

# DISTRICTWIDE PARENTS' ORGANIZATION

## IOWA CITY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

[http://www.edline.net/pages/ICCSd/parents/District\\_Parents\\_Organization](http://www.edline.net/pages/ICCSd/parents/District_Parents_Organization)

### 2020 January 8 DPO Meeting Minutes

Attendees included: Stevie Tommey, Noor Miller, Chad Meacham, Miriam Timmer-Hackert, Eric Johnson, Mary Murphy, Cynthia Crossett-Powell, Michael Tilley, Susan Brennan, Shawn Eyestone, Amy Kortemeyer, Karen Nichols, Yu Yu, Ben Brozene, Suzanne Halekes, Brianna Wills, Kristen Hixenbaugh, Charlie Eastham, Marissa Keeney, Silvia Quezada, Kristine Bullock, Yu Yu, Tara Sterba, Jen O'Brien, Kate Middleton, Matt Degner, Celeste Shoppa, and presenter Randy Richardson.

Representing: Alexander, Borlaug, City High, Coralville Central, Garner, Grant, Hoover, Horn, Kirkwood, Lemme, Liberty, Lincoln, Longfellow, Lucas, Mann, SEJH, North Central, Northwest, Penn, Shimek, Transitions Services Center, Twain, Van Allen, Weber, West High, Wickham, Wood, ESC, UNI, ICCSD Foundation, ICCSD School Board, Iowans for Public Education.

**DPO Co-President Stevie Toomey** opened the meeting, thanked everyone for being present and the Borlaug parent group for providing lunch. She also indicated that the DPO is still looking for a co-president elect.

#### District Parent Organization Officer Reports

- **DPO Co-Past President Miriam Timmer-Hackert** stated the DPO has established a nominating committee to select a co-president elect for this year, two co-president elects for next year, and a co-secretary for next year. The nominating committee includes:
  - Alexander - PTO Co-presidents Sara Karbeling and Valerie Blau
  - Garner - Kristin Hixenbaugh
  - Hoover - Yu Yu Spring
  - Lemme - PTO President (or DPO rep) Amanda Molsberry
  - Lucas - Michael Tilley
  - Shimek - PTO President Ben Brozene
  - Weber - PTO President or DPO Representative
  - North Central - President Amy Bartacheck
  - City - Tea Ho
- **DPO Co-Past President Eric Johnson** reminded the attendees that the DPO has a scholarship where school parent groups select one or more individuals to honor (e.g. retiring teacher, etc.). Parent groups should submit a short 150-word biography of the honorees along with a \$50 check, which will be used to provide the scholarships. The reception for the honorees is April 23, and scholarships are awarded at this time to eligible students who have applied and intend to go into teaching. Please encourage students graduating from high school to apply. The biographies and checks are due March 9.
- Mary Murphy asked for a motion to approve the December DPO minutes. The attendees approved the December 2019 minutes.

- **Treasurer Cyndi Crossett-Powell** stated the only three remaining schools still need to pay dues.

**Celeste Shoppa, Principal at Borlaug** (<https://www.iowacityschools.org/BorlaugES>)

welcomed the group and she talked about the history of Borlaug Elementary, talked about who Norman Borlaug was, and provided a rough outline of the demographics of the school.

- Principal Shoppa identified how the bond funded two new classrooms at Borlaug and expanded the music room.
- The colors of Borlaug are black and gold.
- The mascot is the Borlaug Bulldog.
- The school is named for Dr. Norman Borlaug, an Iowan agronomist, who created wheat varieties, and won a Nobel Peace Prize.
- Borlaug has about 570 students, 21 classrooms, and about 80 staff members.
- Borlaug has 4 special education teachers.
- Borlaug has an active PTO.

