

May 3, 2011

**DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**  
**CITY BOARDROOM — 400 ROBERT D. RAY DRIVE**  
**MINUTES**  
**MAY 3, 2011**

**PUBLIC FORUM — 5:45 p.m.**

The Board of Directors met in regular session on Tuesday, May 3, 2011, in the city hall boardroom at 400 Robert D. Ray Drive., Connie Boesen presiding.

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

**REGULAR MEETING — 6:00 p.m.**

The Board of Directors met in regular session on Tuesday, May 3, 2011, in the city hall boardroom at 400 Robert D. Ray Drive.; Connie Boesen presiding.

Present: Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, Gallardo, Murphy, Link, Strong, Woods  
Absent: None

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA — 6:00 p.m.**

Ms. Strong moved to approve the agenda; second by Link.

Aye: Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, Gallardo, Murphy, Link, Strong, Woods  
Nay: None  
The motion carried, 7-0.

*APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF April 19, 2011.*

Ms. Link moved approval of the minutes of April 19, 2011; second by Gallardo.

Aye: Boesen, Caldwell-Johnson, Gallardo, Murphy, Link, Strong, Woods  
Nay: None  
The motion carried, 7-0.

**DISTRICT RECOGNITIONS — 6:05 p.m.**

Dr. Sebring first noted that it was Teacher Appreciation Week before introducing participants in the Iowa Science & Technology Fair.

She introduced Brody Middle School science teacher Deborah Marriott who in turn introduced her students Allison Kochheiser, Jacob Levang, Valeria Cano and Bryan Richter.

Dr. Sebring then introduced Merrill Middle School science teacher Blake Hammond who introduced, on behalf of his colleagues Dinah Lockhart, Scott Rosin and Christine Ryerson, the following students: Olivia Helton, Aidan Palmer, Benny Nielsen and Bradley Rhein, who was declared the overall Junior High Grand Champion in physical science.

**CONSENT ITEMS — 6:15 p.m.**

7. Award of Contracts on Bid ----- 1  
8. Award of Bid B6312 — Window Replacement, Meredith Middle School ----- 3  
9. Award of B6338 — Kitchen Renovations, North High School ----- 5  
10. Final Acceptance of Bid B6191 — Phase II Demolition Package, Central Campus ---- 7  
11. Scholarship Award — Des Moines School Employees Association Scholarship ----- 9  
12. Election of Teachers and Administrators for Contract Year 2011-12 ----- 11  
13. Personnel Recommendations ----- 13  
14. List of Bills for Approval ----- 15

Minutes

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson 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 \$5,259,214.71 and unpaid bills in the amount of \$771,621.02; second by Murphy.

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

Nay: None

The motion carried, 7-0.

**PUBLIC HEARING — 6:15 p.m.**

15. Site Improvements — Woodlawn Education Center ----- 17  
16. Sale of Property — 1401 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Wallace Elementary ----- 19

**OTHER — 6:20 p.m.**

17. Implementation of GSAB 54 and Authorization of Committed Fund Balances ----- 21  
18. Monitoring Report Management Limitations 2.3 — Financial Condition and Activities  
for the Quarter Ending March 31, 2011 ----- 23  
19. Urban Education Network (UEN) ----- 25

**REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION — 6:55 p.m.**

**CHAIR’S REPORT — 6:55 p.m.**

Ms. Boesen announced that Dr. Sebring had withdrawn from consideration as the next superintendent of schools in the Boulder, CO district.

Ms. Boesen reminded the Board that the high school commencements will be held this year at Hy Vee Hall due to the renovation underway at Veterans’ Auditorium.

Finally she pointed out that the next meeting has been shifted to May 16 to accommodate some Board members’ attendance at an out-of- town conference.

May 3, 2011

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT — 7:00 p.m.**

No report

**ADJOURN 7:00 p.m.**

**Item No. 7**

**Page 1 of 2**

**Subject: AWARD OF CONTRACTS ON BID**

**For: ACTION**

**Contact: Various**

**Attachments: None**

**Issue:** Bids have been advertised, issued and received for various equipment items, supplies, and services as outlined below.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends the contracts as shown below be approved.

**Background:** The suggested bid awards and detailed information for each of the bids are as shown below.

Where cost comparisons are shown, they are merely a representative sample of the item on the bid, and are not intended to be all inclusive.

**A. Bid 5173-08 Juice, Water, Sport Drinks FY 2011-2012**

Pepsi America	Urbandale, IA	Estimated Award	\$ 42,500.00
Reinhart Foods	Cedar Rapids, IA	Estimated Award	<u>\$ 52,500.00</u>
Total			\$ 95,000.00

**Funding Source:** Funds are available in food and nutrition accounts.

The vendor has agreed to extend the contract with the same terms and conditions. This vendor provides beverages consumed by the Central Nutrition Center.

