

Madison Metropolitan School District
Madison, Wisconsin

Daniel A. Nerad, Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes for SPECIAL MEETING-WORKSHOP
Open Session
December 8, 2008

Doyle Administration Building
545 West Dayton Street
Room 103
Madison, Wisconsin

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Arlene Silveira at 8:05 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Maya Cole, Ed Hughes, Lucy Mathiak, Marj Passman, Arlene Silveira

MEMBERS ABSENT: Beth Moss, Johnny Winston, Jr.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PRESENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Steve Hartley, Erik Kass, Dan Nerad, Joe Quick, Barbara Lehman-Recording Secretary

ATTENDEES: Sen. Fred Risser, Sen. Mark Miller, Rep. Mark Pocan, Rep. Spencer Black, Rep. Sondy Pope-Roberts, Rep. Joe Parisi, Rep.-elect Kelda Roys

Staff: Tryg Knutson (representing Sen. Jon Erpenbach), Brian Rieselman (representing Rep. Terese Berceau), Sarah Briganti (with Sen. Risser), John Anderson (w/Sen. Miller)

Legislators' comments are in italics.

1. Discussion between School Board and the MMSD State Legislative Delegation to Identify and Discuss: (a) Reaction to School Finance Proposals; and (b) Issues affecting Public Schools as related to the State Biennial Budget for 2009-11

(Packets included the School Finance Network funding proposal (10/08—Draft 15) and a brief description of the more pertinent issues for MMSD from Superintendent Burmaster's recommendations for the Governor's 2009-11 budget. Copies are attached to the original of these minutes.)

Mr. Quick commented that these opportunities have been valuable from both perspectives to get a better sense of some of the problems that the legislature is confronted with and some issues that the district and school board members have.

School Finance Network Proposal

- *Ms. Pope-Roberts, Chair of the Education Committee, indicated that they are waiting for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to meet in January and put their name to it and roll it out. It remains to be seen whether all the groups will join as one. They have been offered the opportunity for a public hearing. All other proposals seem to come short of what is needed.*
- *Need to move the priority from corrections to education.*
- *School Finance Network plan is at least addressing some of those things that the current formula is not adequately meeting.*

Qualified Economic Offer (QEO) and Revenue Caps

- *Difficult to remove one without the other. Difficult to remove either under these unique economic conditions. Fear is that any proposal that is acted on at this point is probably going to be another band-aid for a gaping hole. Not the time to start over. Have to provide for adequate funding and tell ourselves that we have not reached the end.*
- *Inherently difficult and inequitable that districts are forced to use referenda. Appreciate the legislature's willingness to schedule a hearing. There is a lack of public policy discussion to get the marbles on the table. Now is a good time; whether or not it can be implemented is a secondary issue. Want to continue to get the point across that it would be very helpful not to remove the QEO without doing something to the revenue cap.*
- *Incumbent on everyone to talk about education as an investment.*

Achievement Gap/Poverty Levels

- ❖ MMSD demographics are changing very dramatically. Things have evolved so quickly. The percentage of poor children in this district is 43 percent on free and reduced lunch; this has doubled in the last ten years.
- ❖ *Achievement gap and poverty need to be addressed state-wide.*

General Outlook

- ❖ What do you expect to happen in the budget that will start to push forward some of these issues?
- ❖ *Hoping Obama will take some pressure off with the health care plan. It is another band-aid but may help.*
- ❖ *Safe assumption that there will not likely be any new revenues. Wisconsin has to figure out how to bring some in. Might be some good news as part of the Obama package for K-12 funding, especially on the mandates side. Doubtful that the state will deliver good fiscal news in the next 12 months. Think we will have major improvement in the economy in the years to come. Time to talk about what we can do in the future. When the economy improves, it would be good to be prepared with plans.*
- ❖ *Looking forward to the President's naming the next Education Secretary.*
- ❖ *Gov. Doyle has made education his number one priority so there is some strength there too.*
- ❖ *For the first time in ten years, the legislature will have the opportunity to have a responsible discussion about school funding. Leadership change will increase the likelihood of finding better and more responsible ways to fund preK-12 education.*
- ❖ We are heartened by that and, to any extent that we can, would like to be part of that.

Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K)

- ❖ MMSD had this 4K conversation a few years back and is preparing to have another conversation. It is uncertain whether it is financially viable. There are other issues beyond costing. The community partners want to have this conversation again. It will be a model blending school-based and community-based programming. Having to use a three-year rolling average for enrollment has stymied us. The MMSD is in the minority now among school districts who have 4K.
- ❖ *Tweaks can help that but may not be direct infusions of cash. We are going to be really creative. Even if it has fiscal impact, does not mean that we cannot put it into a budget package.*
- ❖ DPI has criteria that includes start-up money for 4K which is currently at \$3 million. Superintendent Burmaster proposed doubling that. Hoping the \$3 million can stay there even though it will not cover the costs completely. *Think that is a tweaking piece.*

School Safety

- ❖ *School Safety Committee—that is one thing we are hoping to do, create some holes in the revenue situation for things like school safety. Will be making some progress on that in the next week.*
- ❖ Luther Olson talked about allowing 1-2% to be spent for school safety outside the revenue limits of the whole budget.

