

# Wayne-Westland Community Schools

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Committee

Minutes: October 13, 2009 – 6:00 p.m.

### 1. Welcome

Dr. Baracy welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the entire 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Committee and thanked them for attending and playing an active role in this committee.

### 2. Team Reports

Jeff Rahmberg, Consultant from Rahmberg, Stover & Associates, reminded the committee at large to keep in mind the *Ten Guiding Principles* that Tom Watkins emphasized at the July meeting. He stated that the principles will become very important as the committee continues their work. Mr. Rahmberg reviewed the agenda items to be discussed this evening and opened up the floor to the individual committees to present their reports.

Instruction: The members of the committee shared their observations regarding the schools that they visited in Dexter, Livonia, Saline and Novi School Districts. It was the consensus of the committee to recommend the 5-6 grade configuration to the Facilities, Enrollment, and Finance/Human Resource teams for further exploration and consideration.

Facilities: The team explained that they developed a set of building priorities to assist in the facility evaluation process and assess each of the District's elementary and middle school buildings. Discussion took place on rumors regarding the schools that will be closing and the committee stressed that no decision has been made as to which buildings will close.

Finance/Human Resources: The committee reported that they discussed the current Potential Student Attendance flowchart following the K-4; 5-6; 7-8; and 9-12 grade configuration. It was also noted that the committee reviewed a representative sampling of eight unnamed school buildings to get a feel for the savings that could be expected when closing a building. The group agreed that between \$400,000 and \$550,000 would be a reasonable estimate of savings when closing a building. Discussion took place on the potential reduction in personnel (a good portion will hopefully come from attrition) that could result due to the greater efficiency of the proposed new grade configuration. Other potential operating efficiencies and cost saving ideas were discussed. It was further noted that additional cost saving strategies may be necessary to reach the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Committee goal of saving between \$10 million and \$12 million of General Fund operating costs.

Enrollment: The Team reported that discussion took place on the grade configuration that was recommended by the Instruction Team. A PowerPoint presentation was shown to the committee depicting our current grade enrollment with school boundaries. Discussion also took place on meeting the needs of children in Special Education in the buildings. John Mills, Senior Executive Director for Special Education has been working with the Facilities Committee to ensure that all of the Special Needs Programs have adequate facilities for those programs.

Communications: The committee reviewed and discussed the 21<sup>st</sup> Century brochure and posters that have been distributed throughout the district. The Team gave their input on this informational pamphlet. It was noted by Jen Curry, Communication's Chairperson that there is a "Communication Ambassador" in each building to help answer questions and to help tone down the "rumor mill". Future brochures are planned including a Q & A.

### **3. Reaffirmation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Initiative**

Tom Watkins, Consultant from TDW & Associates and former State Superintendent, noted that the district has lost 1,900 students in the last ten years due to the declining enrollment and poor economy. With the loss of students (many families are leaving the state) and lack of equitable funding by the state, the district will be operating in a deficit of approximately \$7,500,000 for the 2009/2010 school year. He stressed that we need to maximize our resources, look at the global dynamics – remember that our children are competing against all the children in the world, re-imagine and re-create how we deliver our services and stated that we need to be the best we can be – our students deserve nothing less!

Dr. Watkins noted that this is our new reality and we need to galvanize and educate the community. There will be some tough changes and challenges, as the economy will not be picking up anytime soon. He concluded by stating that there are three (3) ways to balance a budget: (1) increase revenue; (2) find ways to reduce expenditures; and (3) a combination of 1 and 2 to maximize our resources.

He congratulated the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Committee for all of their hard work and reminded them that this is all for the children.

### **4. Project Timeline – Next Steps**

Jeff Rahmberg summed up the meeting by discussing the project timeline:

Phase I:	Study Foundation was completed in July
Phase II:	Fact Finding has been on-going since August and will be completed in October
Phase III:	Alternative Analysis has also been on-going since August and will be completed in October
Phase IV:	Recommendation Formulation began in October and will be completed in November
Phase V:	Board of Education Review is scheduled to be completed in December

Mr. Rahmberg concluded by stating that as a committee we need to address the rumors and get the facts out to the community.

Mrs. Charlotte Sherman distributed Questions and Answers that will be available in all of the buildings in the district and will also be posted on the district website *wwcsd.net* by clicking on the link for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Committee for more information.