

DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMUNITY MEETING

Monday, April 30, 2018
6:00 P.M.

Frederick Douglass Academy for Young Men
2001 W. Warren
Detroit, MI 48208

MEETING SUMMARY

The Community Meeting of the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD or District) began at 6:05 P.M.

Board Facilitators:

Dr. Iris Taylor, President
Angelique Peterson-Mayberry

Administration:

Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent

Welcome/Introduction

Dr. Iris Taylor, President presented the welcome and stated the purpose of the meeting in response to the community requesting dialogue with the Board. The Board will hold community meetings every other month for the remainder of the school year with a rotation of Board Members acting as meeting chair and co-chair. The agenda for community meetings will consist of an opening and/or welcome, District update by administration, and then questions and answers. The meeting location will change to accommodate participants.

Dr. Taylor stated the Board are looking into several ways for the Board to hear from the community and the community to hear from the board. One example given was the "All Aboard" meeting hosted by Board Secretary Misha Stallworth. At the Regular Board Meeting the Public Comment portion of the meeting will be moved up to the middle of the agenda. A focus group, task force or hearing would be a means of presenting a specific subject for discussion.

A Follow up of all meetings will be posted within 10 days of the meeting.

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District Update

Dr. Vitti provided a brief update of the District using the 5 Pillars of the Strategic Plan. He provided the following:

Outstanding Achievement

- The District adopted a K-8 Curriculum for literacy and math.
- Training on the new curriculum will take place for teachers in late spring into summer as well as for parents through the Parent Academy.
- A Hotline will be made available for parents with questions or concern.

The Whole Child

The budget for 2018-2019 was passed by the board and approved by the Financial Review Commission (FRC). Every school will have a music or art teacher, guidance counselor/social worker or mental health specialist, attendance agent, at least one assistant principal, a dean of discipline, and in-school suspension facilitator.

Exceptional Talent

The Finance and Academic Committees have both approved an agreement with Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) to recognize experience outside of the District allowing recruitment of staff.

Transformative Culture

A new Code of Conduct will go before the Academic Committee for approval at the May meeting. The District will have an attendance, discipline, special education, literacy, marketing, Enrollment, and staffing plan that will go before the Board for approval in June.

The following teams will facilitate upcoming Community Meetings:

- ✓ Treasurer Sonya Mays and Secretary Misha Stallworth
- ✓ Members LaMar Lemmons and Dr. Deborah Hunter-Harvill
- ✓ Vice President Angeliq Peterson-Mayberry and Member Georgia Lemmons

Questions, Comments, Concerns and Responses

Question, Comment, or Concern:

William Davis expressed concern regarding class size reduction.

Superintendent's Response:

The budget currently allows funding for a music or art teacher in every school as well as a physical education teacher. The allocation plan is based on the number of students at each

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school and sets class size at a reasonable level. The issue currently regarding class size is the recruitment of teachers. Recognizing experience beyond two years will allow the recruitment of teachers to not only fill vacancies but an opportunity to hire additional staff.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Tracy Peters attended a neighborhood meeting chaired by Letty Azar, City of Detroit Manager for District 4. In referencing the Mayor's proposed bussing loop, Ms. Azar stated the project would begin on the Westside. Ms. Peters is concerned that the project/plan is another experiment such as the that of the Educational Achievement Authority(EAA), there is no accountability of tax payer dollars, and feels it is government interference at the expense of students.

Response:

The original proposal was a five-year agreement that included every school. If the District participates it will be with a one-year agreement to determine the impact and will only pay \$1,000 dollars per student rider and \$500 for student riders accessing the recreation center afterschool program. The final agreement in proposed form will go before the Finance and Academic Sub-Committees before the going to the full board for approval.

President Dr. Taylor stated a final agreement have not been reviewed. The Board wants to ensure proper vetting of the entire proposal by standing committees before approval.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

A Gentlemen whose daughter attends Palmer Park Academy expressed concern about the lack of communication and receipt of information (referenced a report) from the school to parents as well as concerned about a meeting that took place at 1:00pm.

Response:

President Taylor state the meeting scheduled at 1:00pm was an Financial Review Commission meeting for members who are seated on the commission. The meeting is not chaired or governed by the District. The meeting is open to the public and allow public comment.

