

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #832**  
**STUDY SESSION – BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Thursday, January 22, 2009 - 7:00 PM**  
**Mahtomedi District Education Center - Community Room**

The Mission of the Mahtomedi School District No. 832, as a multi-community public school system, is to provide individually challenging, lifelong learning experiences for all people, leading to productive and self-fulfilling roles in a global society, accomplished through partnerships with students, families, staff and communities all committed to excellence.

**- AGENDA -**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL OF ATTENDANCE
3. DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS
  - A. School Board Dialogue - Planning for the Future 2  
Presenter: Mark Wolak and Steve Wolgamot
4. ADJOURNMENT

### **Strategic Goals for Continuous Improvement**

**Economic Stability** – The economic health of the school district will be maintained through strategic program review and the formation of effective partnerships.

**Improving Student Achievement** – Student performance will increase through continuous improvement practice in the schools and school district.

**Community Engagement** – The public trust and confidence in the performance of the school system will increase through improved communications and meaningful participation.

The School Board and administration lead with an unwavering commitment to continuous improvement measures in all aspects of the school system. Balanced scorecards are prepared at the school and district level to address continuous improvement in the following areas: Student Learning, Professional Practices, System Performance, Satisfaction/Public Image, and Community Engagement. The additional area of Student Development is under consideration.

#### **Annual Data Retreat – Friday, October 24, 2008, 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM District Education Center**

School Board, administration and representatives from Mahtomedi Education Association will hear progress reports on school and district balanced scorecards, discuss concerns, and identify areas for improvement for 2008-2009. Scorecards and improvement strategies will be adjusted accordingly.

### **Current Challenges**

The School Board and administration recognize that critical leadership decisions must be made this school year if the school district wants to maintain high quality programs and services for future years. Specific threats to predictable and consistent quality programs and services include:

1. A continued decline in resident students will reduce annual state and local levy revenue,
2. Predicted State of Minnesota revenue shortfalls and potential negative impact on future public school funding,

3. Potential need for additional local levy tax contributions to pay for increased operating costs,
4. Increased costs for employee salaries, health insurance and related benefits,
5. Increasing expectations for all students to meet expected levels of educational performance and the concomitant expenses for support staff to provide these individualized services,
6. Increased fixed costs in the total operation of the school district, and
7. Facility improvements or changes that require long term financial commitment of capital funds and potentially new local tax contributions from citizens.

In particular, by December 2008, key decisions must be made regarding the preferred plan to address future facility needs, agreements with area cities and athletic associations for co-funded recreation programs, partnerships for state-funded integration efforts with East Metro Integration District and/or a new partnership with neighboring school districts, expected progress for Mahtomedi Engineering Leadership Program and preliminary expenditure plans for 2009-2010. This leadership plan will address the necessary processes to assist the school board and administration in meeting the deadlines. The School Board will direct the Superintendent of Schools to organize administration, teachers and support staff as needed based on the strategic goals and decisions of the school board.

#### **I. DEVELOP PLAN FOR FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES NECESSARY FOR FUTURE SUCCESS**

##### **Optimal Programs/Services and Right Size for School Capacity/Enrollment**

The school district continues to experience a decline in the number of resident students. Declining enrollment reduces revenue to the school district and, in turn, requires workforce reductions in administration, teachers and support staff. Typically, consequences of declining enrollment include increased class sizes and the loss of valued programs and services. Within the area of financial planning for 2009-2010, spending reductions will likely increase class size, reduce staffing and reduce program choices unless we find cost efficiencies in the way we deliver instruction or services at all levels in the school district.

Projections for Kindergarten indicate similar resident enrollment for the next two years and then a sharp reduction in resident student enrollment occurs. Enrollment in the high school remains steady at 1180 students for several years and then declines. The enrollment forecast for early childhood programs through grade 8 indicates a more rapid decline and one that will impact staffing, class size, and specialist programs. Together, through careful planning and thoughtful dialogue, we expect to minimize the negative impact of declining enrollment to the best of our shared abilities.