**This is the third extension.**

FY 2010-2011	Estimated award	\$ 63,800.00
FY 2009-2010	Estimated award	\$ 62,825.00
FY 2008-2009	Estimated award	\$ 74,360.00

**Contact:** Sandy Huisman  
(sandy.huisman@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-7712)

**B. B6163 Preventive Maintenance – CNC FY 2011-2012**

Goodwin Tucker Group	Des Moines, IA	Estimated Award	\$ 38,940.00
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**Funding Source:** Funds are available in food service accounts.

The vendor has agreed to extend the contract with the same terms, conditions and pricing. The vendor provides maintenance and service for the food service equipment used by the Central Nutrition Center and food preparation centers throughout the district.

**This is the first extension.**

**Contact:** Sandy Huisman  
(sandy.huisman@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-7712)

**C. B6133 Waste Management & Recycling Service FY 2011-2012**

Waste Management Des Moines, IA Estimated Award \$ 211,745.30

**Funding Source:** Funds are available in Custodial Services and Food and Nutrition accounts.

The vendor has agreed to extend the contract under the same terms and conditions subject to an increase of 3.5% to defray a 3% rise in landfill fees and .5% increase in overhead and variable costs. The vendor provides waste management and recycling services for all district sites.

**This is the first extension.**

2010-2011 Estimated award \$ 204,595.00

**Contact:** Sheila Mason  
(sheila.mason@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-7980)

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**Item No. 8**
**Page 1 of 1**
**Subject: AWARD OF BID NO. B6312 — WINDOW/DOOR REPLACEMENT;  
MEREDITH MIDDLE SCHOOL**
**For: ACTION**
**Contact: BILL GOOD**
**Attachments: None**

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

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**Issue:** Award of contract for the window and door replacement project at Meredith Middle School.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends a contract for the base bid and alternate 1 be awarded to the lowest responsive/responsible bidder, REEP, Inc. in the amount of \$395,804.00.

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

**Background:** This is one of the projects under the statewide penny funding. The work at Meredith consists of:

- **Base Bid:** Replacement of the exterior windows and repair/replacement of selected exterior entry doorways.
- **Alternate 1:** Change from hollow metal exterior doors to fiberglass doors.

The district received bids on April 21, 2011. The results are as follows:

<b>Bidder</b>	<b>Base Bid</b>	<b>Alternate 1</b>
REEP, Inc Baxter, IA	\$381,184	\$14,620
Two Rivers Glass WDM, IA	\$426,360	\$12,842

**Funding Source:** Statewide Penny (Students First Program)

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**Item No. 9**
**Page 1 of 1****Subject: AWARD OF BID NO. B6338 — KITCHEN RENOVATIONS; NORTH HIGH SCHOOL****For: ACTION****Contact: BILL GOOD**

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

**Attachments: None**


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**Issue:** Award of contract for kitchen renovations at North High School.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends a contract for the Base Bid be awarded to the lowest responsive/responsible bidder, Dean Snyder Construction in the amount of \$288,000.

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

**Background:** This is a project under the statewide penny funding. The work at North has been divided into several individual bid packages.

- **Base Bid:** Renovate the kitchen, including work to rough in and connect new food service equipment, new flooring, and other finishes. The food service equipment is being furnished and installed under a separate bid.

The district received bids on April 27, 2011. The results are as follows:

<b>Bidder</b>	<b>Base Bid</b>
Dean Snyder Construction; Ankeny, IA	\$288,000
Bergstrom Construction; Des Moines IA	\$289,800

**Funding Source:** Statewide Penny (Students First Program)

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**Item No. 10**

**Page 1 of 1**

**Subject: FINAL ACCEPTANCE OF BID NO. B6191—  
PHASE II DEMOLITION PACKAGE; CENTRAL CAMPUS**

**For: ACTION**

**Contact: BILL GOOD**  
(harold.good@dmps.k12.ia.us : 242-8321)

**Attachments: None**

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**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends the Board give final acceptance to the project listed below and approve final payment to the contractor listed, subject to the conditions and in accordance with the provisions of Chapters 26 and 573 of the Code of Iowa.

SCHOOL: Central Campus

PROJECT: Phase II Demolition Package

CONTRACTOR: Metro Demolition Inc.

