

**Board of Education Meeting
January 28, 2008**

The Board of Education of the Findlay City Schools met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. in the Library at Glenwood Middle School.

President Dysinger called the meeting to order. Present were: Dr. Browning arrived at 6:31 p.m., Mrs. Dysinger, Mr. Hoffman, Mrs. Lockard, Mr. Shrader, Superintendent Wittwer and Treasurer Barnhart.

2008-01-009 Executive Session

It was moved by Mr. Hoffman, seconded by Mr. Shrader to recess to executive session to discuss the potential purchase of land at 6:30 p.m.

Roll call: Mr. Hoffman, aye; Mr. Shrader, aye; Mrs. Dysinger, aye; Mrs. Lockard, aye. President Dysinger declared the motion carried.

The Board of Education returned to regular session at 7:05 p.m.

CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to Central's Power of the Pen team for winning regionals. "We the People" placed 1st in Columbus. Great job to Central's 8th grade boys' basketball team. Congratulations to the students who made it through their recent exams and the staff as well. Thank you to the FHS Hockey Team for serving lunch to the residents of Birchaven on Saturday. Welcome to the students from the University of Findlay who are observing the Community Forum.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/COMMUNITY FORUM

Review of Goals and Ground Rules for the Forum

Public Participation

1. Concern regarding the arts (FFE, choral choir, band, etc.) and students having to choose academics over one of those classes if FHS moves to an eight period day vs. the current nine period day.
 - a. FHS task force is addressing these types of issues and recommendations will be made to Dr. Wittwer by the fall of 2008. The task force is looking at other schools with different schedules to avoid this situation.
2. Concern regarding class sizes in primary schools. Parent states her child is in a classroom at Jefferson in 2nd grade with 26 students, while other schools have only 18 students per classroom. If kindergarten remains at 1/2 day, a child won't get attention as 1 child out of 25.
 - a. Dr. Wittwer indicates average class size is much lower than 26 (mean class size for all buildings K-5 is 20.9), but there have been some recent changes at Jefferson. To balance class size, have to look across the district and possibly hold open enrollment earlier. For kindergarten classes, will have to look at rooms and students.
3. Status of all day kindergarten.
 - a. Dr. Wittwer indicates he is very pleased with the two pilots this school year. There is a lot of data from the testing of these students to determine the results. Dr. Wittwer provided information to the finance committee recently. To move the entire district to all day kindergarten would cost approximately \$350,000 and require 4-5 additional teachers. Jefferson, Northview and Whittier are currently determining where these students could be placed within their buildings. Dr. Wittwer expects a recommendation will be made to the Board probably in February, provided there is space within each of the buildings and everything works out. No tuition would be charged for these programs. From a parent perspective, may need to poll parents to find out if this is what they want. Studies show all day kindergarten helps students get off to the right educational start and our students are showing same results – more in-depth school work and social interactions.
4. From a music teacher's perspective, concern about specials (art, music, and gym), needing more money and lunch periods for the all day kindergarten students. Asking that the Board look at all aspects when making a decision. Another community member feels there are more important issues than all day kindergarten – need to replace buildings first.
 - a. Dr. Wittwer expects that there may have to be specials added – probably 1 ½ - 2 FTEs (full-time equivalent teachers). Board member, Rick Hoffman, indicates the Board is challenging the administration to find the money and make it work. All day kindergarten is the foundation of education.
5. Concern that money should go to the buildings, not all day kindergarten.
 - a. Board member, Eric Browning, states the goal is to perform an assessment and convene as a committee – this is first priority. FCS is seeking exceptional funds from the state. This is the first step with much more to be done.
6. Question about the plan for Washington school.
 - a. Eric Browning states the plan for Washington is to not exist as it does today. Washington staff, students and parents deserve the support of the community. The Board wants to know from the staff, students and parents what they want to see done with Washington – build a new building,

transfer the students to another building? The Board wants to make the right decision, but will need input.

