



**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**J.B. Pritzker**  
Governor

**Heidi Mueller**  
Director

**Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice School District #428  
Board of Education Meeting Minutes  
Minutes – November 19, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

- 1.0** A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Heidi Mueller, on Friday, November 19, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via WebEx Video Conference.

**ROLL CALL**

- 1.1** Roll call by Recording, Dr. Dunbar, resulted in the following: Board Members answered Present: President Heidi Mueller; Member Mr. Patrick Griffin; Member Dr. Shawn Jackson; and Member Dr. Heather Dalmage; Arrived at later time: Member Jennifer Vidis, Member Mr. David Green, and Member Willa Taylor.

Board Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Dr. Tresa D. Dunbar, Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. NeAngela Dixon, Chief Legal Counsel; Dr. Bambi Bethel-Leitschuh-Leitschuh, Assistant Superintendent of Schools and Director of Special Education; and Laurence Roper, Recorder; Ms. Cynthia Houston, Principal; Dr. Joyce Nelson, Principal; Mr. Michael McGrone, Principal; Mr. Mike Zarco, Principal.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- 2.0** As follows.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
OF NOVEMBER 19, 2021**

- 2.1** President Mueller motioned to approve the agenda. Member Dalmage motioned to approve the agenda and Member Jackson seconded.

Voice Vote

Aye: Unanimous

Nay: None

Motion Carries

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2021 and  
JULY 16, 2021 MEETINGS**

- 2.2** Approval of all minutes were tabled for next meeting. (September 17, 2021 Minutes and July 16, 2021 Minutes)

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- 3.0** None.

**4.0** President Mueller requested that Chief Dixon give updates of the Consent Decree and School District #428.

Chief Dixon stated that the School District #428 has maintained calm and ready since the Pandemic. The Consent Decree is wrapping up where there are findings of partial compliance. The monitors and the Court want to make sure that the District is consistently implementing the changes that were set. Those changes and practices are sustainable. Chief Dixon is encouraging the District to keep up continues to make every effort to adhere to the full day instruction.

The way that School District #428 messages and interacts with the monitors also changed and is helpful with the Consent Decree. All monitors expressed observing a renewed passion, more engagement and really great communication about what the District is doing. The Principals had a new step of interacting with monitors and had done wonderful presentations to Dr. Leone. Also, it was apparent to the monitors from their individual interviews with staff and youth that there was better communication about the exciting things being done as a department. This seemed to be a height and passion and instance of collaboration.

Chief Dixon stated she believes that in terms of the procedural practices and the culture of the District, when that improves and appears to be more positive, it will give the Court and the parties more faith that the District is going to sustain the changes made. She also believes that it is a job well done in moving forward with the Consent Decree is great, but the District still has to be mindful in continuing to do the good work that has been done.

Chief Dixon briefly spoke about the education with DOC. She is working on the issue of educational services with DOC and IDJJ is being a collaborative partner in those discussions. They are working on having steps set to move forward and communicate to the Board Members.

Member Dalmage asked about how long does consistency last in terms of RJ, Restorative Justice and trauma informed practices for the Consent Decree and the Courts. Chief Dixon explained that for the District, consistency is whether they met the threshold of two years of substantial compliance. The Court is to have more faith that all of the other provisions that met substantial compliance will continue because the District's quality assurance process is keeping them on track. That will be the arguments that will be continued to be made. From the progression that has been seen and the willingness of the plaintiffs to have conversations about exiting from the Consent Decree, the District has gained trust with the Court.

Per Member Dalmage, it could become a problem to show consistency and show that to the Courts when the District is going through a transformation.

Chief Dixon explained that the District was prepared as it was known that the transformation may raise some red flags to the Court. The changes that were made to win with substantial compliance were how the District came up with the ideas about transformation. In the District's position, transformation does not impede on any provision of the remedial plan because it is agreed that the remedial plan has provisions that do improve and enhance services in the treatment of the youth in custody. We want to be consistent with those provisions even as the District moves forward in transformation. We want School District #428 to be consistent in staffing and quality services as well as on treatment.

President Mueller explained that in terms of trauma informed care, as part of the Consent Decree this is not a requirement, but for the School District to develop a trauma informed practice is a major goal of the transformation. Trauma informed practices are continuing with the implementation, like prep trainings with leadership and administrative teams.

