

Special Meeting  
Board of Education  
June 1, 2010

The Board met with the Peoria City Council at 6:30 p.m. at the Gateway Building. The following members answered the roll call for the Board of Education: Gorenz, Parker, Petelle (6:45), Ross, Stowell and Wolfmeyer (7:30). Board Member Butler was absent. Superintendent Dr. Grenita Lathan was also present. The following members of the City Council were present: Gulley, Irving, Montelongo, Riggerbach, Sandberg, Spain, Spears, Turner, Van Auken. Councilman Jacob was absent. Mayor Ardis opened the meeting welcoming everyone. Mayor Ardis also stated that since there are 8 presentations on the agenda, questions will not be answered tonight, but can be submitted and will be answered later on the web-sights. Mayor Ardis thanked everyone for coming as well as for their prayers for the Jacob family. Mayor Ardis then recognized public officials in the audience, as well as Dr. Bill Collier for organized this meeting. Mr. Jim Stowell thanked Mayor Ardis for the opportunity for the two groups to meet. Mr. Stowell acknowledge M. Jacob and the part he played in bringing forth the Glen Oak Impact Zone and stated that in these challenging financial times, he challenges everyone to come together.

WCIC Station Manager David Brooks stated that they are trying to make the community a better place. One important way to do this is to help the students of District 150. Their radio station adopted Charter Oak in March and will provide mentors this summer. WCIC has just completed drive asking listeners to donate books so that they can put a new book into the hands of every 1<sup>st</sup> grader in District 150 in May. Collection points were Barnes & Noble and Hoerr's Berean. Those books will be delivered to students tomorrow.

Mr. Glen Barton gave a progress report on the Quest Charter School Academy detailing progress over the past twelve months. They are scheduled to open August 24, 2010 with a total of 225 students in grades 5, 6, & 7. They will attend school 1 hour longer, for 11 more days, which amounts to 25% more instructional time. Mr. Barton introduced Mr. Engin Blackstone, Principal of the Academy. They are working on hiring teachers and are still working to raise funds. Mr. Barton thanked the city and district for their support.

Ms. Tara Gerstner of Peoria Promise gave an update on the program. They funded scholarships in 2008/09 for 267 students and 373 in 2009/2010. The expectation for 1010/1011 is 500 students. Dr. Lathan asked Ms. Gerstner her promotion tactics for the high schools, and Ms. Gerstner stated that she is hoping to send a letter to all high school students this year. Dr. Lathan offered support and stated she will have Stacey Shangraw contact Ms. Gerstner.

Dr. Jeff Nelson and Dr. Sally Weber of the Regional Office of Education gave a report on Race to the Top, which is a competitive grant program under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that is intended to drive education reform and student success. Some components include Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Induction and Mentoring, and Early Childhood Education. Dr. Weber reported that Peoria Public Schools along with the Regional Office of Education and the Peoria Federation of Teachers began working on their application over two months ago. Dr. Nelson reported that If Illinois is selected in this round, the state would receive \$400,000,000, with ½ going to the state and ½ going to districts through the Title 1 formula. Both Dr. Nelson and Dr. Weber reported that educational reform will move forward with or without RTTT funds.

Mr. Stowell introduced Mr. Dave Ryon, Director of Special Projects for Peoria Public Schools. Mr. Ryon reported that there is construction taking place in 14 locations, both new and renovations, totaling \$17,000,000 in Capital Improvements. Dr. Ryon, along with the various architects responsible for each project, detailed the various construction projects taking place in District 150.

Mr. Kiam.....detailed plans for Harrison Homes Redevelopment, which will result in approximately 200 new homes. Mrs. Brenda Coates, Executive Director of Peoria Housing Authority, reported on exciting changes and improvements that are taking place with the PHA.

Mr. Ross Black, City of Peoria, gave an update on Impact Zones, stating that they were developed by former Councilman Manning and current Councilman Jacob. The Impact Zones focus on improving city services in a 2 block area around the new Glen Oak School and the new Harrison School. Mr. Black stated that the Impact Zones are being developed thanks to

cooperation between the city, the school district, not-for-profit organizations, and neighborhood residents. He reported that the residents in both areas have bought in and continue to be involved.

Mr. Randy Simmons, Principal of Peoria High School, reported on the readiness of Peoria High School to open in August, 2010. Mr. Simmons thanked Mr. Shaun Grant, Mrs. Jeanne Williamson, and Ms. Teri Dunn for their help. He gave an overview of activities since November that have been done to prepare for August, 2010. The projected enrollment is 1600 students. There have been many transition meetings of various committees, with a focus on safety. There will be 17 new classrooms, with a total of 73. Twenty Woodruff teachers will be moving to Peoria High as well as two administrators for the 2010-2011 school year.

Dr. Grenita Lathan updated the group on some of her plans for the district. She has visited all of the schools and has found many passionate teachers and administrators, for which she thanked all staff members. Dr. Lathan detailed some of her plans for moving the district forward, and asked the community that she be allowed to do her job with the Board. Dr. Lathan stated the district will need partners to stand by it for tough decisions. Ms. Van Auken reported that the West Bluff Council, which represents neighborhood associations, has recommended returning to K-8 neighborhood schools and asked Dr. Lathan if that is a consideration. Dr. Lathan responded that it has been discussed, but there is a need for resources to support that plan.

In closing, Mayor Ardis stated that schools need to be schools of choice if Peoria is to be a city of choice. The quality of education helps form the quality of life. He stated that there needs to be transparent, effective intergovernmental interactions. He might suggest the forming of a committee to look into the possibility of some of the School Board members being appointed by the Mayor of the City.

Mr. Stowell thanked Mayor Ardis for bringing the two groups together and believed the Board and City Council need to continue to work together. Mayor Adris echoed that and thanked Board President Wolfmeyer for the Board's participation in this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Debbie Sullivan,  
Board Secretary

ATTEST:

Debbie L. Wolfmeyer  
Board President