

**Elgin Area League of Women Voters
Observer Report**

MEETING: School Board – Elgin U-46

DATE: May 18, 2009

League Member Observer : Laurel Bault

Elected Officials Attending: All Board members present – including new student trustee (non-voting) **Andrew Boston**, Student Advisor to the Board, attends South Elgin High School. Andrew is the first student representative to the Board having been selected by his peers in 2009. Andrew is an active member of the National Honor Society and he has participated in the “Pay It Forward” service across America program as well as the Students Today – Leaders Forever program. He will serve through the end of his senior year with a term expiring in May 2010.

Absent: none

Was press in attendance? Yes No

Did the press cover the significant issues? Yes No ***

Press on school board issues often is reported in pieces, over the course of several days. Observer wishes reporters would report according to District Improvement Plan – as this would help educate the tax payer on what is suppose to be done according to the plan, and create more effective observers of our - critical to democracy – public school system.

SUMMARY OF MEETING and CRITICAL ISSUES

Accent on Achievement – National Corporation for Service Learning – 5 out of the 11 students nation wide serving on this body are from Elgin High School! Kane County Teacher of the Year (and 2004 Illinois Teacher of the Year) Deb Perryman introduced the 5 students to the board. Service Learning is a program that not only includes community service, but also purposefully includes service in the curriculum. For more information – see <http://www.nylc.org/>.

Revenue –

Bond issue vote upcoming - Current cash revenues (\$34.4M as of April 30) are only expected to last the district through the first week of June (CFO John Prince) The district will be considering a resolution authorizing the district to issue tax anticipation warrants if state aid payments and property tax revenue continues to come up short. The vote could take place as early as June 1 meeting.

Method of accounting – It was again proposed that U-46 move to a modified accrual method of accounting, moving from the current cash on hand method used. While this will be more costly (very small % of large district budget) this is the more commonly used method.

Safety - Adopted the National Incident Management System, an emergency response plan developed by the Department of Homeland Security. This allows the district to apply for federal safety grants and requires the district to participate in prevention, and training exercises with all 11 communities covered by U 46 – and the emergency responders of each community.

Curriculum – Adoption of *Civics Alive* and *Economics Alive* curriculum recommended by the Instructional Council in April.

Citizens Advisory Reports – Enrollment and Facilities (Lonnie Williams) and Special Education (Henry Harris)

District Improvement Plan Report by Dr. Torres – the district plan is broken into six categories and can be found here <http://www.u-46.org/cdps/cditem.cfm?nid=331> – Observer lists here as Dr. Torres reported by category of any action taken by the district.

1. **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment:** District will be continuing work with the Dual Language Committee – following up on the recommendation to expand the program (currently only at Channing Elementary) Framework and facilities need to be studied.
2. **High Priority Schools** – Summer School begins on June 15 for middle school and June 18 for elementary school students. Note – the regular school year ends on June 10th because of numerous snow days.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – school committees will be given more control and responsibility for school budgets.
4. **Leadership** – displaced employee assistance being offered.
5. **Data Management** – Roadmap training opportunities added for next year.
6. **Public Trust and Support** – reported on May events including graduations that will be held on Saturday, May 23 for 2500 students.

COMMENTS/NOTES:

This is the first board meeting observer has attended since Dr. Jose Torres being Superintendent. His in-depth report on the District Improvement Plan was over and above past superintendent reports. This report is in-depth as well as it is the first (since I have been a league member) observer report on the school board meetings.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

NEXT MEETING: June 1, 2009

Observer: Please fill out and e-mail to Laurel Bault at laurelbault@yahoo.com after each meeting observed.

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