



Do The Right Thing For Kids
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KCMSD School Board Report Card

Meeting Date: March 28, 2012

**All School Board members were present: West, Richey, Benson,
Carroll, Jackson, Kelly, Rea, and Wilson**

The following is a compilation and editing of the observations of seven Board Watchers at the March 28, 2012 KCPS School Board meeting:

Presentation of the "Superstar" student awards consumed the first 35 minutes of the meeting. While it is important to recognize student successes, it seems the priority for use of time should be working on issues related to accreditation. We have observed the recognition of students at other area school board meetings done in a more efficient manner. Perhaps a maximum of 15 minutes should be allocated for awards.

In general, the focus of the superintendent's report on finances and accreditation seems to be on target. These are the issues we would hope to hear discussed at every public meeting.

We were disturbed about the lack of urgency in the discussion of the acuity test results. At least six schools were identified as having inadequate progress. There was no discussion about intervention strategies being implemented after the schools took the first acuity tests in October. The assignment of part-time counselors to address discipline issues was discussed, but no instructional interventions were mentioned. While it was mentioned that the underlying issues in those schools were building leadership and discipline, there was no discussion about how obstacles have been removed, i.e. principals, ineffective teachers, etc. It was only noted that professional development is needed. The bottom line is that the clock is ticking, and the MAP testing begins within days. How are these six schools expected to perform well when the problems identified in October have not been resolved? Is the board holding the administration accountable for this lack of progress?

When a board member asked the administration to draw correlations between effective schools and effective teachers based on current teacher rankings, the administrators indicated this information would be shared in a future closed session meeting. Teacher contracts will be renewed in April, and this information should have been shared with the board already. The district seemed to indicate that it did not have this information compiled. They have been gathering teacher reviews since the fall of Dr. Covington's arrival. Why is this information not available? Why couldn't it be mentioned that this information had been considered in determining which contracts will be renewed?

Summer School -- Radical intervention techniques are appropriate for unaccredited districts, including additional instruction time. However, it was indicated that only 1,700 students (10%

of the population) will be enrolled in summer school. Why isn't mandatory instruction being considered for the summer? If the reason is funding related, then the administration should be telling the board about the obstacles and how applications for waivers and grants have been made to make the funding happen. Did the transformation plan include increased instruction in the summer?

Head Start and early childhood programs in the 2012-2013 budget are to remain at current enrollment levels. The transformation plan called for increases in both. Is the board holding the administration accountable for implementing the transformation plan?

The board unanimously approved \$56 million in expenditures under the consent agenda without discussion and agreed to increase the superintendent's approval authority to \$250,000. DTRTFK continues to be concerned about oversight of spending. Having checks and balances in place is not the same as micromanaging. We do not know how much knowledge the board has about what is actually being spent. Other school boards we have observed have a member who works closely with the finance department and recommends budget approval to board colleagues based on careful review of the items.

The meeting had the flavor of a campaign rally to show that the schools are succeeding and inferring credit to board members who are running for election. We prefer very specific turnaround strategies that will require major intervention in the status quo. It is unfortunate that an organization that claims to have a strong commitment to community engagement does such a poor job of informing and engaging those interested community members who attend meetings. There were not enough printed agendas to go around; the screen remains unreadable by a majority of the audience; board members often cannot be heard; and presenters have to awkwardly pass a hand-held microphone from one to the other. These are not indications of a high-performing organization. Board Docs presentations could be posted on the district website prior to board meetings so that the community could have copies and follow along.

View the agenda/minutes of this meeting at: <http://www.boarddocs.com/mo/kanscsd/Board.nsf/Public>