Facilities

- ❖ *Creating a no-cost option for schools to retrofit buildings so they are more efficient.*

Coalitions

- ❖ *If there are any coalitions looking on the revenue side, be active with those. First priority is to cut. It is going to be very likely that we have to talk about revenues. Larger coalitions help. When the economy gets better, that would help. Pick the right time to get us together. Appreciate your ideas. Wan to emphasize that if the Board could tie in with the rest of the state, there is strength in numbers. Some people look at Madison as a separate entity. Current \$5 billion deficit, \$1,000 per person, is not a small amount of money.*
- ❖ At the same time, there has to be continuing investment in ensuring that kids do well. Eventually it will be around workforce issues. If we do well, others do well. We want to partner with you. Hard to envision that things turned this bad but that has to be faced.
- ❖ *Were not able to talk about it in earlier years now we can. Have to address the revenue side. Have to fill a hole. However, it will help Wisconsin recover its economy to stay ahead or abreast of the national economy. Everyone wants to see that happen.*

MMSD Priorities

- ❖ *If there were no new money, top few things that you would like us to look at.*
- ❖ Categoricals addressing high needs, 4K, SAGE, high poverty, anything with revenue limit flexibility, school safety in the short-term would help.

- ❖ *Invite Joe Quick back in January to see what we can get included in the governor's budget.*
- ❖ Better to go after small things v. broader look at flexibility.
- ❖ *Democrats have been in the minority for 14 years. Proposal should include very specific things that are hard to argue. Many colleagues are at least talking about school funding; the message is pretty clear that this is a high-priority issue.*
- ❖ This board has been involved with the WASB and Dane County School Boards Consortium and they are at a point where they are going to have their own agenda which you will hear over and over again. We are going to try to come up with a message throughout the county consistently. By doing that, we will hit some of the real stories in the schools and it will not be just Madison.
- ❖ *Look into other consortiums as well, e.g., emergency software, technology never quite gets to the 2/3, shift in demographics--that is a concern. We do spend a lot of money on corrections and not enough for education. For us this is a new time to look back and say what is our vision going to be for education in the state; hope you will be able to articulate that as well. Local media is a good resource, particularly if they cover the whole state.*
- ❖ *Have to make everyone aware of the things that are being done that go beyond teaching children. What have you seen that affects your mission?*
- ❖ More and more principals will tell you growing numbers of homeless children, unmet medical needs, number of emotional needs, kids in crisis, percentage of free and reduced lunch is telling. Poverty density research indicates the tipping point is up to 50 percent and we are at 43 percent; want to prevent that from happening.

Housing

- ❖ Next highest percentage is in Dane County.
- ❖ *Boundaries are not co-terminus. Have you ever heard suburban v. urban bearing the burden? Have you worked with the city on this issue?*
- ❖ Very general discussion about that with the mayor. Not at that level of specificity. We are committed to continuing those conversations. Hope it can be dealt with long term in this county. Poverty is not just in Milwaukee. Needs more conversation. There are a lot of parents who work in communities that they cannot necessarily afford to live in. There are transportation issues, etc. City is going to evolve in the way that we are seeing as a district. Do not think that people yet understand the shift in demographics.

Open Enrollment

- ❖ Open enrollment law disproportionate race issues have been stopped now. In order to replace the race with socioeconomic status, the district would have to demonstrate that there would be disproportionality. Leopold community faces these issues and they are more vulnerable because they are so close to another district. We support parental choice but now see that the disproportionate family income has to be considered. Know that would be difficult but would help us.
- ❖ *Can you stop from using economic criteria and just use space? Have you seen suburban parents coming out?*
- ❖ For every one that comes in, 2.5-3 go out. If you do not have diversity in your belly for your children, that is where a lot of those decisions need to be made. It is not just financial erosion but also the tipping point on poverty density. We are trying to learn more about how we are being affected. **We will share that data with you, including those that transfer out or never entered in from private school.**
- ❖ This is also probably under-reported at the high schools. Have to address that status. Same thing happens with homeless because they do not report it. Lot of stories from the schools about kids who do not want to go on winter break. Weeks before the breaks are more difficult.
- ❖ Public discourse becomes vicious and mean-spirited when we have real needs.

Breakfast Program

- ❖ *Do not support legislation that under-funds mandates for schools. We have 14 districts that do not offer lunch.*
- ❖ Critically needed in a district like this. Continue to feed kids into the summer. Submitting a resolution that deals with school lunches to get state support for schools to start using locally produced foods. Farms are already doing it. Biggest block is production facilities. If money comes from a federal source, we could benefit from a collaborative production facility.

We have great schools. It is about balance for us. The experts are dealing with the job but how do we approach the public? Personal stories are the best goodwill we have. A huge chunk of this city has no clue about how we have changed. It means we do things differently. There are more problems for those in

transition. We can deal with it; schools that are stable in their poverty levels are doing quite well. It is not that poor kids cannot learn, it is the emotional stress because of their living conditions. It is our job to do the best we can for them, but it comes back full cycle. We have cut social workers, psychologists, librarians, special education people, nurses, etc. Society is not helping our most vulnerable. We cannot afford to let that continue. If Madison cannot work out its problems who else can? *We have to provide free and equal educational opportunity for everyone in the state and we have not done that. Legislature needs to do that.*

Everyone expressed their commitment to working together.

4. *Adjournment*

It was moved by Marj Passman and seconded by Lucy Mathiak to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 a.m. Motion unanimously carried by those present.

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