

**League of Women Voters
Community High School District 99 Observers Report**

Board meeting attended: Special Meeting

Date and Location of meeting: 09 Apr 2018
Administrative Service Center, 6301 Springside Avenue

Meeting started: 7:00 pm **Meeting adjourned:** 8:00 pm

Board Members Absent/Tardy: Michael Davenport arrived at 7:03 p.m.

League Observer: Linda Derrig

Estimated Number Attending (excluding Board and Staff): approximately 12 persons in the audience at the start of the meeting including students and staff

Meetings are taped and posted at:

<http://www.csd99.org/boe/meeting-highlightsvideos.cfm>

Agenda can be found at:

<http://www.csd99.org/boe/Meeting-Agendas.cfm>

3) Student Perspectives:

A. Students from Downers Grove South presented curricular projects which were completed as part of their work in U.S. History, Library and Literacy program classes. The students researched a topic, conducted an in-depth interview on the topic, then wrote a script and created a video.

B. Student Board Member questions and comments. The South High student board member told the board that the school musical was coming up—"All Shook Up." The Mustang Trot—a 5k—was the prior weekend. Next up in terms of performance will be the children's play—James and the Giant Peach.

North High board member told the board that 564 students had walked out on April 14. She said many other students wore orange in solidarity and wrist bands tied to the event sold out before first period. She said all events were student led, but noted that Principal Schwartz did a good job of supporting the students. She said the March for our Lives in Downers Grove on March 24 was also heavily student led, in conjunction with the Brady group. "It felt good to see the community come together," she said. She talked about how DGN has a lot of good leaders. But, did note that all the leaders on these events were female.

4) Board Workshop

A. 2019 Title I District Plan:

Gina Ziccardi, Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning, presented. Ziccardi said the district was required to file a new plan last year. It is then required to revisit the plan annually. She said the 2017-18 plan is being extended for 2018-19.

The board was told the plan does not require a vote—the administration just wanted to make the board aware that it is being carried forward.

Title I is aimed at ensuring that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. The District 99 plan addresses both At-Risk and Gifted/Talented students.

- B. **Board Meeting Start Time:** Hank Thiele, Superintendent, requested the board consider moving the meeting start times (currently 7 p.m. for workshop meetings; 7:30 p.m. for business meetings) and move potential closed sessions on Workshop meeting nights until after the open meeting.

Discussion centered around the ability of board members to make an earlier start as well as the requirement for staff to stay through business meetings, when most staff is not present at closed session meetings (i.e. extended their work day). In addition, it was generally agreed that the start time for the two meetings should be aligned.

A tentative plan to start both meetings at 6:30 p.m. and move closed sessions to after the open sessions received agreement from all board members.

To accommodate the earlier start, it was discussed that the board may relax its policy on participating in a board meeting remotely. Superintendent Thiele noted that many boards have policies that allow members to participate in meetings, but not vote when participating remotely.

The change in meeting start time will be put on the Superintendent's Report at the Monday, April 16, 2018 business meeting for approval.

- C. **Master Facility Plan Community Engagement Update:** Board President Nancy Kupka asked to recognize those people who helped to get the vote to secure funding for the master facility update plan—her recognition included staff, administration and three community members.

Thiele presented the official vote count as certified that morning:

- 22,016 total votes cast
- 13,661 votes in favor (62.05%)
- 8,355 votes opposed (37.95%)

He acknowledged that the strong support is the result of “decades of good work in your community.” And said it was a testament to the legacy of District 99 in this community built over the past 90 years. He also thanked the community for supporting the district.

He then told the board, “now, the work begins,” to laughter from board members.

The first step will be building out a design plan for the work. He said, the district had opted not to spend upfront money on significant design work in case the referendum had not been passed.

The design process, he said, will mirror the planning process, including significant community engagement.

There will be an overall planning team and Thiele requested that one board member serve on that team. In addition, each of the unique projects, e.g. South High auditorium, North High cafeteria, will have a design team and he requested that board members sign up to help with each. Board members were told to let the administration know which areas they would like to be involved in by Friday, April 13. He said board members are invited to be as involved “as you’d like to be.”

The general process, Thiele outlined, will be brain storming/discussion leading to an initial design. The initial design will then be presented publicly for feedback. After securing input, a second/revised design will be presented publicly for feedback, before design is finalized. He said the goal is to use the same process that was in place for community involvement and feedback during the referendum—emails, sharing of designs on the district website, presentations, etc. He noted the district wants the community to have a voice in the look and feel of the proposed changes.

Board Member Don Renner asked about a timeline for the design phase. Thiele said district staff would be having a kickoff meeting with the external design group on Friday, April 13, and that the first items would include timeline and budget.

The update will remain a standing agenda item for the board throughout the process.

Renner also asked whether air conditioning work would begin this summer. Thiele said the board will be presented contracts for the air conditioning work to begin this summer at its next business meeting. He told the board that this was the only item for which the district had worked significantly on design prior to the referendum.

Discussion then turned to the funding of the work. Mark Staehlin, district controller, said the initial bond issue would be for \$9 million. This would fund the air conditioning and some of the other initial work. The smaller sum allows the district to secure initial funding from local financial institutions, he said. And, rather than take a larger sum and pay interest on it, the goal is to marry up the bond issue to construction payouts. However, he noted there is an expectation of a rising interest rate market and potential volatility. If things get crazy, he said, the district would issue a larger amount.

Questioned by the board, Staehlin said there is a five-year window to issue the bonds and three-year window to then spend the dollars, which allows some flexibility.

5) Reception of Visitors- None