PBIS is a requirement with the R. J. Consent Decree because the District is supposed to have a behavior management model. For the District it is PBIS. Our next steps with PBIS is to make it developmentally appropriate and start thinking about how the incentives match the developmental life of the people in the IDJJ custody and how we can offer incentives and reports that are meaningful and developmental for young people, as per President Mueller.

Member Dalmage acknowledge Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh for the positive changes she has made within Special Education for School District #428. Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh thanked her and stated it was a team project and appreciated her work being noticed.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**      **5.0**      Dr. Dunbar asked for the Board Members to motion to approve the 2022 Board of Education Meeting Calendar.

**2022 BOARD OF EDUCATION CALENDAR**      **5.1**      President Mueller motioned to approve the 2022 Board of Education Meeting Calendar. Member Dalmage motioned to approve the 2022 Board of Education Meeting Calendar and Member Jackson seconded.

Voice Vote  
Aye: Unanimous  
Nay: None  
Motion Carries

Dr. Dunbar thanked the board for approving the Board of Education meeting dates and asked them to save these dates on their calendars, as their support is needed.

**SCHOOL DISTRICT #428 2020-2023 DRAFT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW**      **5.2**      School District #428 Strategic plan. About a year ago, a draft of the School District #428 Strategic Plan was presented upon to the Board Members. It was based upon observations surveys, evaluations, discussions, etc. that took place over about an 18-month period of being the Assistant Superintendent of Schools and talking with youth and students and trying to figure out where the District was and what the goals would be. The purpose of this was to start with having a foundational draft document of which we could plan forward for what we wanted to do in areas that were ineffective or needed support. The next steps were that stakeholders, including students and youth, look at it and provide feedback and to go through the process of making it work for us. One of the most powerful was the work of the Principals and their feedback.

Through retreats with the Principals, it was communicated how to get the work done. In October there was a retreat with the Principals in which all the steps they were taken in the past were discussed in terms of the purpose and the vision of the strategic plan for School District #428 is. It reflects the 21<sup>st</sup> century Transformation

Plan which is the overreaching goal document. All the Principals had a robust and difficult conversations throughout the retreat discussions and everyone's perspectives and goals were noted. It was decided together to come up with an updated Strategic Plan that will be presented to the board in either January or March, as it is a different format that is still being worked through.

As per Dr. Dunbar, we are going to get some training from leaders in the strategic planning industry and leadership and development industry so that we can think forward and provide support in a context to our youth students. We will be bringing documents for the Board to review and help engage our staff better and youth. Both documents will be molded together in terms of the name. There is a struggle which is how it can be made to make sure it is supporting the work of the teachers so they can help students get instruction based upon their needs.

A copy of the new draft is not provided in the packet because it is not ready yet. It is being worked on and what looks like, sounds like, feels is like is being thought through.

Dr. Dunbar asked that some Principals give feedback on how they felt that day because it is important for the Board to know that this is a very deep, long process.

Principal Houston stated that they worked extremely hard and had fun with the opportunity of working together, collaboratively with colleagues that she doesn't get to see every day. As per Principal Houston, they were happy to leave the retreat and go back to their personal building and work with staff to craft a strategic plan of their own individual building. The overall goal is that it will then be used district-wide. So, this is an opportunity to have the strategic plan tailored to your school culture and environment with the same goals across every facility, but how it is done will be different for each facility because their culture and environment are different. Her and her staff will start by listing action items into 3 categories, leadership personal development, curriculum and instruction and technology.

Principal Houston thanked Dr. Dunbar and Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh for allowing them, as Principals, make decisions for the update of the Strategic Plan.

Principal Dr. Nelson stated that in addition to having the opportunity to expand and explore and navigate through how the strategic plan can be made workable and achievable over time for the entire District. It is also important to make sure that there were true components a part of it, being administrations, staff, students and the parents. As per Dr. Nelson, we are exploring and expanding the strategic plan so that is involves all stakeholders and there are opportunities for everyone in the process to grow and make our District more welcoming as well as making the goals for the students achievable. We all contributed to this and made sure to communicate this to all staff so that her voice is heard too. It is believed that with this, it will result with something that everyone is proud of and a part of it.

Dr. Dunbar stated that she and Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh realized that they got into the work without any support around the making of the strategic plan. She stated that they as leaders need training in this area. She asked if anyone knew of someone that may know what is required in building a strategic plan, such as, planning, leadership, visioning and drafting it, to notify them. Vendors are being searched for this kind of help and support. She is looking forward to engaging in this type of training. All this then leads into the overarching of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transformation Plan, which is the

specific supportive plan for instruction education and the mission and vision around families. This is why having a separate plan is very necessary.

