

January 18, 2011

DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
CITY BOARDROOM — 400 ROBERT D. RAY DRIVE
MINUTES
JANUARY 18, 2011

PUBLIC FORUM – 5:45 p.m.

The Board of Directors met in regular session on Tuesday, January 18, 2011, in the city hall boardroom at 400 Robert D. Ray Drive., Connie Boesen presiding.

Present: Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, Gallardo, Murphy, Link, Strong
Absent: Woods

REGULAR MEETING – 6:00 p.m.

The Board of Directors met in regular session on Tuesday, January 18, 2011, in the city hall boardroom at 400 Robert D. Ray Drive., Connie Boesen presiding.

Present: Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, Gallardo, Murphy, Link, Strong
Absent: Woods

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson moved to approve the agenda; second by Strong.

Aye: Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, Gallardo, Murphy, Link, Strong
Nay: None
The motion carried, 6-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF January 4, 2011

Mr. Murphy moved approval of the minutes of January 4, 2011; second by Caldwell-Johnson.

Aye: Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, Gallardo, Murphy, Link, Strong
Nay: None
The motion carried, 6-0.

DISTRICT RECOGNITIONS 6:10 p.m.

N/A

CONSENT ITEMS – 6:15 p.m.

7. Architect Payments -----	1
8. Construction Payments -----	3
9. Award of Bid No. B6260; Locksets and Hardware — North High School -----	7
10. Award of Bid No. B6217; Complete Roof Replacement — Cattell Elementary -----	9

11. Award of Bid No. B6216; Exterior Wall Restoration — Hiatt Middle School ----- 11
12. Personnel Recommendations ----- 13
13. List of Bills for Approval ----- 15

Minutes

Ms. Strong moved approval of the consent items including payment of bills previously authorized and certified by the secretary and reviewed by her as paid in the amount of \$1,624,491.21 and unpaid bills in the amount of \$3,915,220.10; second by Murphy.

Aye: Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, Gallardo, Link, Murphy, Strong
Nay: None
The motion carried, 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING — 6:05 p.m.

14. Cowles Montessori School ----- 17

OTHER — 6:10 p.m.

15. Receipt and Filing of Termination Recommendation ----- 19
16. Monitoring Report — Student Achievement; Graduate Ends 2 ----- 21

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION — 8:00 p.m.

CHAIR’S REPORT — 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Boesen announced that the “day on the hill” at the statehouse for the Urban Education Network [UEN] will be February 9.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT — 8:00 p.m.

Dr. Sebring said that the UEN superintendents will also have a “day on the hill” soon as will the Des Moines metro area superintendents but she did not disclose specific dates.

ADJOURN 8:05 p.m.

Item No. 7
Page 1 of 2**Subject: ARCHITECT PAYMENTS****For: ACTION****Contact: BILL GOOD****Attachments: None**

(harold.good@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-8321)

Issue: Payment of architect/engineer invoices.**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends that the following architect/engineer payments be authorized.

<u>Architect/Engineer/Project</u>	<u>Percent Paid</u>	<u>Estimated Fee</u>	<u>Previous Payments</u>	<u>Current Payment</u>
<u>BCDM</u>				
Hoover Meredith Complex Architect App. No. 10(SWP)	78%	\$299,500.00	\$225,845.00	\$7,074.00
<u>Gould Evans Goodman</u>				
Roosevelt High School Architect App No. 35 (LOSST)	93%	\$2,128,149.00	\$1,955,239.29	\$8,775.55
<u>OPN Architects</u>				
North High School- Arch. App. No. 12 (SWP)	84%	\$959,975.00	\$782,137.82	\$23,504.70
<u>RDG Planning & Design</u>				
Central Campus – Phase 1 Architect App. No. 37 (LOSST)	99%	\$1,446,111.00	\$1,387,529.73	\$31,160.25
Career Tech – Phase 2 Architect App. No. 7 (SWP)	75%	\$600,000.00	\$416,268.79	\$30,865.80
<u>Shive Hattery</u>				
Brody Middle School Architect App. No. 3 (SWP)	65%	\$113,400.00	\$30,800.00	\$42,150.00
Merrill Middle School Architect App. No. 1 (SWP)	24%	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$36,000.00