CONTRACTED AMOUNT: \$ 432,843.00

CONTRACT BALANCE: \$ 21,642.10



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**Item No. 11****Page 1 of 2****Subject: SCHOLARSHIP AWARD — DES MOINES SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP****For: ACTION****Contact: Terrence Martin****Attachments: None**

(terrence.martin@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-7871)

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**Issue:** For the 2010/11 school year, the Selection Committee nominates Caitlin Wilson of Des Moines Lincoln High School for the Des Moines School Employees Association Scholarship.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends the Board authorize payment of the scholarship award to the student nominated by the Des Moines School Employees Association Scholarship Committee.

**Presenters: None**

**Background: Information about the scholarship:** The Des Moines School Employees Association, established as a burial fund for its membership, disbanded in 1984 because the membership decreased to five members in good standing. After benefit payments were paid to them, the remaining assets of the Association, totaling \$15,000, were donated to the district and invested in a U.S. Treasury bond with a yield of 11.6%. The earnings from the bond provided funds for the payment of one scholarship payment in 1985 and two \$850 scholarship payments annually from 1986 to 2005. Because of a reduction in the earnings from the bond, starting with the 2005-2006 school year, the scholarship was reduced to payment of one award of \$500 to a district employee's child. The scholarship is non-renewable.

**To qualify for the scholarship:** (1) The applicant must be a graduating senior of a Des Moines Public Schools high school. (2) The parent must be a current Des Moines Public Schools employee who has worked for the district for two or more years. (3) The applicant must be an average or above-average student. (4) The applicant must attend school regularly. (5) The applicant must have selected a career goal. (6) Applicant's participation in both school and community activities will be rated by the selection committee. (7) The applicant may attend a two-year or four-year post-secondary institution of the student's choice. (8) Financial need will be considered.

Applications are screened and selection of the recipient made by a committee consisting of (1) an Associate Superintendent or a designee, (2) the Chief Academic Officer, (3) the Director of Operations, (4) the Director of Food and Nutrition Management, and (5) the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent.

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Final approval of the recipient will be made by the Des Moines Public Schools Board of Directors. The recipient will be notified by letter of the selection following approval by the Board.

**Information about the nominee:** Caitlin Wilson, a senior at Lincoln High School, is presented as the nominee to receive the Des Moines Employees Association Scholarship award of \$500.

Caitlin has been accepted at the University of Northern Iowa. She plans to major in Accounting and Finance. Caitlin is the daughter of Sandra Wilson, a teacher at Lincoln High School.

Caitlin was selected from a field of seven applicants.

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**Item No. 12**

**Page 1 of 1**

**Subject: ELECTION OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS  
FOR CONTRACT YEAR 2011/12**

**For: ACTION**

**Contact: Twyla Woods**

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

**Attachments: 11-015**

**11-016**

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**TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS**

*Teachers Election List is Attachment 11-015*

*Administrators Election List is Attachment 11-016*

**Issue:** Election of teachers and administrators for the 2011/12 contract year.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends the Board approve the teacher and administrator election lists for the 2011/12 contract year.

**Background:** The bargaining agreements between the Des Moines Education Association and the Des Moines School district have not been settled; therefore salaries and benefits have not yet been determined. The contracts for 2011/12 being sent will have the 2010/11 salaries until settlements have been completed. When negotiations are completed, employees will receive a letter indicating their 2011/12 compensation.

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**Item No. 13**
**Page 1 of 1****Subject: PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS****For: ACTION****Contact: Twyla Woods****Attachments: None**

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

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

**Background:****LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Name	School, Position	Effective Date	Reason
Crabb, Traci	Curriculum, Math Coach (.5)	06/06/11	Family responsibilities

**RESIGNATION**

Name	School, Position	Effective Date	Reason
Jones, Yvonne	Weeks, Math	06/06/11	Personal
Porter, Claire	Layoff to resign	04/25/11	Position out of district
Sleep, James	Hoover, Science	06/06/11	Personal

**DIFFERENTIAL**

School	Name	Position	Effective Date	Amount
Lincoln	Lichty, Luke	Assistant Drama	01/10/11	\$1299.50
Samuelson	Gee, Jennie	Dean Of Students	08/07/10	\$2855.00
Merrill	Kearney, Cathy	Middle School Band	04/02/11	\$1457.00

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**Item No. 14**

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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**

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**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.

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**Item No. 15****Page 1 of 1****Subject: SITE IMPROVEMENTS — WOODLAWN EDUCATION CENTER****For: PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION****Contact: BILL GOOD**

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

**Attachments: None**

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**Issue:** Approval of the plans and specifications for the site improvement package for Woodlawn Education Center. Publication for the Public Hearing was included in the Des Moines Register on April 27, 2011.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends the Board approve the plans and specifications prepared by Bishop Engineering for the site improvement package for Woodlawn Education Center.

