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Board of Education Meeting Minutes

Date: November 10, 2016

Time: 9:46 a.m.

Place: Aftercare Conference Room, 100 N. Western Avenue, Chicago, IL

Approved: January 20, 2017

- IO 1.0 **CALL TO ORDER** by President Jesse Montgomery at 9:46am
- 1.1 **Roll Call**
- 1.2. Board Members Present: Jesse Montgomery, Patrick Griffin, Dr. Heather Dalmage and Jennifer Vidis (9:52am) and David Green (9:53am)
- 1.3 Board Members Absent: Candice Smith and Dr. Tresa Dunbar Garrett
- 1.4. Others present: Esther Yahnig, Assistant Legal Counsel; Marna Goodman, Chief of Professional Development Training; Dr. Bambi Bethel-Leitschuh, Director of Special Education; Cynthia Houston, Principal of Pere Marquette; Dorothy Miaso, Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers of Illinois, Dr. Sophia Jones-Redmond, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Rachel Brady, Equip for Equality; and Laquita Reynolds, Recorder
- AI 2.0 **CONSENT AGENDA**
- 2.1 **Approval of Agenda**
President Montgomery motioned to move the approval of the agenda. Member Vidis motioned to approve the agenda and Member Dalmage seconded.

Voice Vote

Aye; Unanimous

Nay; None

Motion Carries

2.2 **Approval of Minutes for September 16, 2016**

President Montgomery motioned to approve the September 16, 2016 minutes with no corrections to the minutes. Member Vidis motioned to approve the agenda and Member Griffin seconded.

Voice Vote

Aye; Unanimous

Nay; None

Motion carries

AI 3.0 **Public Participation Guidelines** – Ms. Esther Yahnig, Assistant Legal Counsel

Ms. Esther Yahnig introduced and gave background on the Public Participation Guidelines for which at this time there were no rules in place on how to direct comments during open meetings from the general public. Attorney Yahnig met with Superintendent Davis and Dr. Jones-Redmond to discuss putting in place directives on this area. By allowing public participation, this avenue will allow opportunity for the community and others to express their views to the Board and the administration; while continuing to conduct Board business efficiently and orderly; respecting the rights of the members; the school district; staff; students; and audience members.

- Member Dalmage asked, how would the process work? At what point is there a discussion? Would the board know the final outcome from the Department? Dr. Jones-Redmond mentioned that once administration has addressed a public comment, it will be made available to the board at our next meeting.
- Member Vidis asked, Is it okay if a board member engages the public during public participation? Dr. Jones-Redmond warned about how not to respond without hearing the whole story and suggested that the board reframe from direct comments until a later time.
- Member Vidis asked, How would the public be able to get into the tightly secured facilities? President Montgomery suggested having someone at each door to assist during the meeting times and Dr. Jones-Redmond mentioned that on the public announcement communication flyer that are posted at each facility and doors of the meeting to indicate which door or doors the general public should enter in.
- Member Dalmage asked, How is the report addressed back to the public? Attorney Yahnig said, it depends on the situation and a process can be worked out on how to respond back to the general public. President Montgomery motioned to table this discussion until next meeting. Member Dalmage motioned to table discussion and Member Green seconded.

Voice Vote

Aye: Unanimous

Nay; None

Motion carries

3.1 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation during this Board of Education meeting November 10, 2016.

IO 4.0 **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Montgomery spoke briefly about wanting to bring youth to the meetings; as well as, inviting the Principals to the meetings to meet the Board members. President Montgomery briefly introduced Marna Goodman who is the Chief of Professional Development and Training.

4.1 **Introduce Cynthia Houston, Principal – IYC Pere Marquette**

Ms. Cynthia Houston, Principal, Pere Marquette, thanked the board for inviting her and how excited she was to be in attendance. Principal Houston mentioned that she attended School Board meetings previously and likes to stay involved and up-to-date. Principal Houston has 29 years in education with 11 years as a Middle School Teacher; Administration as an Assistant Principal; and Principal. She mentioned that she started with Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) – School District #428 in February 2016 with IYC Pere Marquette. She earned her Bachelor in Elementary Education and a Master in Education Administration from the University of Missouri in Saint. Louis. Ms. Houston has been a huge assist since joining Illinois Youth Center, Pere Marquette in which she is constantly providing direction and assistance in leadership, professional development, instructional strategies, open campus, and a learning atmosphere for the youth.

- Dr. Jones-Redmond mentioned that Principal Houston has been a breath of fresh air for Pere Marquette as well as the school district. She has taken extra steps to beautify the campus and open the special education area and getting computers for special educational needs. During Ms. Houston's first week at Pere Marquette the youth were excited and enthusiastic about her presence. She is excited to be in attendance and to meet the Board and to hear the various things going on.
- Member Vidis thanked Principal Houston for coming and asked if there was something in the system she feels the Board could be assisting with. Principal Houston said that at this time she doesn't.

5.0 **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Jones-Redmond spoke on behalf of Superintendent Gloria J. Davis and gave background on a fully executed contract that was signed on July 2016 and extends over a 10 year period with Literacy Volunteers of Illinois (LVI) and the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. We have started a new contract with an aggressive push to make sure each facility have a Literacy Volunteers on site. Under the Superintendent's leadership this Literacy program was approved. Dr. Jones-Redmond introduced Ms. Dorothy Miaso who is the Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers of Illinois or LVI.