Item No. 7
Page 2 of 2**Alvine Engineering**

Woodlawn Ed. Center Architect App. No. 4 (SWP)	71%	\$140,625.00	\$90,000.00	\$9,421.88
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DLR Group

Cowles Montessori Architect App. No. 1 (SWP)	6%	\$126,500.00	\$0.00	\$7,590.00
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Cowles Montessori Architect App. No. 2 (SWP)	24%	\$126,500.00	\$7,590.00	\$22,770.00
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Baldwin White

Edmunds Elementary Architect App. No. 1 (SWP)	19%	\$67,560.00	\$0.00	\$12,577.50
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Jackson Elementary (LOSST) Architect App. No. 27	100%	\$371,430.00	\$353,730.00	\$17,700.00
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Taylor Ohde Kitchell

Program Management App. No. 121 (LOSST)	95%	\$19,351,769.00	\$18,187,238.32	\$151,810.05
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Total				\$401,399.73
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Presenters: None**Background:** None

Item No. 8
Page 1 of 3**Subject: CONSTRUCTION PAYMENTS****For: ACTION****Contact: BILL GOOD**

(harold.good@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-8321)

Attachments: None**Issue:** Payment of contractor invoices.**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends that the following contractor and supplier payments be authorized.

<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Percent Paid</u>	<u>Estimated Fee</u>	<u>Previous Payments</u>	<u>Current Payment Due</u>
<u>Larson & Larson</u>				
Roosevelt High School (LOSST) GC App. No. 20 Sealed Bid No. 5226-09	81%	\$17,862,059.00	\$14,212,063.59	\$ 235,016.59
<u>Edge Commercial</u>				
Hoover/Meredith (SWP) GC App. No. 4 Sealed Bid No. B6169	25%	\$2,829,109.00	\$437,739.72	\$259,365.06
Jackson Elementary (LOSST) RETAINAGE RELEASE Sealed Bid No. 5210-09	100%	\$4,105,220.00	\$3,899,959.00	\$205,261.00
<u>Dean Snyder</u>				
North High School (SWP) GC App. No. 4 Sealed Bid No. B6151	26%	\$7,301,681.00	\$1,364,237.05	\$563,157.15
<u>Bergstrom Constr.</u>				
CC Connector (SWP) GC App. No. 3 Sealed Bid No. B6179	65%	\$156,936.00	\$70,178.40	\$31,747.10

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Brocon Services

Wright Elem. School (SWP) RETAINAGE RELEASE Sealed Bid No. B6085	100%	\$1,563,903.00	\$1,485,707.82	\$78,195.18
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Reep Inc.

Wright Elem. School (SWP) RETAINAGE RELEASE Sealed Bid No. B6024	100%	\$188,204.00	\$178,793.80	\$9,410.20
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North Windows (SWP) GC App. No. 6 Sealed Bid No. B6087	95%	\$905,652.00	\$805,643.29	\$51,542.72
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Larson & Larson

Central Campus Phase 2 (SWP) GC App. No. 1 Sealed Bid No. B6220	3%	\$7,770,000.00	\$0.00	\$215,211.04
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Robinson Brothers

North High School (SWP) GC App. No. 4 Sealed Bid No. B6148	89%	\$170,514.55	\$144,068.73	\$7,054.28
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REEP Inc.

Cowles School (SWP) GC App. No. 2 Sealed Bid No. B6176	12%	\$277,989.00	\$7,922.05	\$24,327.98
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Howe Elem. School (SWP) RETAINAGE RELEASE Sealed Bid No. B6034	100%	\$224,026.00	\$213,903.89	\$10,122.11
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Neumann Brothers

3 rd Floor and Stairs (LOSST) RETAINAGE RELEASE Sealed Bid No. 5214-09	100%	\$8,453,250.00	\$8,345,331.00	\$107,919.00
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Item No. 8
Page 3 of 3**Wheeler Contracting**

Woodlawn School (SWP) GC App. No.1 Sealed Bid No. B6201	80%	\$166,800.00	\$0.00	\$133,760.00
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Metro Demolition

Central Campus (SWP) GC App. No. 3 Sealed Bid No. B6191	95%	\$432,843.05	\$384,239.85	\$26,961.05
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Tri City Electric

Hoover High School (SWP) GC App. No. 1 Sealed Bid No. B6221	45%	\$108,586.00	\$0.00	\$48,971.88
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Bergstrom Constr.

