

**ROCKFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS**

*Administration Building  
June 10, 2008*

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Rockford Board of Education was called to order by Vice President Mike Williams at 5:06 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Vice President Michael J. Williams, Secretary David L. Kelley, Mr. Robert Evans, Mr. Harmon Mitchell, Mrs. Alice Saudargas, Mrs. Jeannē K. Westholder (arrived 5:25 p.m.),

**Absent:** President Nancy Kalchbrenner

**CLOSED SESSION**

**Motion** by Mrs. Saudargas, **seconded** by Mr. Evans, that the Board hold a Closed Session in Room #202 to consider the appointment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of employees; the discipline of students; pending or imminent litigation; or other matters provided for pursuant to §2 (c) of the Open Meetings Act.

**Approved** unanimously on roll call.

The Board was in closed session from 5:07 p.m. until 6:37 p.m.

**OPEN SESSION**

**Motion** by Mrs. Saudargas, **seconded** by Mrs. Westholder, that the Board reconvene in Open Session.

**Approved** on voice vote.

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*Following the closed session, Vice President Williams made the following statement:  
The Board in closed session considered the appointment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of employees; the discipline of students; pending or imminent litigation; or other matters provided for pursuant to §2(c) of the Open Meetings Act. Action will be taken on eleven items in open session.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice President Mike Williams called the regular meeting of the Rockford Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Following a moment of silence, the Pledge of Allegiance was given.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Vice President Michael J. Williams, Secretary David L. Kelley, Mr. Robert J. Evans, Mr. Harmon Mitchell, Mrs. Alice Saudargas, Mrs. Jeannē K. Westholder

**Absent:** President Nancy Kalchbrenner

**Mr. Williams introduced Auburn High School students Alvin Gibson, Dontavious Brown, Jason Birch and Chris Johnson. On behalf of the entire Board, he thanked them for their assistance in operating the camera and sound equipment in order to telecast this Board meeting.**

**PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS**

1. *Elizabeth Randle, 314 Soper Av., Rockford, IL, thinks Fresh Start is a punitive system and asks that her son attend Auburn Freshman Campus rather than return to Fresh Start.*
2. *Charlie Kennon talked about incorporating American disabled students into the mainstream student population at all costs. Referred to situations were this does not work and that is detrimental to all students. Ms. Kennon refused to leave the podium once she spoke for two minutes. She now has an attorney, Joyce O'Neil Austin who is going to represent them if we continue with the closing of Page Park School.*
3. *Becky Miller, Rockford, IL. Concerned that what the Board voted for regarding Skyview and Fresh Start is not what is taking place.*
4. *Carol Kraft, Rockford, IL. Thank you for addressing some of the questions she asked at the last meeting she attended. She doesn't understand how the separate wing at Auburn Freshman Campus is considered a separate facility. Concerned about the location of the auxiliary gym, the nature trail is not wheelchair accessible and that the park is across the street. Will the nurse be available for epileptic students for one to two hours uninterrupted? She asked the success rate of Fresh Start, Page Park and Skyview students.*
5. *Neal Soles, 4134 Ashwinton Way, Rockford, IL 61109. Parent of Froberg student who will not be bused in the fall due to the State law that says families living within 1.5 miles of their school do not qualify for transportation services. An exception can be made if there is a serious hazard to the safety of the student due to vehicular traffic, however; he was informed by Transportation that his student did not fit the criteria. He would like an explanation not just the answer "no".*
6. *Gillian Kennon, 5311 Claremont Street, Rockford, IL 61102. Gillian is autistic and cannot speak so her mother, Charlie Kennon spoke for her. Read the requirements of her daughters IEP. These requirements are not available at the new facility and the Board is violating her IEP.*