Vice President Peterson-Mayberry stated all District meetings are post on the DPSCD website.

Superintendent Dr. Vitti stated the district tries to use protocol in sharing information. The report was first shared with faculty before informing the public. The report was posted on line

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for public access. Robo calls were made to parents to inform them of the report as well as hard copies provided to the school.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Helen Moore, Keep the Vote No Takeover, asked why the District was indulging the Mayor to get money from public funds. Feels the District has not full-filled things they need to do. Feels the district is at war with those supporting charter schools, people who don't understand African centered education, the potential failure of third grade students held back, possible closure of schools in two years.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Russ Bellant wanted to follow up on his previous concern about National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing and getting rid of an invalid testing process that produces headlines stating the district is a failure.

Response:

President Dr. Taylor stated the Board's focus is what is the best educational opportunity for our children. The instructional rigor and requirement of the new curriculum starting in the fall is going to build a platform to allow a positive trajectory for students.

Superintendent Dr. Vitti stated the recent NAEP scores display the failure of emergency management not what children are capable. If the district did not participate in NAEP testing, the district would only be measured by the state test M-STEP. You must look at an objective way to measure impact. There is no district similar to Detroit. Nape allows comparison of districts similar to DPSCD. Superintendent believes that NAEP test scores will show improvement in 2 administrations from now and is uncomfortable with opting of testing. Any suspension of testing will make it difficult to resume testing. It is hard to get back in once you suspend testing.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Dr. Telford expressed concern with the district not utilizing the Qwk2LRN program. Dr. Telford also asked if the teachers who selected the new curriculum have an opportunity to vet other programs including Qwk2LRN.

Superintendent's Response:

Superintendent Dr. Vitti stated the curriculum selected is aligned with the standards and have been defined successful when it comes to literacy and math. A Request for Proposal was issued

for bids for the new curriculum, however, QWK2LRN did not apply. The concern is that QWK2LRN although researched based but has not been proven with the new standard. There is currently no principal to pilot the program for next year.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Ms. Moore, parent of student at Paul Robeson and Malcolm X Academy expressed the following concerns:

- Mayor's interest in the district.
- Parents removing students from Palmer Park Academy.
- Request the district honor the application process for Paul Robeson.
- Notification of meetings is a problem. Sharlonda Buckman, Senior Executive Director of Family and Community Engagement will be coming to the school on Friday regarding school communication.
- Parent Action Leaders are not present in the schools to relay information to parents.
- Being penalized for opting out of the M-STEP test.
- Cuts from the school budget and field trips.

Superintendent's Response:

- *The only change as far as field trips are concerned is the district is initiating a program called funded on the district level called "cultural passport". The Cultural Passport program will fund field trips for every grade level with the goal for all students to have a cultural experience by the time they have entered grade 5.*
 - *Schools are receiving more positions in the combination of music, arts, physical education, attendance, agents, etc., limiting the number of contracts and reducing time spent by principals managing contracts.*
 - *Recommends students are tested to determine performance level. If students are not test the school will be penalized by the state by placing the school as a low performing school. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and legislature have considered penalizing schools for not testing enough students.*
 - *There is no data to support students leaving Palmer Park Academy going to other schools.*
 - *The district's recommendation for the Bus Loop is to pay per student to benefit only DPSCD students.*
 - *Agree there is a lot of work to do around communication. The district is working on a marketing plan that will be introduced in June/July.*
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Question, Comment, or Concern:

Damion Jackson, Chairperson for the McKenzie Alumni Association, is concerned with the partnership between the alumni association and the district regarding the use of school property for reunion functions. The alumni association have held an annual BBQ the 4th Sunday in June for the past 25 years on school property. That function is in jeopardy due to concessions and community use of schools.

Response

President Dr. Taylor requested the Superintendent assign staff to work out the specifics of the McKenzie Alumni Association's concerns.

Superintendent Dr. Vitti stated that he and Vice President Peterson-Mayberry have already discussed the issue. Kristen Howard, Executive Director of Compliance is working through any liability issues. Issue should be resolved by the end of the week

Vice President Peterson-Mayberry stated there should be one standard for Community Use of Schools.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Rosilyn Brown, volunteer accompanist concerned about the cancellation of the use of accompanist in the district.