Park Avenue School (SWP) GC App. No. 9 Sealed Bid No. B6066	95%	\$2,443,561.00	\$2,318,210.90	\$3,172.05
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Swanson Glass

Park Avenue School (SWP) GC App. No. 5 Sealed Bid No. B6026	95%	\$266,860.00	\$244,625.00	\$8,892.00
			TOTAL	\$2,020,086.39

Presenters: None**Background:** None

Item No. 9
Page 1 of 1
Subject: AWARD OF BID NO. B6260; LOCKSETS AND HARDWARE — NORTH HIGH SCHOOL
For: ACTION
Contact: BILL GOOD
Attachments: None

 (harold.good@dmps.k12.ia.us: 242-8321)

Issue: Award of contract for the locksets and door hardware for North High School.

Superintendent's Recommendation: The superintendent recommends a contract for the Base Bid and Alt. No. 1 be awarded to the lowest responsive/responsible bidder, Walsh Door, Des Moines, IA in the amount of \$ 55,825.01

Presenters: None. Bill Good will be present to answer any questions.

Background: This project is funded by PPEL. The bid consists of the following:

- **Base Bid & Alternate No. 1:** To supply locksets and hardware to replace door hardware on the first, second and third floors as well as the athletic areas. The district received bids on January 3, 2011. The results are as follows:

Bidder	Base Bid + Alt No. 1
Walsh Door – DSM, IA	\$ 55,825.01
Accredited Lock Supply – Secaucus, NJ	\$ 64,821.25
Doors Inc – DMS, IA	\$ 67,544.00
Menards – Altoona, IA	\$ 70,398.67
Independent Hwd – Philadelphia, PA	\$ 79,832.93

Funding Source: Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL)

Item No. 10**Page 1 of 1****Subject: AWARD OF BID NO. B6217; COMPLETE ROOF REPLACEMENT — CATTELL ELEMENTARY****For: ACTION****Contact: BILL GOOD**

(harold.good@dmps.k12.ia.us: 242-8321)

Attachments: None

Issue: Award of contract to replace the existing roof membrane.**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends the contract for the base bid and alternates 1-3 be awarded to Academy Roofing in the amount of \$101,000.**Presenters:** None. Bill Good will be present to answer any questions.**Background:** Plans and specifications were prepared by Angelo Architects and Facility Management. Work will begin on or before June 6, 2011. The project came before the Board on December 14, 2010 for public hearing and action.

- **Base bid:** Remove deteriorated roof membrane; replace with new Thermo Plastic Olefin) TPO
- **Alternate No.1:** Remove deteriorated roof membrane on upper roof section; replace with new TPO
- **Alternate No.2:** Add for Sarnafill on main roof section
- **Alternate No.3:** Add for Sarnafill on upper roof section

The district received seven bids on January 11, 2011. The results are as follows:

Bidder	Base Bid	Alter. No.1	Alter.No.2	Alter.No.3	Total with Alternates
Academy Roofing Des Moines, IA.	\$79,600	\$18,900	\$2,100	\$400	\$101,000
Bailey Roofing Des Moines, IA	\$102,200	\$18,475	No Bid	No Bid	\$120,675
Black Hawk Cedar Falls, IA	\$130,200	\$23,600	No Bid	No Bid	\$153,800
Brockway Burlington, IA	\$126,395	\$23,150	No Bid	No Bid	\$149,545
Central States Ames, IA	\$112,500	\$18,000	\$12,000	\$2,500	\$145,000
Cunningham Oskaloosa, IA	\$127,968	\$25,062	No Bid	No Bid	\$153,030
Ida Grove Ida Grove, IA	\$112,000	\$22,000	No bid	No bid	\$134,000

