment, a practice that allows families to request that their child attend an in-District school other than their home school. Dr. White described the process and timeline for open enrollment requests and reviews, noting that he consults with principals and Mr. Munch in considering implications on staffing, among other factors. Individual Board members raised concerns about allowing open enrollment a school that is over-crowded or already experiencing a significant increase in students (i.e. due to population growth in the area), and concerns about allowing a large number of students within a specific grade to move. The number of open enrollments into Madison (18 students) and out of Oak (14) was specifically highlighted. Some Board members expressed agreement with parent concerns raised during public comment related to the impact of open enrollment on space, class sizes, and resources. It was suggested that open enrollment be "the exception and not the norm," and that kindergarten open enrollment should not be permitted. Dr. White said he would provide a report showing data on parents' reasons for requesting open enrollment. It was suggested that policy language be revised to tighten open enrollment procedures. It was requested that the figures posted on BoardDocs be reviewed for accuracy and that resource allocation between schools be reviewed for positions such as Differentiaion Specialists given the shift in demand due to current demographics and open enrollment.

Other Topics

- PTO Insurance will be a topic for discussion at the November meeting.
- Principal Appreciation Week begins October 16; Principal Appreciation Day is October 20. Ms. McGuiggan encouraged PTO members to fill in and review the Google Doc she shared with ideas for Appreciation Week. Per a request to share ideas, Monroe noted they are doing "Hats On for Horne" which will encourage students to wear a hat to school if they bring in a \$1 donation - contributions will be given to the charity of Mr. Horne's choice.
- A PTO had asked Ms. McGuiggan if she had assembly ideas. She shared a Google Doc with them and said she would open that to all PTOs. A question was asked about science-related assembly ideas. NIU STEM was suggested and Ms. McGuiggan said would reach out to The Lane to ask for ideas, as they host a Science Olympiad event annually.
- PTOs agreed that if it rains on Walk to School Day (October 4), they all move activities into the gym as needed.

Adjourn

10:45am