Dr. Dunbar stated that the Principals were excellent in what they came up with through their very deep powerful, robust, honest, transparent conversations.

Dr. Dunbar stated that this also falls into everything else we are doing, such as the Counselor's Curriculum, the E District manual, and getting course work catalog together.

Dr. Dunbar thanked the Board Members, President Mueller and Principals for their support.

It was communicated that Member Willa Taylor has some suggestions regarding strategic planning which she will be sending via emails to Dr. Dunbar.

Dr. Dunbar thanked each and every Board Member individually for their commitment and help, as she described how they helped her and School District #428.

**ASSISTANT  
SUPERINTENDENT /  
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL  
EDUCATION UPDATE -DR.  
BAMBI BETHEL-LEITSCHUH**

- **21<sup>st</sup> Century Transformation**
- **Curriculum Council**
- **School Counselors**
- **Math Curriculum Team**
- **Special Education Monthly Data Narrative August/September 2021**

**5.3** Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh commenced her presentation with the Assistant Superintendent's Report and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transformation. She stated that we are participating at different levels with individuals and one of the committees is looking at the community assessment process. We want to make sure that we have valid information about the students' academic performance with they move into the community and this is provided from these assessments. This way we can provide better support in general education and special education across the agency.

**Curriculum Council**

Dr. Dunbar and Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh will be meeting with the Curriculum Council because Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh has done some work with Pearson for credit recovery online instruction. We are looking at the internal and external use of Pearson, for the youth that connected with it while they are in aftercare, their success rates, the frequency of courses, and additional courses being delivered. The ultimate goal is to improve the scope and sequence and have data to know where our youth are more successful on the credit recovery or where they need more direct instruction. The Council will be looking at prioritizing the direct instruction along with the support so we can focus on areas. Once those direct instruction supports are implemented and developed the school data will be looked at from now to the end of June. This will be compared and contrasted to see if the scope and sequence needs to be fixed further. This will be their first in person meeting in a long time. It will take place in Springfield, IL on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. This will be added into the strategic plan as well.

**School Counselors**

Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh is working with School Counselors to improve upon the transcripts to match the requirements of the 16.75 tribulation credit for graduation purposes. The Principals have also been participating in these discussions. This was also presented to all the staff through the All Staff Monthly Meeting. It is in the District Manual hardcopy. Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh is working with Brandy Smith to have a SharePoint so that there will be a spot for every item within the new district

manual. There are over about 70 items in the manual hardcopy that need to be moved into the Live E manual, so that it can be kept updated more easily. The School Counselors have been very supportive in the transcript process.

#### Mass Curriculum

The English Language Arts curriculum has been worked on for the past two years and now has a very definitive guideline as now it has an assessment tool. Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh has spoken to Steve Klokenga, the School District #428 procurement expert, and is trying to work out in developing specific specifications to be put it into deliverables and into a procurement process in the form of a request for proposal to get to the goal of getting a successful curriculum or instruction for math. This will be supplemental for the youth struggling with math once we have this implemented, hopefully in the beginning of the 2023 school year.

#### Special Education

Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh spoke about the Liaison Program. She is very pleased that ISBE sent information showing that they are now sharing out our liaison program to all school administrators of the 850 plus school districts. We have a Contract Grant with ISBE. We are on year two with ISBE and the longer we are with them we keep growing. Now we are able to visit other school districts and see their computer programs and read our youth attendance on their program. We are getting to the point where our youth can reenter and gain their diploma from their resident school district. We have already grown a list of school contacts and 31 school districts that we have reached out to.

Enrollment over the course of the year it is still significantly under the amount that we have had prior to COVID-19. We currently have serviced 49 youth since the beginning of the school year and as the end of September, for data collection, there have been 34 in our facility.

As per Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh, there are two Special Education Administrative Directive in the Board Packet. One is Special Education Authorized Absences for use with Individual Education Plans. The other is IDJJ School District #428 Special Education Re Entry Liaison Program. The reason Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh mentioned these to the Board attention is that they are recommended administrative directive that have been worked on for a long time and within the school board there is a policy subcommittee. There are two places that these two documents are to be taken to. One is the Board of Education Policy Subcommittee for their review, then, through a process within IDJJ for 30 days for another review. These have been worked on with the support of aftercare and key stakeholders who are part of these programs, as well as, they have been sent to Lindsay Bentivegna, SD#428 Policy Review Attorney, and Chief Dixon and Dr. Dunbar.

