

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

**MEETING: School Board – Elgin U-46**

**DATE: June 1, 2009**

**League Member Observer : Laurel Bault and Brenda Khan**

**Elected Officials Absent: Amy Kerber – Joyce Fountain left early**

**Was press in attendance?  Yes  No**

Press leaves early to meet deadlines.

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

As of Tuesday, no report on the new Writing curriculum adopted at the cost of \$777,000 plus \$55,000 for Spanish titles. Unfortunate, as media could have reported on the committee of 45 teachers that worked hard to come to consensus on a curriculum that created students that, “See themselves as writers.” Media did cover mobile classrooms, the appointment of a new administrator, and the possible official club designation of an organization for gay students. (vote to come on June 22.)

### **SUMMARY OF MEETING and CRITICAL ISSUES**

**New Administrator** – Dr. Torres introduced Jim O’Connor – coming from Chicago Public Schools, named Executive Director of Student Services, he will oversee the special education and English Language Learner programs. O’Connor was principal of a CPS charter school, KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program), a 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade school with over 90% minorities and a high poverty rate. The first class graduating from this school in 2007, was one of 11 Chicago schools that ranked first on the ISAT test in Math.

#### **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. *No action.*

**Method of accounting** – U-46 will 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. *Approved.*

**Curriculum** – Adoption of *Being a Writer* elementary writing curriculum along with a very professional report by the committee members that worked to come to con

**Citizens Advisory Reports** – Finance Committee (School Fees) and Curriculum Committee (observer was concerned about the curriculum committee’s recommendations to the board seemed to be out of touch with state law and strategies by the district to respond to current law and best practice.) All of their reports can be found at [www.u46cac.org](http://www.u46cac.org).

**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. No report by Dr. Torres on DIP.

1. **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment:**
2. **High Priority Schools** –
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** –
4. **Leadership** –
5. **Data Management** –
6. **Public Trust and Support** –

**COMMENTS/NOTES:**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**NEXT MEETING: June 22, 2009**

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

#####

*The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. Join us in making democracy work!*