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

**Background:** This project will add parking and a new exterior handicap access ramp, replace entry stoops and sidewalk, and also includes landscaping.

A copy of the plans and specifications is available for review at the District's Operations Center; 1917 Dean Avenue.

**Funding:** Statewide Penny (Students First Program)

Minutes

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

Caldwell-Johnson moved approval; second by Woods.

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

Nay: None

The motion carried, 7-0

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**Item No. 16**

**Page 1 of 1**

**Subject: SALE OF PROPERTY — 1401 EAST 12<sup>th</sup> STREET,  
WALLACE ELEMENTARY**

**For: PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION**

**Contact: Bill Good**

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

**Attachments: None**

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**Issue:** Sale of property located at 1401 East 12<sup>th</sup> St. known as Wallace Elementary, Des Moines, Iowa 50321. The resolution to hold the public hearing was published in the Des Moines Register on April 20, 2011.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends the board hold a public hearing and then approve the sale of the property at 1401 East 12<sup>th</sup> St. to The Imagination Station, Inc. in the amount of \$60,000.

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

**Background:** Since January 2010, the district has been actively marketing this property.

Minutes

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

Mr. Murphy moved approval; second by Link.

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

Nay: None

The motion carried, 7-0.

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**Item No. 17****Page 1 of 2****Subject: IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD 54 (GASB) AND AUTHORIZATION OF COMMITTED FUND BALANCES****For: ACTION****Contact: Patricia Schroeder****Attachments: None**(patricia.schroeder@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-7745)

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**Issue:** Implementation of the new Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 54 pronouncement relative to classifications of the components of fund balance.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends the Board authorize the administration to classify district fund balances for decentralized school accounts, custodial reimbursements for facilities usage, and the Charter School account, as *committed* fund balances in accordance with GASB 54 requirements.

**Background:** Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 54, effective for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011, requires that the district classify:

“The extent to which the government [district] is bound to honor constraints on the specific purposes for which amounts in those funds can be spent.”

The new fund balance classifications differ somewhat from those that have been required. In the past, components of fund balance were classified as reserved, unreserved-designated, or unreserved -undesignated. The new classifications of fund balance are non-spendable, restricted, committed, assigned and unassigned.

Per GASB 54, *Committed Fund Balances* are amounts whose uses are constrained by limitations that the district imposes on itself. This means certain balances that in the past have been carried forward from one year to the next based on district needs now require specific board action to continue this practice.

Decentralized School Accounts (sometimes referred to as school supply accounts) - These are funds that are available to each district school for their discretionary use to purchase items necessary for the operations of that school. Since the creation of these accounts, the district has allowed the funding to carry over from one year to the next.

Custodial Reimbursements for Facilities Usage: When outside organizations use district facilities, they must pay rent and operational fees including custodial overtime. The portion of the payments representing custodial costs is then available to the custodial department to replenish the custodial supplies required when outside



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organizations used district facilities. In the past several years, the district has allowed these amounts to be carried forward from one year to the next, because a portion of the reimbursements are for May and June facility use and are received too late in the fiscal year to be used to replenish custodial supplies until early in the next fiscal year.

Charter School account: The Charter School by definition, and specifically relative to its finances, is primarily autonomous from the district. That being said, the district believes remaining funds in the Charter School account should be allowed to carry over from one year to the next.

Based on district interpretation of GASB 54, we believe the aforementioned components of fund balance should be authorized by the Board to be classified as *Committed Fund Balances*, thus allowing remaining funds at the end of each fiscal year to be committed for uses identified above and carried forward from one year to the next.

Minutes

Mrs. Woods asked if any of the proposed changes in fund classifications would alter the permissible uses of PPEL revenues.

Ms. Schroeder said they would not.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson moved authorization; second by Link.

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

Nay: None

The motion carried, 7-0.

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**Item No. 18** **Page 1 of 2**

**Subject: MONITORING REPORT MANAGEMENT LIMITATION 2.3 —  
FINANCIAL CONDITION AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE QUARTER  
ENDING MARCH 31, 2011**

**For: ACTION**

**Contact: Patti Schroeder** **Attachment: 11- 017**  
(patricia.schroeder@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-8527)

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**Issue:** Board Governance Policy 3.4 – Monitoring Superintendent Performance includes a schedule of reports that requires a quarterly monitoring report on Management Limitation 2.3 – Financial Condition and Activities.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The superintendent recommends the Board receive, discuss and take action on the quarterly monitoring report for Management Limitation 2.3 – Financial Condition and Activities for the quarter ending March 31, 2011.