Funding: Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL)

Item No. 11
Page 1 of 1**Subject: AWARD OF BID NO. B6216; EXTERIOR WALL RESTORATION — HIATT MIDDLE SCHOOL****For: ACTION****Contact: BILL GOOD**

(harold.good@dmps.k12.ia.us : 242-8321)

Attachments: None**Issue:** Award of contract to repair exterior masonry deterioration at Hiatt Middle School.**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends the contract for the base bid and alternates 1-3 be awarded to the lowest responsive/responsible bidder, Mid-Continental, Fort Scott, KS in the amount of \$273,529.**Presenters:** None. Bill Good will be present to answer any questions.**Background:** Plans and specifications were prepared by Angelo Architects and Facility Management. Work will begin on or before April 1, 2011. The project came before the Board on January 4, 2011 for public hearing and action.

- Base bid: Remove deteriorated brick, mortar and lintels; replace with new
- Alternate No.1: Repair wood door jams
- Alternate No.2: East exterior auditorium wall repairs
- Alternate No.3: North, south, west exterior auditorium wall repairs

The district received six bids on January 7, 2011. The results are as follows:

Bidder	Base Bid	Alter. No.1	Alter.No.2	Alter.No.3	Total with Alternates
BI State Masonry. Inc. Rock Island, IL	\$314,900	\$1,200	\$34,936	\$37,300	\$388,336
E&H Restoration Davenport, IA	\$339,636	\$1,947	\$44,311	\$53,105	\$438,999
Fred Jackson Dubuque, IA	\$317,635	\$2,431	\$40,808	\$46,726	\$407,600
Mid-Continental Restoration Fort Scott, KS	\$220,469	\$694	\$24,600	\$27,766	\$273,529
Renaissance Restoration Galena, IL	\$338,000	\$1,800	\$53,000	\$39,000	\$431,800
Western Waterproofing WDSM, IA	\$320,900	\$1,085	\$39,440	\$33,950	\$395,375

Funding: Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL)

Item No. 12**Page 1 of 1****Subject: PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS****For: ACTION****Contact: Twyla Woods****Attachments: None**

(twyla.woods@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-7972)

Superintendent's Recommendation: The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the following personnel recommendations:

Background:**ELECTIONS - GENERAL EDUCATION**

Name	Class	Step	Effective Date	Amount
Argumedo, Danielle	1	1	1/12/11	38,757

BA from Drake University, Des Moines, IA; Address/Des Moines, IA; Assignment: East/Art (.5), Roosevelt/Art (.5)

Christopher, Heather	1	1	01/03/11	\$38,757
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BA from University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA; Address/ West Des Moines, IA; Weeks/Math

Heetland, Emily	1	1	01/03/11	\$38,757
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BA from Luther College, Decorah, IA; Address/ Des Moines, IA; Weeks/ ELL

Kinnevan, Meagen	2	1	01/10/11	\$40,185
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BS from Missouri State University, Springfield, MO; Address/ Urbandale, IA; Central Campus/ Family and Consumer Science

Lehman, Sara	1	1	01/05/11	38,757
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BA from Drake University, Des Moines, IA; Address/Des Moines, IA; Assignment: Oak Park/5th grade

Owen, Morgan	1	1	01/10/11	\$38,757
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BS from Drake University, Des Moines, IA; Address/ Des Moines, IA; Lincoln/Spanish

Sheridan, Elizabeth	1	1	01/03/11	\$38,757
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BA from University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA; Address/ Des Moines, IA; Roosevelt/English.

Thomas, Barry	1	1	01/03/11	\$38,757
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BA from Grandview College, Des Moines, IA; Address/Des Moines, IA; Lincoln/Academic Lab

Voorhis, Carole	2	12	01/06/11	\$52,247
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BA from University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA; Address/Johnston, IA; Riverwoods/Nurse

RESIGNATION

Name	School, Position	Effective Date	Reason
DeBoer, Dawn	Riverwoods, Nurse	01/07/11	Personal
Rodriguez, Jose	East, PE	1/14/2011	Personal

Item No. 13

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Subject: LIST OF BILLS FOR APPROVAL

For: ACTION

Contact: Patricia Schroeder

(patricia.schroeder@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-8527)

Attachments: None

Issue: A list of bills will be furnished to the Board of Directors at the Board meeting for approval. The secretary will be glad to furnish information as requested on any of these items. Prior to the meeting, one member of the board will have checked this list with the invoices.