Superintendent's Response:

Superintendent Dr. Vitti stated there was a meeting held in the morning regarding accompanist. The district will be funding accompanist next year and is in the process of determining the funding source. Accompanist maybe be hired as teachers if they possess proper credentials.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Sharon Kelso, parent of Palmer Park Academy student was concerned with problems at Palmer Park Academy stating parents are not satisfied with the school and choose to stay only because it is too late in the school year to move their children. Issues include:

- Communication (principal did not distribute report).
- Academic program lacks structure.
- Students are tested on things they were never taught.
- Teachers must be trained and buy into success.

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Superintendent's Response:

Superintendent Dr. Vitti stated teacher paid training and professional development on the new curriculum will take place over the summer. The program design is in the works.

Palmer Park Academy will be moving to a Montessori level program with improvements to the building in the fall.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Victor Gibson, retired teacher wants the district to concentrate on recruiting staff and teachers with recruiting African American males as a priority. Also, offer cultural and African-centered training and professional development for cultural-based schools to master what is being taught and develop classroom management.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Verna Brock, Special Education Student Advocate, stated students with special needs are overlooked and do not receive the support they need. The district should consider an ombudsman to support parents and the program.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Former Board Member (name unknown) was concerned about:

- Stable curriculum
- Testing
- Return of the school library
- Accountability from state mismanagement of funds
- Continued segregation in the district

Superintendent's Response:

- *The curriculum will come with novels embedded in it.*
 - *An agenda item will come before the board for approval of funding for \$800,000 dollars for classroom libraries.*
 - *The next step will be to do an analysis for cost to bring back traditional libraries. The district is also working to extend partnerships with local libraries for student participation.*
 - *Challenge with segregation is history of laws and courts that allow segregation of schools. School programs can be created to keep Detroiters in our schools and recruit students from outside of Detroit creating a segregated school system.*
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Question, Comment, or Concern:

Andrea Jackson, College Advisor expressed concern regarding the following budgeting for student college tours, support for African American and Latino student programs, students being over tested, health education classes in the schools, and career and college readiness.

Superintendent's Response:

Dr. Vitti stated every school next year will have an ACT and SAT class at the 10th and 11th grade level as well as a graduation coach that will work with students and be empowered to have college visits using Title I funds. Ms. Jackson was encouraged to speak with Sharlonda Buckman, Senior Executive Director of Family and Community Engagement regarding 5000 Role Models male mentoring program.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Wanda Hall, Operator, of Greater Family of Detroit LLC., located inside of Barton Elementary School. The organization currently lease the building and was seeking a negotiated lease reduction due to extensive damage to the building. They currently made an offer on the building but have various concerns and issues to be addressed.

Response:

President Dr. Taylor requested the Superintendent assign staff to work with the organization to address the details of their concerns.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Rita Carpenter expressed concern with infusing Crocket High School and Career and Tech Center as well as concern with staff bullying and abusing students.

Response:

President Dr. Taylor requested Ms. Carpenter to report the names of any staff she has witnessed bullying or abusing students providing complete detail of the incident for follow up and accountability.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Parent was concerned with school latchkey programs in the Southwest Detroit area.

Response:

President Dr. Taylor requested the Superintendent to investigate for a response

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Question, Comment, or Concern:

Kim White, parent of senior student attending Communication and Media Arts High (CMA) School is having challenges with scheduling her daughter to take a test, as well as daughter being assaulted by the athletic director at the school and retaliated against for parental concerns.

Superintendent's Response:

Superintendent invited parent to sit down and discuss the issues and focus on what is best for her child. Parent was requested to forward the last emails to the superintendent.

Question, Comment, or Concern:

Parent felt she was harassed by Rebecca Luna after making a complaint against a teacher. Concerned with receiving handouts as opposed to books.

Closing

Vice President Peterson-Mayberry thanked the audience and expressed appreciation for bringing their concerns to the attention of the Board and Superintendent and encouraged continued dialogue to receive a response and resolution to the all issues and concerns.