7. *Flossie Hoarde, 701 Miriam Avenue, Rockford, IL. Feels the School Board have made decisions that have not been favorable for all children. She is warning each of the Board and Cabinet members that there will come a time when we will have to answer for our actions. She talked the termination of Dr. Jackson.*
8. *Toni Thomas, 2225 Holland, Rockford, IL 61102. Wants equality for all children and will advocate until this equality is accomplished.*
9. *Dionne Baldwin, Rockford, IL. Advocating for educational equity and the black leaders back.*
10. *Donna Thomas, 2225 Holland, Rockford, IL 61102. Injustice being done to children, teachers and staff.*
11. *Yahcolyah Muhammad. He has been requesting a “want” since August. It is an untruth that Dr. Jackson changed grades, is unqualified and not doing his job. His desires have not been addressed on a case by case result basis.*
12. *Mildred McCall, 2004 Montague St, 61102. Speaking on behalf of her daughter Desiree McCall who on the Tuesday, May 27 was told by one of her teachers that she would not be graduating. Ms. McCall never received anything saying that her daughter was failing or received a call from her counselor. Ms. McCall hopes and prays that her daughter will receive her diploma.*

#### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

**Mrs. Saudargas commented to the current laws for Special Education students. According to the law Special Education students have to put them in the least restrictive environment. If parents want a more restrictive environment for their child, get your group together and lobby to get the law changed.**

**Mr. Williams stated that over the past few meetings parents have commented on many different topics. His concern is that the Board indicates that there will be follow-up in those cases that require follow-up. He hopes that Administration will follow-up to some of the questions raised tonight regarding the Page Park move. It is inappropriate for Board members and parents to talk specifically about students and personnel matters. He is concerned when anyone comes to the Board and threatens litigation. He hopes there will be an intelligent dialogue between Administration and the individual(s) about their concerns.**

**Mrs. Westholder is concerned about comments coming to the Board. She feels that parents that come to speak to the Board believe that this is their last resort. She pleads with the Board to address the concerns to the best of their ability under the advisement of our Legal Counsel.**

**Mr. Williams agrees that coming to speak to the Board is a last resort for parents. For example, he was surprised that he did not receive one call regarding a student not graduating until the day of graduation. We can do a better job of communicating. He encourages parents and the community to raise these concerns with the Superintendent and the Administration before coming to the Board.**

**CONSENT ITEMS**

**Motion by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mrs. Saudargas, that the Board approve the following consent items:**

- A. Approval of Minutes – May 17 & 27, 2008**
- B. Personnel plus Addendum**
- C. Payroll**
- D. Accounts Payable Checks**
- E. Purchase Orders**
- F. Contracts \$10,000 & Under**
- G. Airfare**
- H. Bid Recommendations**
- I. Recurring Contracts:  
Heartland Volunteer Services Agreement  
YMCA**
- J. Closed Session Items:**
  - (i) Student Discipline  
AH#1**

**That the student whose case was heard in closed session be expelled from school and all school-sponsored activities and prohibited from being on school grounds without the prior written permission of the principal for the first semester of the 2008-2009 school year with recommendation for alternative placement, and the ten (10) day suspension is affirmed.**

- (ii) Student Discipline  
ZCR#2**

**That the student whose case was heard in closed session be expelled from school and all school-sponsored activities and prohibited from being on school grounds without the prior written permission of the principal for the entire 2008-2009 school year with recommendation for alternative placement, and the ten (10) day suspension is affirmed.**

- (iii) Student Discipline  
JS#3**

**That the student whose case was heard in closed session be expelled from school and all school-sponsored activities and prohibited from being on school grounds without the prior written permission of the principal for the entire 2008-2009 school year with recommendation for alternative placement, and the ten (10) day suspension is affirmed.**

- (iv) Student Discipline  
LC#4**

**That the student whose case was heard in closed session be expelled from school and all school-sponsored activities and prohibited from being on school grounds without the prior written permission of the principal for the entire 2008-2009 school year with recommendation for alternative placement, and the ten (10) day suspension is affirmed.**

(v) Student Discipline  
CR#5

That the student whose case was heard in closed session be suspended for ten (10) days out-of-school.