**Background:** The Management Limitation 2.3 – Financial Condition and Activities Monitoring Report is included as Attachment 11-017. This report covers the quarterly period from January 1, 2011 to March 31, 2011, unless otherwise stated.

Management Limitation 2.3 states: With respect to actual ongoing condition of the district financial resources, the Superintendent shall not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy, or a material deviation of actual expenditures from the Board's Ends priorities.

Accordingly, the Superintendent shall not:

1. Fail to provide quarterly summaries of the financial condition of the district.
2. Fail to settle district payroll obligations and payables in a timely manner.
3. Fail to implement prudent competitive quoting procedures for all facility improvement projects in an amount that meets or exceeds the competitive quote threshold as established by Iowa law.
4. Fail to implement prudent competitive bidding procedures for all facility improvement projects in the amount of \$100,000 or more.
5. Fail to implement prudent competitive procedures, including but not limited to RFPs, for purchasing products and securing contractual and professional services.
6. Obligate the district to contracts or expenditures greater than \$25,000.
7. Acquire, lease or dispose of real property.
8. Invest funds in securities contrary to state law.
9. Allow tax payments or other governmental ordered payments or filings to be overdue or inaccurately filed.

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**Item No. 18**

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Minutes

Ms. Boesen asked for some clarification as to the decrease in technology funding from Prairie Meadows.

Ms. Schroeder explained that the figure included in her report appendix represented a reduced expenditure as opposed to a reduced grant.

Ms. Link moved approval; second by Strong.

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

Nay: None

The motion carried, 7-0.

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**Item No. 19****Page 1 of 1****Subject: URBAN EDUCATION NETWORK (UEN)****For: INFORMATION/DISCUSSION****Contact: Nancy Sebring****Attachments: None**

(nancy.sebring@dmps.k12.ia.us; 242-7766)

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**Issue:** DMPS interests and issues vs. those of fellow UEN member districts.

**Background:** DMPS is a member of the UEN which is comprised of the eight largest school districts in Iowa. Previous Board discussion about future legislative priorities and the most effective means of advocacy for them has included consideration of the extent to which DMPS interests overlap with those of other urban districts in the state.

Minutes

Dr. Sebring opened the discussion by summarizing a meeting earlier that day of the UEN Steering Committee.

She said the committee was modifying membership criteria to accommodate a group of 10-15 smaller districts that have expressed interest in joining UEN as associate members. There is a growing sense among school districts around the state that there may be strength in numbers when it comes to advancing legislative priorities that districts have in common.

Jason Glass, Director of the Iowa Department of Education [DOE], spoke to the committee and listened to UEN's expression of concerns unique to urban districts.

Also addressing the committee was Tom Downs, the incoming Executive Director of the Iowa Association of School Boards [IASB]. The importance of transparency in the operations of groups like UEN and IASB in the wake of recent IASB controversy was one of the topics discussed with him.

The committee's discussion of legislative priorities focused on FY 2013. All of the districts represented agreed that they will be faced with severe teacher layoffs by then if they are facing a second consecutive year of 0% allowable growth in state funding at that point. They all support a strategy of lobbying legislators year round starting immediately instead of waiting for the general assembly to re-convene next January.

Ms. Boesen reported that there had been no progress at the statehouse with legislation on school funding for FY 2012.

Ms. Link suggested that more might be done to marshal the forces of PTA and students themselves as elements of an effort to make the community a strategic partner in advancing a legislative agenda that's favorable to schools.

Ms. Strong agreed and said that advocacy on behalf of adequate funding would be a logical extension of the historical mission of PTA.

Ms. Caldwell-Johnson said that, notwithstanding alliances like UEN built around common interests, what most districts end up articulating are their specific needs and the impacts of legislation on them in particular. She suggested that a more unified and effective approach might feature many districts communicating the cumulative impact of legislative action on a statewide scale.

Mr. Gallardo wondered what school board members can do to be more effective advocates for schools' best interests.

Ms. Boesen said it might be a good idea to convene a joint meeting of all the area school boards to develop a shared strategy.

Mr. Murphy said he was skeptical about the revised membership criteria for UEN. He doesn't want to dilute the unique concerns of truly urban districts with the different ones of smaller, rural districts looking to piggyback on the larger districts' clout. He thinks local control is an issue of general importance to all school districts, regardless of size, because autonomy from over-regulation can be as critical as funding. He also reiterated his belief that districts like Des Moines should be more actively engaged in training teachers to work in urban schools. Finally, he suggested that perhaps a collaborative press conference involving various stakeholders in the schools could be designed and staged simultaneously with the governor's educational summit planned for this summer.