

**FAIRVIEW AREA SCHOOLS' BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
RACE TO THE TOP GRANT PROGRAM
JANUARY 6, 2010**

A special meeting of the Fairview Area Schools' Board of Education was held on Wednesday evening, January 6, 2010 in the elementary media center.

Board President Beth Miller called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

PRESENT: Diana Danhoff, Kirk Peterson, Beth Miller, Chris Neff, Merianne Tappan,
and Anne Tompkins

ABSENT: Dan Smith

III. Approval of Agenda

IV. Public Comment

President Beth Miller acknowledged Mr. Steve Gusler, Local Union President. Mr. Gusler relayed concerns that information and regulations related to the Race to the Top program remain elusive and keep changing as time goes on. The latest memo from Michael Flanagan indicates that the Union no longer needs to sign off on the Memo of Understanding. It is the official position of the Union president and the local Union to support the program only if an addendum to back out is included.

(According to Thrun Law Firm a new *Memo of Understanding* has been presented by the State which includes language that impacts collective bargaining rights and excludes any "opt out" language. Thrun strongly recommends that the Board consider these new developments before making a decision.)

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. "Race to the Top" Grant Program

Despite several discussions regarding the topic, the Board still has concerns regarding the obscurity of the Race to Top Program. No new definable aspects of the program have been created, and uncertainty remains as to what all will have to be implemented and if the school will be able to afford to keep such programs and staff in place after federal funding has been exhausted. As of this date, the exact structure of the program is still unknown.

Mr. Bob Jones, Superintendent for C.O.O.R. ISD arrived at 6:47 p.m. and relayed the importance of moving forward with this program especially since legislation has been passed that will mandate reforms whether or not the district gets on board with the federal grant program. Mr. Jones believes that most of the developmental process of this program will not be completed by the State but regionally by the participants.

V. OLD BUSINESS, (Con't.)

A. “Race to the Top” Grant Program, (Con't.)

The Board presented Mr. Jones ~~will~~ with specific questions regarding teacher assessment tools, potential cost of these new assessments, if accreditation may be affected, and if any funds received would be charged back if the district did not meet expectations or chose to opt out at a later date. Mr. Jones could not provide answers to these questions. When asked if the entire ISD would be affected if one district declined acceptance, Mr. Jones stated that he believed it would not and provided assurances that the ISD would continue to support districts that chose not to participate in the federal program.

Mr. Jones reiterated the value of accepting the program and recommended that the Board sign the *Memo of Understanding* based on trust, stating that there is no room for any one district to stand alone anymore.

Mr. Jones left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

The Board continued to thoroughly discuss the matter, stating both pros and cons of signing the MOU. Members agreed that it is important to have a voice in shaping our future direction and it is a concern that by not signing the MOU the district runs the risk of being left out and potentially being forced to consolidate. There is also concern that the risks of agreeing to a program with so many undefined variables outweigh the potential benefits. After much deliberation the Board proceeded to the vote.

Miller/Danhoff That the *Michigan’s Participating LEA/ISD Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)*, indicating Fairview Area Schools’ intention to participate in the federal Race to the Top Grant Program, be executed as presented. If adopted, the Board will also sign a Board resolution document provided by Thrun Law Firm, P.C.

Ayes – 3 (Miller, Peterson, Tappan)

Nays – 3 (Danhoff, Neff, Tompkins)

Motion failed.

VI. Board Comments and Closing Public Comments - none

The President adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Diana Danhoff, Board Secretary