K. Closed Session Items:

Administrative Appointments:

Darcy Allen, Assistant Principal, RESA Middle School

Carl Armato, Coordinator Athletics

Jason Grey, Principal, Lincoln Middle School

Kevin Lynch, Assistant Principal, Lincoln Middle School

Kerry Manus, Assistant Principal, Auburn High School

Dismissal of a Tenured Teacher

M. Other Consent Items:

LUDA Annual Membership

Prevailing Wage Resolution

Certified Administrators/Staff Retirement Program – Payments for Sick

Leave Rule Adoption

Items pulled for further clarification:

- |         |   |                    |
|---------|---|--------------------|
| Item H. | Bid Recommendations<br>RFP 8-49, Axis 210A & 221 Security Cameras<br>RFP 8-51, Replace Bridge at Administration Building Entrance   | by Mrs. Westholder |
| Item I. | Recurring Contracts<br>Heartland Volunteer Services Agreement   | by Mrs. Westholder |
| Item J. | <u>Closed Session Items:</u><br>(i) Student Discipline<br>AH#1<br>(ii) Student Discipline<br>ZCR#2<br>(iii) Student Discipline<br>JS#3<br>(iv) Student Discipline<br>LC#4<br>(v) Student Discipline<br>CR#5 | by Mrs. Westholder |

Approved unanimously on roll call.

**ITEM H. Bid Recommendations:**

**RFP 8-49, Axis 210A & 221 Security Cameras**

**Motion** by Mr. Evans, **seconded** by Mrs. Saudargas, to approve Item H. **Bid Recommendations: RFP 8-49, Axis 210A & 221 Security Cameras.**

*Mrs. Westholder wants the community to know where the cameras are being installed and read the school and number of cameras being added.*

*In response to Mr. Williams, Mr. Schmidt responded that these are new cameras and not replacements and is a continuation of the Security Plan the Board developed.*

*In response to Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Schmidt responded that we are adding 175 security cameras in addition to the cameras already installed.*

**Approved** unanimously on roll call.

**ITEM H. Bid Recommendations:**

**RFP 8-51, Replace Bridge at Administration Building Entrance**

**Motion** by Mr. Westholder, **seconded** by Mr. Kelley, to approve Item H. **Bid Recommendations: RFP 8-51, Replace Bridge at Administration Building Entrance**

*Mrs. Westholder asked for further information from Mr. Kelley. Mr. Kelley advised that this was put out for bid previously under a different design. This bid request, under the new design, is about half of what was originally bid.*

**Approved** unanimously on roll call.

**ITEM I. Heartland Volunteer Services Agreement**

**Motion** by Mr. Saudargas, **seconded** by Mr. Kelley, to approve Item I. **Heartland Volunteer Services Agreement**

*In response to Mrs. Westholder, Mr. Hoffman responded that this is a collaborative between Mrs. Hernandez and Todd Schmidt. This is a new contract with the scope of services at Stiles, Flinn and additional work at East High School. Heartland will also install bathroom partitions and doors.*

*Mrs. Westholder says the bathroom partitions at West Middle School are awesome and look good.*

**Approved** unanimously on roll call.

**ITEM J. Closed Session Items: (i through v) Student Discipline**

**Motion** by Mr. Saudargas, **seconded** by Mr. Kelley, to approve Item J. **Closed Session Items**

*Mrs. Westholder wants to explain she was unavoidably late to the Closed Session Meeting at which the five cases were being discussed so she will be abstaining from the vote.*

**Ayes:** Mr. Williams, Mr. Evans, Mr. Kelley, Mr. Mitchell, Mrs. Saudargas

**Nays:** (None)

**Abstain:** Mrs. Westholder

**Approved** 5-0 (1 abstention).

*Mr. Williams congratulated those administrators who were being appointed to new positions.*

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**Superintendent's Comments**

Superintendent Hernandez reported that the last day of school for students was June 9 and the day was without incident.

