

Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Synopsis

January 5, 2010

The Urbana School District #116 Board of Education meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m., by Board President John Dimit. All members were in attendance.

Debra Katz-Downie spoke to the board in support of the proposed 2010-11 District Calendar.

The school board heard on a first reading the [proposed 2010-2011 School District Calendar](#). Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Don Owen, told the board that the calendar has been changed to end the first semester at the winter break as opposed to January as the calendar stands now. This means starting school a week earlier. Owen also noted that the Calendar Committee worked to maximize five-day school weeks and maximize instruction leading up to the achievement tests in March. There followed several questions about the proposed calendar from Board President John Dimit. Dimit said currently there are 11 extra days in the second semester as opposed to the first semester. He hopes that the calendar continues to evolve to make the semester school days balanced. The board will formally vote to adopt the 2010-11 District 116 Calendar at its January 19 meeting.

Board members voted 4-3 to instruct President Dimit to sign a memorandum of understanding (joining Superintendent Williams who does not need board approval) to support the Illinois State Board of Education in its application for [Race to the Top](#) federal grant money. If the state wins grant money, the School Board has 90-days to opt out of the memorandum of understanding if District 116 cannot or is unwilling to meet the terms of the grant agreement. Members Brenda Carter and Peggy Patten opposed entering into the memorandum of understanding because there were too many questions surrounding District 116 obligations and Patten also noted that teacher pay could be tied into student achievement test scores. Member Ruth Ann Fisher also voted no.

District 116 Coordinator of Bilingual and Multicultural Programs, Joseph Wiemelt, updated the board on the District's [Bilingual Education Programs, Initiatives, and Statistics](#). President Dimit noted that during school redistricting, the bilingual education program may have to open up on another elementary school campus, joining Leal and Martin Luther King Elementary schools who currently house bilingual education students.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Don Owen, gave the board a presentation about initiatives, statistics, reporting, and data about [School District Discipline](#). Member Elaine Gehrman commented that she appreciated Owen's presentation and found it very useful. She also noted that this information can also help the District in strategic planning. Dimit said he looked forward to an annual discipline report.

Under board report, Dimit congratulated Superintendent Dr. Preston L., Williams, Jr., on the fact that his son, Preston Williams III, recently participated in the [International Bowl](#) for Northern Illinois University.

The Board of Education adjourned at 9:43 p.m. The [next meeting](#) of the Urbana School District #116 Board of Education will be Tuesday, January 19, 2010, at 205 N. Race Street, Urbana.