Item No. 14

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Subject: COWLES MONTESSORI SCHOOL

For: PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION

Contact: BILL GOOD

(harold.good@dmps.k12.ia.us : 242-8321)

Attachments: None

Issue: Approval of the plans and specifications for work at Cowles Montessori School. Publication for the public hearing was included in the Des Moines Register on January 7, 2011.

Superintendent's Recommendation: The superintendent recommends that the Board approve the plans and specifications prepared by DLR Group for the mechanical and electrical renovation work at Cowles Montessori School.

Presenters: None. Bill Good will be present to answer any questions.

Background: This project will enhance energy efficiency and safety/security measures. It will provide electrical upgrades including new lighting, a fire sprinkler system, upgraded technology, and improvements to the mechanical systems.

A copy of the plans and specifications is available for review at the district's facility operation center.

Funding: State Wide Penny (Students First Program)

Minutes

Ms. Boesen opened the public hearing. There being no speakers, she closed the hearing and asked the superintendent to introduce the matter.

Ms. Link moved approval of the plans and specifications; second by Strong.

Aye: Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, Gallardo, Link, Murphy, Strong

Nay: None

Motion carried, 6-0.

Item No. 15

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Subject: RECEIPT AND FILING OF TERMINATION RECOMMENDATION

For: ACTION

Contact: Twyla Woods

Attachments: None

(twyla.woods@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-7972)

Superintendent's Recommendation: The superintendent recommends the Board receive and file a recommendation for termination.

Background: A teacher termination is being considered pursuant to Iowa Code Section 279.27. The teacher has requested a private hearing before the Board, pursuant to the Code. The hearing will be scheduled for a later date.

Minutes

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson moved the recommendation be received and filed with the Board Secretary; second by Link.

Aye: Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, Gallardo, Link, Murphy, Strong

Nay: None

Motion carried, 6-0.

Item No. 16**Page 1 of 9****Subject: MONITORING REPORT — STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADUATE ENDS 2****For: RECEIVE REPORT/DISCUSSION****Contact: Dr. Nancy Sebring/Jo Ellen Latham** **Attachments: 11-003**
(superintendent@dmps.k12.ia.us 515-242-7660/joellen.latham@dmps.k12.ia.us 515-242-7568)

Issue: Board Governance Policy 3.4 — Monitoring Superintendent Performance – calls for a series of reports to the Board on progress toward district Ends. The schedule requires an annual report on Ends Priority No. 2; Student Achievement.

Superintendent's Recommendation: The superintendent recommends that the Board receive and discuss the annual monitoring report for Graduate Ends Priority No. 2; Student Achievement.

Presenters: Dr. Nancy Sebring/Jo Ellen Latham; Curriculum Supervisor

Background: The Board adopted Policy Governance on November 21, 2007, which includes a schedule of monitoring reports. The report on Ends Priority No. 2; Student Achievement is included as Attachment 11-003

Accordingly:

The Board will develop and maintain Ends policies instructing the superintendent to achieve certain results, for certain recipients at a specified worth or priority. These policies will be developed systematically from the broadest, most general level to more defined levels. All issues that are not Ends issues as defined here are means issues.

Minutes

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson asked for an explanation of why accuracy, fluency and comprehension were selected as literacy indicators in 1st, 3rd and 6th grades, respectively.

Ms. Latham responded that each of the three components is measured at each of the grade levels but different ones have been found to be more predictive data points at particular stages.

Dr. Sebring explained that accuracy, for instance, is a better measurement for determining need for remedial interventions by the 6th grade level since by then relatively fewer students have trouble with it.

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Mr. Murphy asked if actions that are cited in the report across a three-year period from 2010/2012 can't be changed.