Registration is August 12<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and August 13<sup>th</sup> from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. The first day of school is August 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Page Park/Skyview/Fresh Start Programs**

Mrs. Cyrus included information regarding the movement of Fresh Start and Skyview and the movement of Page Park students to Wilson in Board member packets. Since Skyview is the name of a building, the new programs at Page Park would be referred to as Program One and Program Two. Program One is the old Skyview Program. It will be housed in a section of the building. There are five sections that are reserved for the Skyview students and staff. They will not mix with the Fresh Start Students.

The services that will be combined and shared by both programs are the student support services of the Crisis Interventionists. The Shop class may be shared by both programs; the PE teachers will be shared by both programs.

Regarding the movement of Page Park to Wilson, Debbi Johnson, principal of the program, is trying to sustain as much of the programming as possible. The library, materials and adaptive equipment will move to the new location. Mrs. Cyrus has checked with legal counsel and has been advised that what is being designed at Wilson is a separate facility. Student's IEP's are not being changed & their needs will be met at the new location.

In response to Mrs. Westholder, Mrs. Cyrus responded that Kathryn Vander Brock is the attorney that the District uses for Special Education issues.

In response to Mr. Evans, Mrs. Cyrus responded that a Clinical Psychologist is currently being advertised in the Non-certified Communicator. Fresh Start has been working with Rosecrance, MELD and Juvenile Detention; they are currently on-board to serve all the students at Page Park. When combining both programs, there will be a full-time Social Worker. An elementary classroom and a transitional specialist has also been added.

There are two gyms at Auburn Freshman Campus (AFC). The small gym is reserved for the Wilson program. There will be no use of the small gym by AFC students. Wilson students will have PE everyday.

In response to Mr. Evans, Mrs. Cyrus responded that the net will be equal or improved services for the Wilson students.

In response to Mrs. Westholder, Mrs. Cyrus responded that we are not increasing social work services; however, we are adding a Clinical Psychologist. School Psychologists are allocated to deal with the evaluation for children with Special Education; a Clinical Psychologist evaluate children. The Clinical Psychologist will run groups and individual counseling with students. The full-time Social Worker assigned to Page Park will not have any special education responsibilities so that the Social Worker can work with the Clinical Psychologist to run groups for children. A .2 Social Worker will evaluate and re-evaluate students where their IEP is concerned.

Mrs. Westholder wants the Board to consider finding another name for Page Park School. She hopes the name Fresh Start will be visible and continue to be used. She would also like the Board to discuss the name of Wilson program, former Page Park students.

In response to Mrs. Westholder, Mrs. Cyrus responded that she has checked with the District's lawyers and that the use of the small gym at AFC is an access issue. There is no way to access the small gym without going through AFC. Mrs. Johnson will work with moving the students through the hallways. The students will not go during AFC passing time nor will they walk by themselves. Mrs. Cyrus called and asked the question "Does walking down the hall to the elevator in AFC compromise the definition of separate facilities"? The response she received was no. It is the programming, not having any education intermixed with children that do not have disabilities. Mrs. Cyrus stated that IEP's will not be changed.

Mrs. Westholder commented that she thought we were two positions short of qualifying Wilson as a therapeutic day school. Mrs. Cyrus responded that therapeutic day schools are private schools. It is not the number of staff but the types of services provided that qualify a school to become a therapeutic day school.

Mr. Williams agrees with Mrs. Westholder regarding the renaming of Page Park and the Wilson program. He hopes that Wilson's program will continue to have the high level of regard that is synonymous with the Page Park name. We need to very clear about the program at Wilson. If we are improving services and facilities that needs to articulated to the parents in a way they understand. If it just shifting people from one building to another he sees no benefit in doing that.

Mrs. Hernandez stated that she doesn't believe that anyone with authority went to Skyview and said everything was being changed back. Skyview students will all go together and their program will be separate. Moving students to Wilson will not change anything that is a benefit to the students as far as their IEP is concerned.