This summer, administration conducted a study of high schools in Minnesota and the Midwest in an effort to compare course offerings, schedules, practices and other data. The school board and administration seek to learn various approaches to organization and instructional delivery from other high performing high schools. One reason for conducting the high school comparison study was to determine if there is an optimal enrollment size for high schools. When Mahtomedi Public Schools had lower enrollment size (prior to 1990’s) choice in course offerings was limited. Today, with a high school of 1180 students, a wide range of courses are offered including College in the Schools (CIS), Advanced Placement (AP), and a comprehensive high school curriculum that respond to a wide range of student interest and needs.

**Questions to Study/Answer** – Is there an optimal size for the school system when considering curriculum offerings, programs and services, current academic success of students, resident enrollment, student and parent expectations for Mahtomedi School District? What is the “right size” and locations for the early childhood/elementary programs (E-2, 3-5, E-4 or E-5)? What is the “right size” for the middle school programs and services (6-8 or 5-8)? What is the “right size” for the high school (9-12)?

Given projected enrollment and the answer to the “right size” questions, what are the facility needs for the school district? Will a change in grade configuration at each school provide for the best or preferred school enrollment capacity at each school site? What do we learn from the JCI Reports? What does cost accounting modeling tell us? What does an approach of optimal programming tell us?

**Timeline and Key Deadlines**

Tuesday	September 23 1:00 PM	Meet with district administration
Tuesday	September 30 1:00 PM	Meet with district administration
Thursday	October 2 9:30 AM	Meet with School Board Facility Committee

Tuesday	Oct 14	9:30 AM	Meet with School Board Facility Committee
Tuesday	Oct 21	6:00 PM	Meet with Citizen Group
Thursday	Oct 23	5:45 PM	Report to School Board at study session
Tuesday	Nov 11	6:00 PM	Meet with Citizen Group
Thursday	Dec 11	7:00 PM	School Board Direction for Facility Plan

**VISION**

**Set enrollment size for Mahtomedi High School based on high school study, enrollment forecast, curriculum choice and fiscal need. Based on high school enrollment, set school enrollment capacity for middle and elementary schools. Right size programs, curriculum, and staffing as needed.**

**Decision to replace Wildwood School is made at public meeting. Community engagement process occurs in 2009 and election scheduled for April 2010.**

**Develop plan for co-location of programs and services with District 916 and Century College. Work with Century for high school university program (award AA degree by 12<sup>th</sup> grade) and with 916 on deaf and hard of hearing or engineering programs.**

**Agree to list of improvements at all district facilities and educate the community regarding these needs.**

**II. EVALUATE CURRENT PARTNERSHIP WITH EAST METRO INTEGRATION DISTRICT**

The school district is a member of East Metro Integration District (EMID). Sixteen resident students from twelve families attend magnet school programs provided by EMID at Crosswinds and Harambee. North St. Paul Maplewood Oakdale and Mounds View school districts are seeking a new partnership with Mahtomedi Schools. The school district must decide by no later than December 2008 if it chooses to leave EMID membership and give such notice to EMID by February 1, 2009. If this occurs, membership in EMID ends 18 months after notification (July 2010).

**Questions to Study/Answer:** What do the governance and funding structures look like in our current and future partnership opportunities? What are the needs of Mahtomedi students? How will we participate in collaborative planning to meet the outcomes, programs, services and

initiatives needed to provide successful experiences for all students in Mahtomedi? How will we assess the partnerships progress, barriers, new challenges and opportunities?

**Timeline and Key Deadlines**

August 7	Review Data
September 11	Hear Presentations from EMID and North St. Paul Maplewood Oakdale
October 2	Meet with Parents for Q/A session regarding presentations
October 23	Present Findings to School Board
November 6	Recommendations to School Board
December 11	School Board Action on Participation
January	Notification to EMID if needed

**VISION**

**Integration District is a potential new administrative umbrella to manage alternative, choice, service learning and student support programs. Services are based on meeting a wide range of diverse and individual needs. Services that support students to learn in varied time frames, with individualized plans are designed and offered. Current programs to be considered under this umbrella include integration services, service learning, community education, adult basic education, engineering leadership program and Mahtomedi Learning Center.**