**School Board Representative Shawn Eyestone** stated the following:

- Given the winter break, there was only one meeting between the December DPO meeting and the January DPO meeting. That was a [Policy and Governance Committee meeting](#).
- The [district's legislative priorities for 2020](#) are:
  - Timely and Adequate Funding at 4.5% state supplemental aid.
    - This figure is based on a 4.4% average growth in expenses per year over the last ten years.
  - Support for climate change initiatives
  - Restoration of Chapter 20 bargaining rights for unions
  - Vote against vouchers and school choice initiatives

**Assistant Superintendent Matt Degner** stated the following:

- The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan is scheduled for [the January 14 Board Meeting](#).
  - The plan replicates the UI Diversity Plan
- The district is still exploring a crisis response plan.
- A curriculum review committee is being established for Career and Technical Education.

**Chief Operating Officer Chace Ramey** stated the following:

- The district's climate action plan will be discussed at [the January 14 Board Meeting](#)
- The budgeting process will move forward when the state provides the official tally of the number of students the district has.
- As inclement weather approaches, it is helpful to remember [the district's inclement weather guidelines](#).
- Mary Murphy asked Mr. Ramey about why the number of reported paraeducators had gone down from 2018 to 2019, and Mr. Ramey agreed to provide additional information about that at a later date.
  - [Chace's reply - *I checked with our budget office on this information and how it was reported. For the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter report presented in November, we computed*

*the paras FTE using 8 hours per day versus 6 hours per day, which was done in prior reports. This resulted in 388.81 FTE reported for the current year. If we had used 6 hours, this would have been 518.40 FTE. This different computing FTE approach is what created the appearance of a large change, but it brought our para FTE reporting in line with the reporting of FTE in the majority of our other employee categories. In my discussion with the budget office, we have decided to footnote this change in calculation approach in the next quarterly report....]*

- Another parent asked how much money 4.5% of the budget is. The answer was that each percent equals about a million dollars in our budget.
- Noor Miller asked about whether WRAM would be adjusted going forward when the administration redoes the budget, and Mr. Ramey said that it is always evaluated, and Mr. Eystone said that the focus is always on providing resources based on the needs, but he admitted that it is hard to manage without adequate state funding.
- There was another question about whether tax-incremental financing (TIF) affects school finances. The answer was that it does not directly affect school finances, since the state sets the maximum amount that can be spent independently of how much revenue any municipality can generate.
- Eric Johnson mentioned that the budget cuts for the 2019-2020 school year also followed on the 2015 budget cuts.

**Co-president Stevie Tomey introduced** the speaker for the meeting: **Randy Richardson**, who is an administrator for Iowans for Public Education and a retired teacher and former AEA employee. **Randy Richardson:**

- Prefaced his comments by saying that the opinions he was stated were his own, and that they were not absolute, and he also indicated that he would be focusing on Republican policy proposals and initiatives, since they are in control of the state executive and legislative branches.
- Indicated that the Republicans would not pass 4.5% state supplemental aid (SSA, formerly called “allowable growth”), and that historically, SSA has not kept up with the rate of inflation as it ought to.
  - Presently, the Iowa Revenue Estimating Conference is predicting a 2.9% increase in new state revenue, which means that is likely the maximum that one should expect for SSA, and we are much more likely to get around 2% or less.
  - Cautioned that the greater than expected revenue may be because of the federal tax changes that brought more money into the state and that the Revenue Estimating Conference has not yet factored in damages from floods in Western Iowa or tariffs.
- Stated one of the priorities of Americans for Prosperity is to pressure the legislature to cut programs like TIF (tax increment financing).
- Stated that when the states cuts taxes, it cuts revenues to schools and that cutting income taxes and increasing sales taxes will shift the burden to lower income families.
- Expects that there could be new categorical funding for children’s mental health, including universal screening. Categorical funds can only be spent on limited things.