Mrs. Cyrus stated the Page Park students are being to moved to Wilson due to utilization of space. The program needs of the student are the program needs of the student whether they are in building A or building B.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE:**

Mr. Evans will schedule a meeting for Tuesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at which time they will review the progress which has been made in preparing for the implementation of the new Career High School. Second agenda item will be to review the efforts made by the Administration to assist the Board in planning for a decision on elementary zones.

##### **OPERATIONS COMMITTEE:**

Mr. Kelley reported that the Operations Committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

The next Operations Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup>.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Motion by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mr. Kelley, to approve Action Items.**

**Board Policy 4.110 – Operation Services – Transportation Services**

**Board Policy 4.120 - Operation Services – Food Services**

**Board Policy 5.280 – Personnel – Educational Support Personnel – Teacher Aides, Coaches, and Bus Drivers**

**Board Policy 6.145 – Instruction – Migrant Students**

**Board Policy 7.60 – Students – Residence**

**Board Policy 7.70 – Students – Attendance and Truancy**

**Board Policy 7.190 – Students – Student Discipline**

**Motion by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mrs. Saudargas, to approve Action Items with unanimous consent.**

**Motion by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mrs. Saudargas, to adopt the Board Policies.**

**Approved unanimously on roll call.**

In response to Mr. Williams, Mr. Katz responded that a migrant is a term of art that refers to, in the case of students, parents who travel around season to season to perform labor usually agriculture labor. There is no permanent home, the family moves seasonally.

**OTHER BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA RECOMMENDATIONS**

A. **Grant of Easement and Assignment of Lease – Swanson Stadium Cell Tower**  
Mr. Hoffman stated that the Executive Summary articulates the history of this site.

B. **Great Source Education Group** – pulled from the Agenda.

C. **Rockford Public Schools Discipline Code**  
Mrs. Cyrus explained the changes that are being recommended for the 2008-2009 school year. The discipline committee met four times. In order for the Discipline Code to be available to parents at August registration, it must be submitted to the Print Shop in July.

A statement was added which addresses weapons and drugs voluntarily turned in to Administration by a student could be, at the discretion of the Administrator, not considered possession.

A statement was added that when a student turns 18, District notifications will be sent to the student not to the parent.

The entrance and exit criteria for Fresh Start was revised to assist with the build-up of a waitlist. The program will contain two strands, a nine week and an 18 week strand. All new students to Page Park Program Two will start in the nine week strand. Students will begin accumulating discipline points. If students remain under 100 discipline points within the nine week program they will return to their home school. If a student accumulates more than 100 discipline points they will be assigned to the 18 week program. If students remain under 200 discipline points within the 18 weeks they will return to their

**home school. If at any point a student accrues more than 200 points they may be recommended for expulsion by Administration.**

**According to the Fresh Start staff the current average stay of student in Fresh Start is about 227 days. With the revisions the maximum stay would be 135 days.**

**In the Transportation section, it was added that bus suspension over 10 days need School Board approval.**

*In response to Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Katz responded that a suspension from the bus for more than 10 days can only be accomplished by the School Board.*

*Mrs. Westholder wanted to know who on the committee was community members, parents, staff, etc. Mrs. Cyrus will provide the information to Board Members.*

*Regarding page 4, Mrs. Westholder wants to add that a student may voluntarily sign a form that allows parents to receive information instead of the 18 year old student.*

*Mrs. Westholder would like a decision made by the next Board meeting regarding the name changes for Page Park, Fresh Start and Skyview.*

*Dr. Schmitt asked why Skyview was named Skyview. Administration is looking at making Skyview the Career Education High School. Is that possible?*

*Mr. Williams indicates that there is a stigma attached to the Skyview name. The names changes should be part of discussion at Education Committee.*

