

An informal report from Eudora Board of Education regular meetings

The following are highlights of discussion and action from the board meeting on Jan. 14, 2010.

CONSENT ITEMS. All items listed on the agenda were approved without discussion.

CONSTRUCTION & FACILITIES UPDATE. After a presentation from Steve Shogren with George K. Baum, the board resolved to market and sell bonds to pay the \$6 million in temporary notes due March 1.

Next, Don Swartz updated the board on construction progress. At the high school, the science wing now has permanent heat and sheetrock and taping is being finished. The technical education center will be completely dry as the roof and doors are completed in the next week. The building's exterior finish will be applied next week. Once the auditorium catwalks are hung and some other interior elements are complete, the last three exterior precast panels will be installed.

Don Swartz gave an overview of the state of the bond budget and shared several scenarios of how the remaining bond money could pay for different remaining projects (stadium, TAC lease, asphalt and roofing repair). He explained that, should the board decide to proceed with the stadium, they will have a "shopping list" of changes, such as reduced seating, reconfigured restrooms or concessions, that could reduce the overall cost of the project. The board will consider bids on the stadium project in March. If the TAC leases are not paid with bond money, he commented that there may be a possibility that the leases could be renegotiated to get a better interest rate or other benefit.

SAFE SCHOOLS/HEALTHY STUDENTS REPORT. Christina Mann gave a presentation about the Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant, updating the board on the progress and explaining the approach of systems change to best meet the needs of the whole child. The goals of all of the initiative's programs focus on reducing risk factors to healthy child development and building protective factors that can strengthen a child's development.

This year has included the beginning of expanded mental health services, after school programs and the family resource center, among others. WRAP workers already have provided more than 1,400 free counseling sessions with students just this year. Also this year, the certified drug and alcohol treatment professional has conducted 37 student sessions, with three formal assessments to date. Still to come are strategic planning for the coordination and growth of early childhood services, marketing and communications projects and ongoing evaluation. The baseline data has been studied and determined to be valid and consistent, allowing us to measure the effects of SSSH programs over time.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT. Don Grosdidier reviewed Gov. Parkinson's proposals to address the financial shortfalls at the state level, including increases in sales tax and the tobacco tax. The legislature has not yet embraced any tax increase. If state aid stays at

the current \$4,012 next year, it will be a reduction from this year's starting budget of approximately \$350,000. If the legislature creates no new revenue, it is projected that the per pupil aid will be reduced by \$286 to \$3,726, costing the district an additional \$800,000 next year off the current budget.

Next, Don shared a copy of a letter from the ENEA, declining to endorse the district's participation in Race to the Top, and the board agreed not to submit a Phase I memorandum of understanding to the state. As a result, the district will not be eligible to receive RtT funds, should they become available.

Don then updated the board on the EHS principal search process. Applications are due Feb. 1; there already are 32 applicants. Don said he is gathering feedback this month from EHS staff, parents, board members, students and district administrators about their vision of the school's future direction. This feedback will guide the interview committee, representing different stakeholder groups, that will meet in February. Don said he expects to have a recommendation for hire at the March board meeting.

Finally, Don gave certificates to school board members, in conjunction with School Board Appreciation Month.

BOARD VACANCY. Nine candidates applied to fill the board seat vacated by Keith Nowland in November: Peter Bock, Daniel Dickerson, Jason Hoover, Michael Howard, Nancy Jackson, Marion Johnson, Bryan Maring, Michael Warner and Christine Yoder. All selection proceedings must take place in open session, and current board members decided to hold a special meeting in February to screen candidates. An additional meeting may be needed to conduct interviews to fill the seat.

BUDGET CUTS AND POTENTIAL SAVINGS. Don Grosdidier gave an overview of cuts and corresponding savings for the current and next budget years. The board agreed to two significant reductions this year: a moratorium on field trips for the rest of the year and the elimination of student custodian positions. Field trips carry an expense of approximately \$1,200 per trip; field trips directly tied to the curriculum may still be allowed. Eliminating student custodian positions will save the district approximately \$6,000 through the end of the year.

For FY11, Don expects that the district will need to make up at least \$350,000, possibly as much as \$800,000, depending on the decisions made during the legislative session. He briefly outlined four possible areas of reduction: reduce the number of school days in the year; reduce in the short term the number of facilities that are operated and maintained by the district; reduce levels of staffing and possibly outsource some services; implement student fees.

He stressed that details of these four areas are not yet finalized, but that he will report at greater length on these options, with supporting data, at the February meeting. He also stressed that the board has ample time to consider these or other ideas in the coming weeks and months, but that cuts of significant magnitude will be necessary if the state fails to identify new sources of revenue.

Want to know more about board business?

- **Attend a board meeting!** Meetings are open to the public and usually take place at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at Eudora Middle School. Check the calendar on www.eudoraschools.org to see the date of the next meeting.
- **Go online!** A full, searchable record of minutes and agendas is available online through BoardDocs. The Eudora section of BoardDocs can be accessed from the district Web site under School Board > Meetings.