



Minutes State Board of Education September 25, 2020

Brooke Axiotis
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Bettie Bolar
Vice President
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Joshua Byrnes
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Michael L. Knedler
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Kimberly Wayne
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Hannah Groos
Student Member
Norwalk

Ann Lebo
Director and
Executive Officer

The State Board of Education meeting was held on Friday, September 25, 2020, in person at the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, ICN Room, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, Iowa, and via Zoom. State Board members present were Brooke Axiotis, Hannah Groos, Bettie Bolar, Joshua Byrnes, Brian Kane, John Robbins, Mike May, Mike Knedler, and Kimberly Wayne. Iowa Department of Education staff members present were Ann Lebo, David Tilly, Amy Williamson, Thomas Mayes, Brad Niebling, Tom Cooley, David Canaday, Bill Roederer, Jen Adams, Holly Barnes, Buffy Campbell, Denise Ragias, Geri McMahon, Eric St Clair, Jim Flansburg, Stacie Stokes, Earl Whipple, Kassandra Cline, Lisa Albers, Carla Schimelfenig, Janet Boyd, Shan Seivert, Susan Walkup, Marietta Rives, James Donoghue, Mary Breyfogle, Janell Brandhorst, Mary Beilke, Heather Doe, Eric Heitz, Barbara Ohlund, Janice Evans, Rob Olsen, Larry Bice, Pam Spangler, Sara Nickel, Hannah Walsh, Carolyn Cobb, and Jody Crane. Also in attendance were Robert Kobylski, Stacey Struck, Marianne Corbin, Robert Scott, Bill Schneden, Brenda Thie, Bruce McKee, Nicole Talbot, Tammy Fenton, Kristin Huggins, Michelle Martens, Mike Matson, Susan Herzmann, Sara Gott, Rebecca Frandsen, Mary Correthers, Jacy Rangel, Rachel Ivory, Corey Ramsey, Jacob Anderson, Sandy Schmitz, Katie Scott, Jen Boyd, Sheri Schultz, Phyllis Meyer, Martin Schiltz, Alan Hartley, Jami Weinzierl, Shaney Ford, Jake Klipsch, Jon Flynn, Garet Egel, Teresa Wessling, Yamily Jean-Simon, Susan Downs, Nichole Coulter, Nicole Mathews, Aaron Vincent, Chad Jones, Stephanie Lambert, Cory Vandewalle, Lauren Hargrave, Leah Kurth, Lisa Crews, Pamela Kirsch, Corri Guy, Jay Chelf, Michelle Verdon, John Kealey, Liz Mastalio, Alli Vandermyde, Jaime Kroeger, Cara Fah, James Quick, Kimberly Dorsey, Heather Harland, and Mike Orfitelli, Davenport Community School District; Bruce Potts, Kent Paustian, Dan Gosa, Jamie Snyder, Karen Kline-Jerome, and Allison Beck, Davenport Community School District Board; Jordan Esbrook, Attorney General's Office; William Decker, Diane Campbell and Jana Van Wetzinger, Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency; Larry Sigel, Margaret Buckton, and Susan Olesen, Iowa School Finance Information Services; Patrick Peacock; Sarah Gleason; Dawn Rascher; Tara Haiston; Athena Gilbraith; Daniel Van Sant, Disability Rights Iowa; Mary Jane Cobb and Cindy Swanson, Iowa State Education Association; Deb Chiodo; Chad Ryan; Lisa Bartusek,

Patti Schroeder, Siobhan Schneider and Lou Ann Gvist, Iowa Association of School Boards; Joe Romano, Iowa House Democratic Research Staff; Lora Vargason and Michael Guanci, Legislative Services Agency; Representative Cindy Winckler; Coby Culbertson, Dubuque Community School District; Monique Dujue Wilson; David Epley, House Democratic Caucus Staff; Kristin Rozeboom, House Republican Caucus Staff; Debbie Mahr; Candy Reed; Amy Rice; Tiffany Thompson; Gary Sinclair; Mike Reinholdt; Georgia Jecklin; Sarah Brennan; Anne Kiss; Jana Hosek; Anthony Watt; Joseph Adam; Tom Lane; John Parker, Iowa Department of Management; Bridget Godes, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff; Lori Janke; Representative Monica Kurth; Rebecca McCreary; Ted Blaesing; and Josh Brennan.

STATE BOARD BUSINESS MEETING

Brooke Axiotis called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Bettie Bolar made a motion and Kimberly Wayne seconded to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

This meeting was conducted in electronic format, with remote access information provided in the notice of the meeting, as permitted by section nine of Governor Reynolds's proclamation of May 26, 2020.