*Mr. Williams is concerned that the Fresh Start model the Board adopted was not meant to be punitive. With the proposed discipline code we are going back to a more punitive model. He is concerned with the point accumulation process.*

*Mrs. Hernandez says the reason we are changing the process at Fresh Start is due to the fact that some of the students were being pushed to the brink did something terrible and were expelled. This new process will offer several interventions and possibly avoid expulsions. Since the inception, Fresh Start has been revised every summer to make it better. Some school administrators are saying that students are staying at Fresh Start too long and the waitlist is too long.*

*In response to Mr. Williams, Mrs. Cyrus responded that the proposed Discipline Code gives only the entrance and exit process for Fresh Start. It does not give the whole Fresh Start Program.*

*Mr. Williams would like to see the Fresh Start program guidelines.*

*Mrs. Cyrus stated the proposed Discipline Code is trying to address the students that have figured out that they can misbehave, won't be expelled, can be verbally abusive to teachers and staff, earn grades, be promoted to the next level and there are no consequences, there is no bottom line.*

*Mr. Williams says students get to Fresh Start because they have behavior problems. Now we are going to punish them because they have behavior problems that are not being modified. The ultimate punishment being expulsion due to point accumulation. That is not addressing the issue.*

*Mrs. Westholder would also like to see a full report on Fresh Start. She would also like to see a full report from Mrs. Reppen-Lucas, who presented to the Board, a working copy of her dissertation on Fresh Start.*

*Mrs. Hernandez stated that seeing said dissertation is inappropriate. To have a person that works at the building do a report to the entire Board that may be opinionated.*

*Mrs. Westholder has reviewed the dissertation and thinks it could be looked at ahead of time and a decision made about what should be made public. She thought the student survey was very enlightening.*

*Mr. Evans commented that students at Fresh Start would accumulate points according to the Discipline Code.*

*Mr. Williams stated that if that is the case students will quickly accumulate the 100 points.*

*Mrs. Cyrus stated that the Administration does not have to give the discipline points for referrals. Fresh Start discipline referrals often say “no points assigned”.*

*Mr. Williams would like a more in-depth discussion to take place at an Education Committee meeting.*

**E. Freedom of Information Act Log – Attorney Katz**

*Mrs. Saudargas asked if any proposals have come to the Board regarding the Superintendent search.*

*Mr. Mitchell responded that Mrs. Kalchbrenner indicated that the proposals will be given to the Board by July 17<sup>th</sup>. A decision would be made at the August 12<sup>th</sup> Board meeting as to which firm would be used.*

*Mrs. Saudargas thought the Board would be discussing this issue at a meeting on July 10<sup>th</sup>. She says that there needs to be a timeline.*

*Mr. Williams also thought the date for Board discussion was July 10<sup>th</sup>. The Board is not ready to make a decision but is at a point to accumulate information and seek proposals for a search firm.*

*Mr. Mitchell stated that the first two firms he contacted are not willing to submit a proposal until they meet with the Board. He called Mr. Katz and Mr. Williams to see what past practices have been.*

*Mr. Evans stated that in the past there have been firms that have been willing to make proposals without coming to the Board with a presentation. If a firm is not willing to put its cards on the line, don't use that firm and go with the firms that are willing to submit proposals.*

*Mr. Mitchell says that last year a search firm was chosen and two were let go that are included for this year. Should those two be contacted this year?*

*Mr. Williams indicated that the Board has a proposal from Ray and Associates but would like Mr. Mitchell to make more contacts and get proposals. July 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> are the target dates for search firm discussions.*

*Mrs. Westholder commented that the pool at AFC will not be utilized for Wilson students.*

*Mr. Williams suggested that if parents feel their child's IEP is not being followed; parents have a right to due process.*

*Mrs. Westholder asked if pools in general can be placed on the Board agenda.*

*Mr. Hoffman responded that swimming pools are a big issue and will be placed on the June 16<sup>th</sup> Operations Committee agenda.*