Ms. Latham said that beyond the current school year actions included in the report may be viewed as projections that are subject to change pending the collection of future data.

Ms. Strong asked if increased enrollment in advanced high school math classes broken down along demographic lines by itself constitutes a reasonable indicator of achievement in that area. Similarly, with regard to 1st grade literacy data, she said the Board welcomes inclusion of the action steps employed as means to the End, but felt there is a piece missing throughout in terms of what the Board can look to as reliable indicators of reasonable achievement of the Ends.

Dr. Sebring asked the Board members if they would accept a combination of standardized measures such as ITBS scores and indicators based on other internal instruments which might be unique to this district.

Ms. Strong said that what the Board wants to see in addition to a plan of action is what the goals are that the plan is designed to achieve in terms of, for instance, proficiency levels at different benchmark grades across the K-12 continuum. Then, if the goals are not achieved, what factors were responsible. She said the data collection and reporting process has critical impact on setting budget priorities.

Dr. Sebring likened to a tennis match the process of trying to determine how much of which data is enough for the Board to accomplish its oversight before it's being inundated with too much.

Ms. Strong said that she is pleased with what is in the report but thinks it needs to be augmented with more in terms of how you will know when you've achieved goals.

Ms. Latham said that when widely used and reliable external or standardized benchmarks are available the district will employ those, but there may be cases when internal measurements either supplement them or have to suffice in lieu of them.

Ms. Boesen said an assortment of criteria is acceptable as long as the Board gets a clear sense of where we stand and where we are trying to go so that appropriate budgeting priorities may be established.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson said there are times when data needs to be disaggregated to reveal the real story that it's telling.

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Ms. Latham agreed and noted that the report does include some areas in which it was deemed important to break data down demographically to see if overall trends were reflected within subgroups.

Mr. Murphy said he would like to see before-the-fact predictions as well as after-the-fact explanations in these reports. He believes that demographic profiles of grade level cohorts might be one example of a means of predicting trends in data outcomes. He added that the Board's reasonable expectations from year to year at different grade levels might then fluctuate based on indicators like poverty levels in a particular group.

Ms. Link commented that the format and content of the reports on student achievement have come a long way. She echoed the desire expressed by others for the addition of a component representing something concrete in the way of reasonable expectations to assist the Board in assessing the superintendent's performance.

Ms. Latham said that staff notes changes from year to year in terms of levels of poverty or numbers of ELL students. Tactics might change accordingly but the goals do not, she added.

Ms. Strong asked how collaborative scoring impacted the report.

Ms. Latham said the writing assessments yield very rich data but they take longer to score. In the baseline year they are scored collaboratively. In subsequent years scoring is at the discretion of each building. She noted that the Wednesday early dismissal times built into this year's calendar have been invaluable for purposes of training in collaborative scoring.

Dr. Sebring agreed that the additional time for training teachers to administer district-wide, common assessments has been extremely important.

Ms. Boesen observed that this is the third year in a process of complete revamping of the system of internal and external literacy assessments. Both she and Dr. Sebring commended the district's teachers for their work in the administration of new assessments.

Mr. Murphy asked the significance of breaking down data according to free-and-reduced-price meals eligibility.

Ms. Latham explained that the achievement gap between those eligible and those not mirrors the gaps found between other demographic subgroups.

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Mr. Murphy then suggested that poverty levels are a factor that would be useful in predicting outcomes in advance of assessments and should be taken into account when establishing reasonable expectations for student achievement within cohorts.

Mr. Gallardo asked about the methodology for collecting literacy data from ELL students at the 1st grade level.

Ms. Latham said staff have collaborated very closely on development of a system that employs pictures, symbols and other visual or sound cues in that circumstance. Dr. Sebring said that when the district installed a new comprehensive literacy curriculum three years ago it included elements for both ELL and special education students to ensure consistency across all student groupings.

Mr. Murphy said that uniformity of format is a big step toward clarity in the collection and interpretation of meaningful data for student achievement reports.

Dr. Sebring said that there needs to be a wider understanding that DMPS is a district that serves lots of poor kids and the focus has to be more on how to effectively teach kids with that background.

