

LWV Park Ridge Observer Report

Meeting: Park Ridge-Niles School District 64

Date: June 11, 2018

Observer: Mary C. Fontaine
(closed session)

Start/End Time: 5:30pm-10pm (followed by

Members Absent: None. Several administrators were also present, including Superintendent Laurie Heinz, CSBO Luann Kolstad, Assistant CSBO Brian Imhoff and representatives of the technology, preschool, building services and other departments.

The meeting had two parts: the special meeting of the board and a meeting of the Committee-of-the-Whole: Budget. Each part had a closed session and an open session.

Citizen Comment: Public comment was divided into two periods, one at the start of the public session of the board meeting and one following the budget meeting. In all, 6 persons commented. All comments related to the district's special education program. Concerns and questions focused on, among other things:

- (i) whether a special education advisory board should be approved at the June 25 meeting,
- (ii) additional staff to be added in response to the recent audit, and whether vice principal candidates being considered for Emmerson would be required to have special education expertise,
- (iii) whether current expenses provided an adequate template for next year's projected expenses, such as new staff and training for existing staff,
- (iv) a reduction in the number IEP approvals, the related impact on individual students, the question of whether quotas had been imposed,
- (v) the legal cost of contested IEPs and how they were reported to the board, and
- (vi) whether more focus should be given to warding off behavioral problems in the lower school, rather than dealing with the problems in middle school.

Discussion/Action:

Board meeting:

The meeting followed the published agenda and included (i) a discussion of administrative and exempt salaries with Superintendent Heinz, with attention to benchmark school districts and the standards for evaluating performance, (ii) approval of personnel report, (iii) approval of a new radio system to be provided by Bearcom, (iv) the Superintendent's comments on summer school and planning for the coming school year, and (v) the Judith L. Snow Awards.

The Board also approved changing the date of the tentative July 16 meeting to July 9.

Budget Committee meeting:

A substantial block of time was spent reviewing a first draft of the 2018-19 budget presented by Ms. Kolstad and Mr. Imhoff. A number of topics were addressed in the context of the budget, including:

- (i) additional staff to be added as a result of enrollment changes and/or the special education program audit, including a new vice principal for Emmerson,
- (ii) expansion of the full day kindergarten program, and related staffing,
- (iii) the cost of construction projects,
- (iv) costs resulting from the use of Chromebooks, digital subscription curriculum and related technology,
- (v) whether the furniture in Emmerson's sixth grade should be replaced, and
- (vi) funding sources and uses, and the board's desire to balance the budget.

The administrative staff was authorized to post for new positions, although filling the positions would need to be approved at a later time.

League Action Needed: None at this time.