Dr. Dunbar thanked Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh for her hard work and her informative report.

#### **DIRECTOR OF CTE, GRANTS MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE UPDATE - DR. TRESA D. DUNBAR**

- 5.4 Dr. Dunbar gave an update on the accomplishments of the CTE Department. She announced that the CTE Vocational Education Director position is hopefully being posted next month and will be able to be sent out far and wide for a CTE Vocational Director for the School District #428. Dr. Dunbar is hoping to get very good candidates for this position as it is a position that is really need help with. We will be looking at the qualities of the person and work ethics and making sure that they

- **Larry's Barber College**
- **TMA MOU, Truman College, Elgin Community College, Greater West Town Community Project, Northwestern University, University of Chicago (article)**

meet the requirements before they come in. It is exciting that hopefully by February the interviewing process can start.

Regarding Larry's Barber College, it is very exciting that President Mueller has agreed to allow Dr. Dunbar and Rob Vickery to work with Steve Klockenga, Procurement officer, to start looking for vendors around Cosmetology and Barbering. We will have a certified vendor who will meet the requirements of ISBE, and the teachers will be licensed to that we can hold them more accountable around coming and making sure that our students are getting Barbering and Cosmetology instruction. Then they can be prepared to take the test to become licensed cosmetologists and barbers. In the past we had volunteers, which was working well, until COVID-19 Pandemic happened. Now it is hard to find volunteers to work 3 days a week 4 hours per day. So, School District #428 is not functioning the Barber/Cosmetology Program. There was a lot of money put into that and it is wanted to be a functional instructional program.

The Trade and manufacturing Association are in the final stages of when it is going to start again. We are hoping to begin in March. Last year 2 out of 7 students graduated from the machine classes. There will be two cohorts learning in the Machinery classes. This is with the partnership with TDMA Trade and Manufacturing Association.

On Monday, students went to Northwestern University to two classes, including astronomy and physics. They also got to go into the football facility and meet with the team for over an hour. Then it was really exciting that Pat Fitzgerald, the head coach, also came to speak to them. The students from northern Illinois that went to this trip had a marvelous experience.

Dr. Dunbar stated that now she is looking into how to have the students from southern Illinois to be involved with Northwestern. If they cannot come or if we cannot move them around, at least they will have the opportunity to be involved with Northwestern University by participating in online courses and receive college credit. Hopefully by February this can be started.

Dr. Jackson came up to explain that he was trying to be an advocate and have an approval for IDJJ to have a partnership with Truman College but was informed that there is a partnership approval pending from the City Colleges of Chicago with IDJJ in regard to the MOU and was told by the General Counsel. Therefore, the local work that was being done locally with Truman College was not going to be approved. President Mueller stated that there must be some confusion. They might be confusing IDJJ with Department of Corrections (DOC). Chief Dixon stated she will look into historical interactions with City Colleges of Chicago and if so follow up within the Board of Education meetings. Dr. Jackson said he will be waiting for guidance from the School District #428 before he continues to do any further action as an advocate with this partnership.

Lastly, Dr. Dunbar presented an article that was done by the University of Chicago Law School that features President Mueller. The article is about the work that is being done in IDJJ. Dr. Dunbar wanted to thank President Mueller for allowing us to be bold in our work. The title of the article is Challenge Beyond Their Wildest Dreams.

President Mueller thanked Dr. Dunbar and appreciated all that the School District #428 is doing, and everyone is doing in the meeting.

President Mueller announced that Story Catchers will start again and will be having their first actual live story Catchers' performance over the upcoming weekend. It is open to the public and IYC Warrenville. CBS Chicago will be there for this performance and will be doing a story on Story Catchers that will be on the news. This is exciting. We are happy things are opening up again.

Also, in November the School District #428 will be launching a new program that will be teaching skateboarding and snowboarding skills with mentoring and mindfulness and respect. This is really exciting as well. The name of it is Chill Foundation. The kids are being taken to a skate park on Monday evenings and they love it. Learning new things and challenging themselves is a great way to grow and practice life skills that are helpful. These are some new things that are in the mix of all else the School District #428 is doing.

**BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS**      **6.0**    None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**                      **7.0**    President Mueller motioned to adjourn the Board of Education meeting. Member Griffin motioned and Member Green seconded. Members were all in favor.

Voice Vote  
Aye: Unanimous  
Nay: None  
Motion Carries

Meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.  
Next Board of Education Meeting will be Friday, January 21, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.  
WebEx Video Conference