**Examine national models for meeting the individual needs of students and propose a program for adoption in Mahtomedi and in partnership with area districts.**

**III. QUANTIFY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH AREA CITIES AND ATHLETIC ASSOCIATIONS**

Area cities depend on Mahtomedi Schools and the Community Education Department for the coordination of recreation activities including field use, field maintenance and improvements, utilities, supervision and custodial expenses. Mahtomedi School District seeks written agreements with area cities to ensure that city recreation activities, including those provided by community athletic associations, are within reasonable fiscal limits and constraints of the

school district. While there is value to in-kind services, the costs of field maintenance, supervision, security, and coordination is a significant district commitment and it needs to be quantified and evaluated as such.

**Questions to Study/Answer:** What are the current costs for recreation services for each city and for the school district? What are the limitations or overages expended by each party? What are the changes that need to be made for each party to meet its obligations for programs within the confines of budget? What are the contributions of athletic associations to the city and district services? What can we learn from the data collected by the associations, cities and school district? What is the impact of open enrollment on the associations, city recreation budgets and school district budget for athletics and recreation?

**Timelines and Key Deadlines:**

September 12	Athletic Council meets
September 19	City and school district leaders meet
October	Data analysis
November 14	City and School district leaders meet
December 5	Athletic Council
December 11	Recommendations to School Board
January – February	Begin written agreements with city leaders
February 6	City and school district leaders

**VISION**

**Written agreements specify the financial and leadership commitment of the school district to area recreation and athletic activities. Participation fees reflect the actual costs of school district services within the partnership with cities and recreation associations.**

**Consider a regional recreation board established to develop a comprehensive plan for effective delivery of area recreation and athletic activities. The board is representative of school districts, cities, associations and other key parties. The board recommends a coordinated model for administration and management of area resources to cities, school boards and associations.**

#### IV. PRELIMINARY EXPENDITURE PLAN FOR 2009-2010

The school district reduced its expenditure budget, or spending, five of the past six years. The next reductions, if necessary, will likely reduce administration, teachers, support staff, and programs and services. Reductions always affect “the way things work” so care must be given to any changes made to the school system. How might we find efficiencies in the elementary and secondary instructional delivery system? For example, is the four period day at the high school most efficient in its use of teachers for instruction? How might we consider changes in instructional delivery at the elementary, middle and high school levels, that, when implemented, provide for cost reductions with limited negative impact on class size or major reductions in program offerings?

**Questions to Study/Answer** – Should the high school change from a four period day to another delivery model? Should the middle school consider an alternative to the current schedule? What potential benefits arise when schedules from Grades 6-12 are aligned for students and employees? What changes in instructional delivery are possible at the elementary level? What can we learn from high school data on student course selection and course enrollments by semester?

#### Timeline and Key Deadlines

Monday, September 8	Meet with High School Faculty Council
Tuesday, September 9	Design/Discuss administrative leadership process
September – October	Review various schedule options and identify choices Complete High School Comparison Study Begin committee to study schedule options and determine School Calendars for 2009-2011
November 15	Deadline for High School Course Registration Guide
November – December	Determine future changes in schedule based on cost efficiencies

**VISION**

Meeting the individual needs of all learners is the greatest challenge facing public schools. Nationally, we anticipate a growing demand for more individualized curriculum, more choice, more advanced use of technologies, and greater diversity of the student body. To prepare for the future, the school board and administration should look for opportunities to meet individual needs in new ways and with greater efficiencies. As we examine instructional schedules, one opportunity is to align the schedules for students and teachers in a grade 6-12 configuration. This will permit the flow of teachers to meet the individual needs of students as identified and allow for more flexibility in teacher assignments to reduce costs.

State and federal standards for achievement and the assessment processes to measure learning allow a movement from “grade by grade” progression of students through school to a more flexible progress to mastery system. The district should move away from a 12 year program to achieve a high school diploma and examine national models that exist today that offer alternative pathways for graduation from high school, including achievement of a two-year college degree by graduation.