7. Hearing that there may be two new levies in the fall and if so, where is the money going?
 - a. Dr. Wittwer states there are no plans for a levy in the fall for operating purposes. He does expect there will be a renewal or replacement of an existing operating levy in 2009. Our district is working with OSFC (Ohio School Facilities Commission), not necessarily because of the flood, but because we need their assistance. From a building perspective, we need a plan before going to the public for money. There is a committee in place to develop community survey and expect to have a decision regarding company and rolling out the survey within the next couple of weeks.
8. Recommend caution to the Board when discussing plans for Central.
 - a. Past administrator and community member indicates the community believes Central Middle School should be used by the community. He states the social-economic diversity across middle schools is important. Look at the utilization of Central in the future. Great teachers are what make the difference in our buildings.
 - b. Rick Hoffman, who also serves on the facilities committee, indicates the committee needs input from the community as to what they want. The first step is this forum. There are plans in progress to create a community committee. People are beginning to think out of the box and getting creative.
9. Alternative school plan.
 - a. Dr. Wittwer indicates there is a committee chaired by Dr. Kathy Crates with Amy Scherer and Deb Rollins. He expects a recommendation by April. Findlay has great intervention strategies such as Findlay Digital Academy, programs for special needs students, etc.
10. Status of Central cafeteria.
 - a. Dennis McPheron, facilities director, indicates the district is waiting on a few pieces of equipment. Wiring is complete and expects the cafeteria will be functioning fully within a few weeks.
11. Are the middle schools and Washington a “package deal” where if the middle school plan doesn’t go through, then Washington doesn’t get attention?
 - a. The Board indicates these are separate issues. There are three different challenges/opportunities – Washington, the middle schools, and Millstream. There is an opportunity to bring Millstream under one roof, possibly partnering with Owens Community College.
 - b. Community member cautions the board on making the Millstream South building into a primary school again. Original concern was having a primary school so close to the high school.
12. Millstream teacher and parent perspective.
 - a. She was appreciative of seeing others from the recent stakeholders meeting. There is a need to bring Millstream under one roof. She agrees the primary school-aged students need attention and money for their program, but the Millstream students also need attention. There are students who can’t afford college or who aren’t college material.
 - b. Millstream parent states she was thankful that her daughter found the cosmetology program at Millstream. She is now working at a prestigious salon in Columbus.
13. Millstream – Board perspective.
 - a. Rick Hoffman states Kathy Wilson and Edie Wannemacher are doing a great job with putting programs together with Owens. The Board and administration want to see how much integration we can have which will lessen the bussing of students. Eric Browning indicates he is a big supporter of Millstream and feels it is under-promoted in the community. We need to look at 21st century learning for our students.
14. Middle Schools and Central.
 - a. Community member states when an architect evaluated Central several years ago, he indicates Central has more than 60 years left in terms of use, where current buildings are being built to only last 20-25 years.
15. Encourage Board to reach all parents in survey.
 - a. Board members agree we need input from as many people as possible. The community survey will target at least a statistically valid sample and there will also be opportunities for focus surveys, perhaps smaller groups on more specific topics as well. The Board plans to take action on feedback from these surveys.
16. Concern regarding open lunch periods at FHS – the freedom and influences the students have during this time and not needed for students.
 - a. Dr. Wittwer indicates this could be addressed with the FHS Task Force. Perhaps the open lunch would not be offered to freshmen and sophomores and earned incentive by the juniors and seniors. Recommends the community let the Board and Administration know if this is an important enough topic to tackle. Another concern might be having room for all students in the cafeteria at the high school if lunch periods were closed.
 - b. Board member, Barb Lockard, states her children did and are surviving open lunch with no issues.
 - c. FHS graduate indicates it was her first opportunity to manage money and she did not experience any issues. Students have to wait in line at restaurants, quickly eat their lunch and hurry back to school.

17. Appearance of Findlay High School.
 - a. Parent states he participated in volunteer day at FHS on Saturday and noted the high school was not clean. Others who were visiting the high school that day also commented on the lack of cleanliness.
 - b. Dennis McPherson indicates the cleanliness was brought up by the FHS Task Force and a survey was done by the staff to determine what to work on.
 - c. Board member, Barb Dysinger, indicates as a member of the FHS Task Force, she also participates in the "climate" subgroup who will be meeting all day on Friday, February 1st and discussing this topic.
18. School calendar change – Why changed and who was in favor?
 - a. Dr. Wittwer states the calendar committee met to develop this calendar. Dr. Wittwer, Eric Browning and Dee Groman (President of Findlay Education Association), along with representatives from all of the county schools met to create a joint calendar. The goal is to have a common calendar with the county to streamline the transportation for Millstream students as well as coordinate student school days. The meeting involved much discussion and feedback from many people. There are 14 different school districts that our calendar has to work with, along with attempting to meet the needs of the parents, students and staff. Students involved in the fair will receive excused absences for days missed. Many of the high school students involved in activities and sports begin those activities in early August.
 - b. A FCS 3rd grade teacher indicates her appreciation of the new calendar which allows teachers 3 more weeks of instruction time before state tests in May.
19. Capital improvements needed - not just operational.
 - a. Community member requests to see hands of those in attendance not employed by the schools – approximately 30 people from the private sector. He expresses his opinion of the purpose of schools to teach children to be productive members of the community. We need to bring everything together – create curb appeal to corporate jobs and companies. We've missed opportunities in the past from a community perspective with potential new businesses and many times it is due to the amenities. He feels the north and south ends are the areas to build new middle schools. We need to bring in city, county and federal government. Do our community members perceive good schools as an improvement to their property value?
20. Trojan Club meetings and facility needs.
 - a. Cross-country coach invites Board members to attend future Trojan Club meetings to help sort out the plans and their needs.
 - b. Eric Browning states any plan about facilities will incorporate athletics and be a community-wide project. Perhaps there is an opportunity to partner with the University of Findlay. Trojan Club issues will be involved in the February 11 Board meeting.
21. Why do we need 13 buildings for 6600 students?
 - a. Current enrollment is approximately 6350. Eric Browning indicates this is a good question and part of the facilities committee discussions. One point to keep in mind is that the atmosphere of the middle schools is critical.
22. What actions/research has been done to reduce the drop-out rate of African-American students from the 2006-2007 African-American students who failed the OGT test?
 - a. Craig Kupferberg, principal of FHS, indicates they are concerned with pass rates for all students. There are 2 subgroups which impact AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) – special needs and economically disadvantaged students, but also looking at all others, including African-American students. Meeting AYP is one of the 4 priorities of the school district.
23. What programs do we offer these students?
 - a. Craig Kupferberg states there are numerous intervention programs – academic lunches (one-on-one time); different online programs if student failed one or more parts of OGT; working with special ed. teachers to visit schools who are doing well in these areas; academic study halls – smaller groups of students with teachers who teach that subject of concern.
24. When FHS discovers remediation, how does it trickle down to middle schools and elementary schools?
 - a. Craig Kupferberg indicates he recently met with middle school and elementary principals. They have selected two districts to visit to see what they are doing for success.
25. Facilities and New School Calendar.
 - a. Washington staff member states her concern regarding the upper floors of Washington are very warm in August. There aren't any screens on the windows, so fans will be needed for air movement. Will temperatures be monitored?
 - b. Dr. Wittwer states the temperatures in the rooms will be monitored continually, especially during August and September. If heat becomes an issue, may have to look at planned early dismissals. Need to target students during prime teaching time. We need to say to our community that we need help with our buildings. We will be surveying our community and invite them in to see buildings.
26. Gifted Program.
 - a. Parent states the law only mandates identifying gifted students, not providing services. Could this program begin in the 1st or 2nd grade instead of 3rd grade, to avoid boredom in class for these students.