Ms. Boesen said all kids are capable of learning and achievement but the same techniques don't necessarily work for everybody.

Dr. Sebring said more time, in the form of things like preschool, smaller class sizes and an array of extended learning opportunities is necessary to narrow the poverty achievement gap.

Ms. Strong agreed and noted that she has always been against the label "early dismissals" for the regular Wednesday professional development sessions because it creates the misleading impression that kids are being shortchanged when really their teachers are being trained to better instruct them. She would like to see reports that demonstrate the payoff of investments in professional development and thinks when such data are gathered they should be trumpeted to the community so people will understand the purpose of "early dismissals."

Ms. Latham said the district has been working with the Leadership and Learning Center on the implementation of systems which yield clearer cause and effect data and that future reports should contain more of what Ms. Strong had called for.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson cautioned against ascribing too much significance to professional development or any other single one along a continuum of strategies.

Dr. Sebring noted that the ideal situation in student achievement data occurs when an external or standardized instrument is validated by a second external and then confirmed by a third and internal measurement such as grades. Alignment of indicators is the strongest evidence of progress.

Turning to the math portion of the report, Ms. Caldwell-Johnson said that reading comprehension is really the cornerstone of learning in all academic areas. She would hope that as progress is achieved in literacy it would begin to reflect in other disciplines.

Ms. Latham agreed, saying it is axiomatic that as you improve children's literacy you will see improvement in other areas as well. She said that the district is adding increased writing components in other content areas and the means to track their effect.

Mr. Murphy raised a question as to Iowa's alignment with the standards of the Common Core Curriculum.

Ms. Latham said that Iowa adopted the Common Core standards last July. As a result she said there will be some significant changes in the next few years, especially in terms of rigor.

Ms. Boesen speculated as to the likelihood that Iowa will continue its subscription to the Common Core criteria given the current political balance of power in the state.

Ms. Latham said there is potentially a great deal of federal funding at stake contingent on a state's alignment with the Common Core benchmarks.

Mr. Murphy wondered if an individual school district in Iowa could align itself with the Common Core even if it was rejected by the state legislature and thereby still position itself for a chance at those federal funds.

Ms. Latham said that federal Race to the Top dollars and School Improvement Grants are absolutely tied to adoption of the Common Core but she didn't know if a district could declare such adoption independent of its state's policy.

Dr. Sebring said as a practical matter that any new curricula the district adopts, such as the one in math it recently purchased, will be in de facto compliance with more rigorous standards established by governing bodies in the various academic fields.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson questioned the legitimacy of the number of science fair project entries as an indicator in that area.

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Ms. Latham said that the only other measurements of progress in science were student scores on ITBS and ITED standardized exams. She added that staff is in the process of incorporating new benchmark data points for science assessments.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson noted that the science fair project data represented the only area in the entire report that was broken down by school and asked for an explanation of that.

Ms. Latham responded that in general the Board has sought a more holistic compilation of data and a district-wide snapshot of overall progress in student achievement.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson said she feels science is a more difficult area than reading and math when it comes to determining appropriate indicators and benchmarks of reasonable progress.

Ms. Strong said that eventually science may be an area where some variation of a collaborative scoring instrument is developed with the help of instructional staff.

Dr. Sebring said that science teachers talk frequently about the fact that sciences are inherently project-based disciplines, a principle that is difficult to incorporate in a district-wide assessment tool.

Mr. Murphy said he thinks using science fair participation is a fair barometer but the data should focus on the number of students involved as opposed to the number of projects. He wondered what might explain the numbers of science projects increasing at the same time the number of students enrolled in advanced science classes at the high school level was declining.

Ms. Link thought perhaps the fact that science projects were tabulated at the middle school level and advanced science isn't available until high school made correlation of the two difficult.

Mr. Murphy suggested that a reduced availability of advanced science classes in high schools was an unintended consequence of staffing decisions necessitated by last year's budget cuts.

Ms. Latham confirmed that because of seniority provisions in teacher contracts there have indeed been unintended consequences in the wake of teacher layoffs.

