



**Do The Right Thing For Kids**  
[dothrightthingforkids.org](http://dothrightthingforkids.org)

## **KCMSD School Board Report Card**

**Meeting Date: October 26, 2011**

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

Five Do the Right Thing for Kids "Board Watchers" attended the 10/26 meeting. This, the second meeting of the month, was the "business meeting" where official actions such as approval of contracts takes place. All standing board members were present. Carl Evans, who is running unopposed for the vacant position, was invited to sit with the Board. Our reports are aimed at informing the public about the Board's and District's progress in addressing academic achievement and other issues related to accreditation.

Preceding the official starting time of the meeting two "Scholar Superstar" school groups gave performances for the audience and board members present. Board Watchers thought this was a useful way to recognize students while saving meeting time. We believe that such presentations should focus on examples of academic achievement. One public speaker, Kent Kahill, spoke eloquently about the failure of some parents to nourish and support their students and the need for more effort on the part of the District to educate parents in parenting skills. Andrea Flinders, president of the teachers union, spoke about teachers being overwhelmed with new programs, meetings, procedures and other mandates from the administration.

We observed that this meeting proceeded very much like previous business meetings, with no urgency or strong focus on strategies necessary to achieve accreditation or deal with the probable upcoming shrinking of enrollment and the budget. Very little direct discussion of academic achievement. We wonder whether over use of the Policy Governance board management system is leading the Board toward a passive and reactive role in the District's governance at a time when strong leadership is needed.

We are struck with how difficult it is for the audience to understand what is going on. A single screen in the front of the room shows power point presentations with figures too small to be read by most of the audience. Documents are discussed that the audience has not had access to. Presenters to the Board have their backs to the audience. The experience of those present is more that of passive observer than stakeholder.

The need for alternative education sites is apparent from the number of students who are causing trouble in the middle and high schools because they are not equipped intellectually or socially to benefit from and contribute to regular school settings. Information about progress in developing alternative education options was requested by board members. The staff presentation was very general with few specifics about numbers of students to be served, the scope of the problem, etc . Nor was there much demonstration of concern about the problem or commitment to solve it.

A number of programs and packages are in the process of being developed or installed, but little detail about them was given.

As is usually the case, the report by Dr. Lee-Gwin on the financial situation was clear and useful. She clearly has a good grasp of the budget and the fiscal control procedures necessary for the District to pay its bills in the short term. There was no discussion about the fact that if the District continues to experience shrinkage in enrollment the financial situation will become more difficult.

The incident of shots fired at a school bus after a football game was asked about. Staff explanations of the late reporting of the incident seemed vague. Nor was there much assurance to concerned parents that strong measures are in place to prevent similar situations in the future.

Do the Right Thing for Kids will continue to monitor KCMSD School Board meetings and report our observations on this Website.

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