- b. Dr. Wittwer indicates he is a believer in the gifted program and concerned not just about these students, but all of our students.
 - c. Follow up information from Judy Withrow, Gifted Coordinator – It is correct that the state mandates identification of gifted students in superior cognitive, reading, math, science, social studies, art, music, drama and dance but does not provide money for service. Whole group identification does not happen until grade 2 in Findlay (full grade test results are not as accurate prior to this age), thus the programming begins in grade 3. Findlay gets 3.2 units (gifted teachers) which means part of their salaries are paid for by the state. 1.2 of those units are used for FIND, grade 3 – 5, a one day per week pullout and 2 are used for middle school REACH, a language arts/reading classroom setting. FCS pays the total amount for one REACH teacher. To start FIND in grade 2, FCS would need to pick up the .3 for the gifted teacher. If you are interested in additional information, please contact Judy Withrow.
27. Millstream and OGT.
- a. Millstream teacher states in-service meetings have occurred recently. Hearing success stories of how the Millstream programs have helped students blend academics with their program. For example, a cosmetology student who did well on her science exam.
28. Educational Philosophy.
- a. Community member reiterates that buildings don't teach students; teachers teach students. Only our educational philosophy has changed.
29. Past bond issue not passing.
- a. Community and staff member states her opinion that the bond issue did not pass due to the jobs coming into our community – people can't afford supporting another levy or bond issue. We need to find another way to support.
30. Open lunch at FHS.
- a. Community and staff member inquires about the number of troubled children coming into our community and whether this has created issues.
 - b. Craig Kupferberg, principal at FHS, states there has been a change in demographics in Findlay. Some students do just gravitate to problems and there will be a certain degree of trouble. Over the past 4 years, there has been a steady decrease of suspensions. When asked if this is due to being more tolerant, he indicated no.
31. School size/Class size.
- a. Community member states opinion that the workplace has changed and classrooms have too. People are no longer just doing their own job and interacting with their boss but rather, now collaborating with a group of people which is ongoing. Classrooms need to have more collaboration. It is a different world today than it was 20-30 years ago.
32. Class size.
- a. Community member states she feels there is a need to spend money in primary schools. The students need strong reading and math skills which will lead to less trouble in middle school therefore, not needing as many alternative schools for high school. Has the board considered placing all preschoolers and kindergartners at Millstream or Central?
 - b. Eric Browning responds by stating that alternative schools are not for troubled children. These students have a different way of looking at things. Advises that we must be careful about the picture we paint of alternative schools because a negative image is difficult to overcome.

Dr. Wittwer requested those in attendance complete the sheet on 21st Century Learning. This will allow us to know what our community is thinking so we can get appropriate information out.

Eric Browning inquired about attendees' interest in a "blog" if the Board would create it. A community member indicated blogs/emails are very much a part of the business world.

2008-01-010 ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Dr. Browning, seconded by Mr. Shrader to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

Roll call: Dr. Browning, aye; Mrs. Dysinger, aye; Mr. Hoffman, aye; Mrs. Lockard, aye; Mr. Shrader, aye. President Dysinger declared the motion carried.

President

Treasurer

Read and approved February 11, 2008.