- With regard to mental health and health, noted two bills left from last year--the legislature meets on a two year session and we're in year 2.
  - SSB1240 at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=ssb1240>
  - SF376 at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=88&ba=SF376>
- Stated teacher supplement funds are building up in some schools.
- Talked about the likelihood of new state laws about classroom discipline and safety, particularly regarding the use of seclusion rooms, data about their use, and following best practices in their use. Stated some legislators have not been in schools in a long time. Matt Degner added that he was concerned about bills that may be requirements about excluding students from the classroom. Randy Richardson stated the recommendation from Iowa State Board of Education's consultant was to end seclusion; however, the Board won't go that far.
- Said some lawmakers would likely be advancing a "transportation equity plan" which would have the end result of increasing money for categorical funding for transportation, which primarily benefits rural districts.
  - Miriam Timmer-Hackert asked about funding equity between districts.
  - Mr. Richardson stated that Iowa has one of the most equitable funding systems in the US, but acknowledge slight variations between districts.
- Indicated the legislature might add a categorical fund for low income students.
- Said that the teacher shortage would continue to pose challenges for Iowa given that enrollment is down in state training programs, and that legislators may consider greater flexibility and reciprocity for certification among other options for increasing the number of teachers.
  - Chace Ramey said that the rules about teacher certification affect recruitment of diverse teaching candidates.
  - Mr. Richardson acknowledged the point but added that Iowa's certification standards are important for ensuring that all students have a high-quality education.
- He said that school choice, especially in the form of additional tax breaks for school tuition organizations may be discussed in the upcoming legislative session as well.
- He also expects that there will be similar or slightly increased funding for preschool, and that IPERS would have no "significant" changes given that it is an election year although the word "significant" is concerning.
- Eric Johnson asked Mr. Richardson about the history regarding why advocacy groups stopped identifying a specific legislative target goal for SSA, like the ICCSD is requesting this year.
- Karen Nicolas asked about whether there would be a push for for-profit online education. Mr. Richardson said that there are currently two districts that have for-profit online instruction, and that could expand in the future. Ten percent of the money goes back to the school district and the rest stays out of state with the for profit company. A district can bring in open enrollees and right now there is little to no oversight from the state. The schools are required to file a report with the state--the results are not good yet the Republicans want to create more. Des Moines Public Schools run a virtual school, which could draw in a lot of students from small schools. Classes are getting larger, other schools will follow and the quality may suffer. They compete with and draw

money away from rural schools.

- Michael Tilley asked how parents could help given that our lawmakers are already mostly supportive of the district's legislative priorities. Mr. Richardson recommended that parents volunteer in or donate to races outside of our immediate area.
- The legislative session goes to May 1.
- Karen Nichols recommended people follow Iowans for Public Education on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/360981620961306/>
- Eric Johnson asked "How many legislators have kids in private schools?" Mr. Richardson thinks about 12 or 15 legislators.
- State Senator Zach Wahls encouraged everyone to attend educational legislative forums, and to communicate with him and others with personal stories about how we are concretely affected by. If people come to the Capitol, they can go to the chambers on the second level and can send a note into your senator--Zach Wahls will come and say hello. The meeting of the Education Committee is open to the public. Anyone can attend and ask to speak at a sub-committee meeting.

The DPO Co-Presidents thanked the attendees for coming, Randy Richard for presenting, Senator Wahls for joining us and the host school and others and the meeting was adjourned by 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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By DPO Co-Secretaries  
Mary Murphy and Michael Tilley

**Next Meeting:**

**February 12, 2020**

**Mann Elementary** at 521 N. Dodge, Iowa City, IA 52245  
**Topic: Building Administration roles and responsibilities**

Feel free to email [dpoiccsd@gmail.com](mailto:dpoiccsd@gmail.com) with feedback or questions.

District Parent Organization Executive Board:  
Co-Presidents: Stevie Toomey, Noor Miller  
Co-Presidents Elect : Chad Meacham  
Co-Presidents Past: Miriam Timmer-Hackert, Eric Johnson  
Co-Secretaries: Mary Murphy, Michael Tilley  
Treasurer: Cyndi Crossett-Powell