Dr. Sebring said there is a general consensus that the severe cuts required in recent budgets have set the district back roughly a year in terms of progress with student achievement.

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Mr. Gallardo asked about the impact of the Science Bound program.

Ms. Latham said that Science Bound is a very positive program.

Dr. Sebring explained that Science Bound is a partnership between the district and Iowa State University that identifies students in 7th grade, provides them with mentors and can culminate with college scholarships for minority students.

Mr. Murphy asked if the 200+ students taking part in Science Bound are included in the total enrolled in advanced science classes since it starts in middle school.

Ms. Latham said that participation in Science Bound by itself is not currently considered equivalent to enrollment in an advanced science course.

Mr. Murphy said perhaps it should be since it sounds like an advanced process.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson noted that ACT science scores have been trending downward and thought that might reflect the possibility that some DMPS kids are taking the ACT a year or more since their last science course because only three years of science are required for graduation. She suggested the Board might want to rethink the number of required science credits.

Mr. Murphy reminded that the district ACT scores reflect the fact that the exam is now mandatory for all juniors. He said it was expected that the average score would drop when even the non-college bound were included in the pool of results.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson said the number of science credits earned might make more sense than ACT scores as an indicator in this area.

Ms. Latham reported that there is research underway in conjunction with the Common Core to determine the proper sequencing of science classes for students in grades 8-12.

Dr. Sebring added that ACT itself has also been doing research on the effect of course-taking on college readiness. She mentioned that their findings are part of the reason why the district is exploring ways to allow students to initiate high school level coursework while still in middle school and build more rigor into their college preparation.

Turning to the data re: civics and government, Dr. Sebring said these are an area where there aren't many reliable external indicators.

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Ms. Link cited the expansion of the program for 8th graders to earn high school credit in government and to do so at their home schools as a positive step, but also said that continued expansion of such opportunities would have budget implications.

Dr. Sebring said the district does want to identify kids who are not at Central Academy but are nevertheless capable of doing Advanced Placement [AP] work and give them the chance in their home schools.

In the area of financial and economic literacy Ms. Strong asked what sorts of things are being considered as indicators going forward.

Ms. Latham said the district is partnering with a non-profit organization called Everfi on the development of a web-based program for personal finance that will start next year and eventually be available district-wide. Everfi is underwriting the cost of the project.

Dr. Sebring said there are also efforts underway to expand programs such as Biztown and Junior Achievement.

Ms. Strong questioned the relevance of data on concurrent credits and keyboarding/technology to the fine and applied arts.

Ms. Connie Sievers from the curriculum report staff explained that many of the concurrent credits are community college credits earned at home high schools in fields that prepare students for specific careers and as such are considered to be applied arts.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson said that was an acceptable rationale but felt the fine arts piece was insufficient.

Ms. Boesen asked if the district currently has the tools to better capture data in the fine arts.

Mr. Murphy suggested that kids who attend fine arts events such as drama productions as well as the kids who directly participate should be tracked since the Ends in this area include reference to “understanding the value of” as well as proficiency.

Ms. Latham said it is a difficult area to know how to measure and agreed that appreciation of the fine arts can be interpreted as an understanding of their value.

Ms. Boesen said the Board would appreciate the development of some additional data points that would reasonably demonstrate progress in students’ understanding of the value of fine arts.

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Ms. Latham said that an assessment tool is being developed for visual art that is potentially one additional indicator.

Ms. Strong suggested the Board may need to schedule a work session around the topic of its interpretation of the Ends statement with regard to fine arts.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson and Mr. Murphy felt that the Board had a consensus as to its interpretation and wanted to stay with the concept of “understanding the value of” as opposed to proficiency. The question is how to effectively collect and report data to that effect.

Ms. Strong said the DMAA concurrent credits data should be disaggregated if they’re to be useful as indicators in either fine or applied arts.

Ms. Boesen clarified that the Board will expect to see the additional category of indicators before it votes on acceptance of the report at its next meeting and there was a consensus on that point.

Dr. Sebring characterized the discussion as the most productive one the Board has had in the area of monitoring student achievement.