COMMUNICATION

Public Comment

Georgia Jecklin, Cindy Winckler, Mike Matson, Lori Janke, Monica Kurth, John Kealey, Athena Gilbraith, Robert Kobylski, Bruce Potts, and Kent Paustian provided public comment regarding the Davenport Community School District (Davenport).

Iowa Department of Education (Department) staff member, David Canaday, read public comment on behalf of Josh Brennan.

BOARD ACTION/DISCUSSION AGENDA

Davenport Community School District Accreditation Update

Amy Williamson, Chief, Bureau of School Improvement, explained the contents of the materials provided to the State Board of Education (State Board). She also provided extensive background information relating to the accreditation situation in Davenport.

At the August 5 State Board meeting, Davenport and the Department provided updates. The State Board voted unanimously to approve Davenport's current corrective action plan with the stipulation that if Davenport failed to meet any single objective in that plan, the State Board should appoint an expert to complete the action for the district at the district's expense. The plan at that time was to recommend, that at a future State Board meeting, partial takeover of district operations as outlined in Iowa Code section 256.11.

Materials for the September 17 State Board packet were due on September 8. The Department received a draft the week before it was due. Robert Kobylski, Superintendent, Davenport Community School District, requested that Williamson review the draft and provide feedback. Williamson did not have time to review the plan nor was it the agreement of the Department and the State Board that comments on draft documents would be provided. On September 8, the Department received an email from Davenport stating that the draft that had been submitted was the final product.

When the Department received the plan, several components were not filled out; therefore, Davenport failed to meet every objective in the action plan. Williamson noted that Department staff had previously spent time with Davenport, the Davenport board, and an Iowa Association of School Boards representative demonstrating how the plan should be filled out.

The Department recommended that the State Board exercise its authority to provide temporary oversight and operational authority of the district by appointing a superintendent and a chief financial officer (CFO) and to complete the action plan at the district's expense. These individuals would be reporting to the State Board. Williamson clarified that hiring and firing is a matter between the local school board.

Williamson stressed the importance of the State Board's decision and the significant consequences.

A PowerPoint was presented that addressed:

- Davenport Accreditation
- Differentiated Accountability Monitoring Process
- Davenport CSD Background
- State Board of Education Authority: K-12 Accreditation
- State Board K-12 Accreditation Authority: Davenport CSD Dates
- State Board Authority: K-12 Accreditation (256.11)
- Davenport CSD: May State Board Decision
- Davenport CSD: August State Board Decision
- Davenport CSD: Current Status

Williamson reviewed in detail the materials included in the board packet and highlighted the major issues. She also responded to comments that Davenport representatives made during the public comment period.

Williamson reviewed and clarified the Department's recommendation.

Thomas Mayes, Legal Counsel, Department of Education, reported that State Board members should direct questions to Assistant Attorney General, Jordan Esbrook, and that Department staff should direct questions to Mayes.

There was discussion about whether Department staff felt the district was provided adequate support, whether Davenport's financial situation will be exacerbated by hiring two new people, the district's resistance to prioritize violence prevention, whether a timeline on the action plan

was provided to the district, the district's certified enrollment report, whether this recommendation extends and lengthens the time before the corrections can be accomplished, how the Department will proceed if the State Board rejects the recommendation, the action taken at the August 5 State Board meeting, the status of the expert coaches who were working with Davenport, whether COVID-19 could have impacted the district's progress, and effects on student learning.

Discussion continued regarding the State Board's operational authority if it accepts the Department's recommendation, how the authority will work with the current superintendent and CFO and the acting superintendent and CFO, anticipated timeline for the district to get back on track, other options for board action, whether the State Board has ever exercised this authority, and the precedent being set.

Motion: Joshua Byrnes made a motion and Kimberly Wayne seconded that the State Board accept the recommendation to appoint a new CFO and a new superintendent and that the Department of Education, Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency, and the Davenport School District work on a timeframe of when that transition will occur.

There was a comment regarding the effects on students. There was also discussion regarding the board's options if the district failed to take the corrective action, and whether the Department's recommendation has a timeline.

Bettie Bolar called the question.

Jordan Esbrook clarified the motion.

Vote: A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Brooke Axiotis, Bettie Bolar, Joshua Byrnes, Brian Kane, Mike Knedler, Mike May, John Robbins, and Kimberly Wayne. Nay. None. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Brooke Axiotis
President

Ann Lebo
Director