5.1 **Special Presentation by, Literacy Volunteers of Illinois (LVI)**

Ms. Dorothy Miaso gave the board background information on Literacy Volunteers of Illinois (LVI). She mentioned, LVI is a statewide organization committed to developing and supporting literacy programs that help families, adults and out-of-school teens increase their literary skills. The program is officially referred to as Jump Start. The purpose of Jump Start was to help raise the literacy levels of incarcerated youth. LVI has three programs nationwide: Jump Start; AmeriCorps; and On the Road to Literacy; which started under a three year funded program in 1995. LVI is focused on working with youths below the 6th grade reading level and non-readers. The student levels are captured from assessment testing that is used to see where the youth are. Volunteers for the literacy program are referrals from faculty, staff, and even from the youth themselves. Once accepted as a volunteer, they are then interviewed to determine what area of teaching they are interested in and backgrounded for security. The volunteers take a Learner Centered Approach and this helps them get centered on a particular interest. There is currently full-time staff at Illinois Youth Center (IYC) Saint Charles and IYC Harrisburg. The AmeriCorps and Vista volunteers work as tutors with the youth and program development, not just educational, but also enrichment programs and recreational activities during school breaks.

St. Charles was where it began and has 31 volunteers on a regular basis. The community is densely populated so it's much easier to recruit volunteers as oppose to rural areas which sees tougher recruitment. IYC Harrisburg and IYC Kewanee were tough but IYC Pere Marquette will be the biggest challenge yet because of the rural area. Some volunteers have come from college campuses. A few years back, Ms. Illinois platform was criminal justice and she volunteered within the program. LVI sponsors a program called VOCAL (Volunteer Outreach for Community Action in Literacy). There are perhaps 31 AmeriCorps members working in adult volunteer literacy programs throughout the state. They work with the students on achieving their GED Certificate and High School Diploma's and for those who wish to be college-bound they assist with the ACT and SAT preparations and FAFSA applications.

- Member Griffin asked, What is the status at IYC Chicago which haven't had volunteers for about 3 years but there are full-time AmeriCorps and part-time volunteer who just wrapped up and one that is starting soon? Ms. Miaso mentioned that there are no community volunteers that are retired teachers or students that could come an hour or two to work with students.
- Member Griffin asked, Why does St. Charles seems to have more volunteers than Chicago? Ms. Miaso mentioned that they have night time volunteers that work this is easier for many and space matters in which IYC Chicago has a lack of space.
- Member Vidis asked to have an update on LVI and the progress of the Jump Start program at our next meeting.

5.2

September Special Education Monitoring Reports
Dr. Bambi Bethel-Leitschuh, Director of Special Education

Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh mentioned that the Special Education Student Monitoring Status Report provides continuing statistical data identifying the number of students with special needs serviced each month. The information is placed on a shared drive for each facility to see and have so case managers can view the monitoring logs on a daily basis. There are reference key available on the monitoring report: "C" – Compliance; "A" - Annual Review; and "R" for Re-evaluation. These keys are set up to keep the information up to date and to see where a need is to be met. The Special Education Form 16 is a monthly report of Special Education Statistics which relates to compliance, number of referrals initiated, student transfers and current IEPs for each Illinois Youth Center. Each table represents different information and totals for each facility and special needs students at that facility are annotated. Our future goal now, is to design professional development which right now is being started with a weekly video conference on Friday of each week. The goal is to go through every student record and have a completed IEP. Once the Special Education Coordinators are in place visits will decrease and be substituted through video conferencing. For addressing reentry IEPs, we are trying to keep service in place and be in constant communication with aftercare.

- The school board congratulates Dr. Bethel-Leitschuh on her great progress thus far with the Special Education program at IDJJ-School District.
- The board asked about the report from Dr. Leone? Dr. Jones-Redmond said that it is currently in editing and once completed the board will receive it.

President Montgomery mentioned that Senate Bill 2777 which is currently being worked on will allow DJJ having its own parole board. Chief Goodman who is the Chief of Professional Development and Training is assisting staff with training that will take place November 17, 2016 and November 29, 2016. We look forward to this new initiative.

5.3 **September Principal Data and Education Reports**

Dr. Jones-Redmond mentioned that the administration collects critical data from each school site on a monthly basis. This data is forwarded to the Superintendent and the IDJJ Data Manager Brittany Groot. According to the consent decree the student general education teacher ratio is to be 10 youth to 1 teacher and 6 youth to 1 for special education teacher. IYC St. Charles does not meet the requirement for general education ratio and IYC Chicago and IYC Harrisburg do not meet the requirement for special education ratio standard per the Consent Decree. The agency as a whole meets the general education requirement but doesn't meet the consent decree for special education requirements however the positions are currently posted with the Department and on Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) websites. This dual posting allows for a much broader recruiting mechanism. There are currently 20 positions that are posted.

Dr. Jones-Redmond further mentioned that the School District wanted to follow up and see if IYC Kewanee could be removed from the final percentages but the request was overruled. Generally, 35% of enrolled students in DJJ receive special education services and the district is pushing to complete more IEPs for the youth which should be at 100%. Right now, the facilities are getting close to that number and thanks to IYC Pere Marquette new leadership with Principal Houston she has maintained a strong hold on this percentage.

- Member Dalmage inquired about the jump in May from the previous months. Dr. Jones-Redmond said that basically they approached each staff and teachers and asked to get the numbers up. Dr. Jones-Redmond says she speaks to the principals at least 3-4 times a week and try to meet at least twice a month and further discussed during the principal's meeting.

Dr. Jones-Redmond mentioned that the board members and executive staff are invited to attend the upcoming principal's meeting the week after Thanksgiving Monday, November 28, 2016 and Tuesday, November 29, 2016 with professional development provided by Dr. Muhammad. He will be discussing on the topic of Overcoming the Achievement Gap – Trap.

6.0. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

No Items to Discuss at this time.

7.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

President Montgomery motioned to close the meeting. Member Griffin moved to close the meeting and Member Dalmage seconded to close the meeting.

Voice Vote

Aye; Unanimous

Nay; None

Motion Carries

The meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

The next board of education meeting will convene, January 20, 2017.