



Do The Right Thing For Kids
dothrightthingforkids.org

KCMSD School Board Report Card

Meeting Date: April 11, 2012

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

Four Do The Right Thing for Kids board watchers observed the April 11, 2012 Kansas City Public School Board meeting making the following observations of this workshop style meeting.

Presentations were made by district staff who reviewed the progress of the SIG grants and identified the SIG schools (schools receiving school improvement grants) and human capital management indicating the administration continues to try to recover from the effects of right-sizing and the decades of malfunction that preceded it. It should be noted that if there had been no right-sizing, the district would be bankrupt.

All of the steps being taken sound like good ideas. It is getting difficult to listen to the enthusiasm, however, for such basic and commonsensical actions. It points to the fact that the district is so far gone that training teachers to teach and manage classrooms, read the data all the testing provides and find ways to connect with students as “names, not just numbers” should not be considered innovative.

It was encouraging to hear principals from district high schools address their own schools’ challenges with what seemed like thorough and energetic attention. Central High School’s Dr. Linda Collins described realizing that many of her students did not have basic writing and math skills. She has focused on back to basics and is seeing progress because of decisive decisions for the good of her students.

There was no mention of Interim Chief Academic Officer Dr. Tiffany Anderson’s impending departure to a school district in St. Louis which continues the revolving door of staff at the expense of stability for the students nor was there mention of the two KCPS students who had been shot and killed the previous week. By not mentioning either of these significant facts, there is a sense of never getting the whole story about what is going on in this district. Will Dr. Anderson’s initiatives be continued in her absence or will her successor bring in new ones?

It was obvious that the nomination and election of officers had been orchestrated before the meeting. It feels like important discussions are held behind closed doors, and the board meeting is a variety show intended to build confidence in the district.

Crispin Rea’s comment that the board is the district’s “community face” seems like an accurate expression of how members see themselves. Everyone is very heavy on public relations and in permanent campaign mode.

Airick Leonard West mentioned the importance of accelerating the increase in attendance figures since a slow increase will not help with accreditation fast enough. This acknowledgment showed some connection to the reality of the district and an awareness that the tempo of improvement must be increased. Sadly, even his “tough questions” seem staged.

View the agenda/minutes of this meeting at: [http://www.boarddocs.com/mo/kanscsd/Board.nsf/
Public](http://www.boarddocs.com/mo/kanscsd/Board.nsf/Public)