The district administration and staff must propose alternatives to the current delivery system that allow for teacher teams to meet during the teacher duty day, for students to experience a wide range of courses, for students to achieve at high levels based on their own learning needs, and for assignment of teacher/student time to be similar at all schools.

**V. MAHTOMEDI ENGINEERING LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

Mahtomedi Engineering Leadership Program is recognized as one of the lighthouse secondary science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs in Minnesota and was featured recently in the September issue of the Minnesota Monthly magazine. State standards for engineering curriculum will be required by 2011. Early adoption and implementation of our own curriculum themes and standards will place us in the forefront of high quality programs in the State of Minnesota.

Program goals for this year are the following:

- 1) Develop distributed leadership for the program throughout the district with assistance of school principals and teachers.
- 2) Align engineering curriculum E-12 through the adoption of state standards for engineering and content themes by grade or age level.

- 3) Continue the development of sustaining partnerships to the program with post-secondary institutions, businesses, industry, private agencies, and professional associations.
- 4) Complete the annual evaluation of program outcomes with external evaluator.

**VISION**

**Mahtomedi Engineering Leadership Program is a model program in Minnesota. Programs that emphasize core classes in science, technology, engineering and math courses are essential for producing competitive high school graduates who can succeed in post high school training and employment. This program has the potential to grow as a regional program for students interested in the specialized instruction.**

**The school district must consider ways to offer these courses through community education, District 916, Mahtomedi Learning Center and Century College. The district may serve students more effectively with extended day, extended year and community experts approaches.**

**VI. MAHTOMEDI QUALITY COMPENSATION PLAN WITH MAHTOMEDI EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

Mahtomedi Education Association developed a plan and received approval from Minnesota Department of Education to implement a quality compensation plan for this year.

**VISION**

**The benefits of this plan and the meaningful partnerships with our teachers is invaluable. The district must continue the plan and the commitment to effective staff development, distributed leadership practices, teacher leaders, and collaborative decision-making processes.**

**VII. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND NEEDS**

Each year the school board and administration review policies for improvement and legal changes/revisions. When possible, policy recommendations from the Minnesota School Board Association are accepted and included in the policy for Mahtomedi Public Schools.

**Mandatory Policy Review**

Out-of State Travel by School Board Members

Chemical Use and Abuse

School Weapons

Student Discipline and Notice of Suspension

Bullying Prohibition

Student Sex Nondiscrimination

Pledge of Allegiance

Use of Peace Officers and Crisis Teams to Remove Students with Individual Education Plans

Transportation Services

**Policy Review and Revision– Open Enrollment**

The school district must review its policy for open enrollment and consider the implications for policy when the number of interested applicants for open enrollment exceeds the number of student openings available. To date, the need for an administrative procedure that includes a lottery selection process has not been a necessary requirement. This may be needed for 2009-2010 and future years.

The school board may wish to close open enrollment at Mahtomedi High School prior to January 2009 given current and projected enrollment for 2009-2010.

**Policy Review and Revision – Policy 425 – Administrator Performance Appraisal**

Administrators will review and improve the current policy to update professional practices. The district will benefit if the policy includes a mechanism for feedback. The administrative team

will suggest a system that when adopted will provide for effective feedback from students, staff and community.

#### **Policy Implications**

**The school board must define the parameters for acceptable changes as we seek to meet student needs within more limited revenue.**

**Below is a proposed list of expectations that must be met as administration and staff plan for the future:**

- **We will continue to seek and employ the very best teachers, administrators and support staff who are committed to learning, teamwork and excellence.**
  - **We will continue to emphasize the use of data and measurement systems to monitor and improve student learning and the performance of the schools and school district.**
  - **Class size in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be kept as low as possible. This may mean that class sizes in other grades will increase to allow this emphasis.**
  - **Literacy by the end of grade three is vital for student success for life. Literacy services at all schools is a priority for the success of all students (Response to Intervention, PBIS, and literacy blocks).**
  - **Meeting individual needs of all students is vital for our future success. We will align resources of time, staffing, goals and information accordingly to meet this goal. The use of technology will be employed to advance learning and meet individual needs.**
  - **A skilled teacher is the most important variable to high levels of student learning.**
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