



INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL TURNAROUNDS MEETING MINUTES

September 19, 2014

Indiana University Northwest, Room 105
John W. Anderson Library Conference Center Building
3400 Broadway
Gary, IN 46408

Board Members Present: Daniel Elsener and Sarah O'Brien, and Tony Walker.
Additionally, Claire Fiddian-Green was present.

Call to Order/ Meeting Minutes Approval- Dan Elsener, Chair

Mr. Elsener welcomed everyone to the meeting in northwest Indiana. Thanked IUNW for their hospitality. Mr. Elsener requested a motion to approve the minutes from August 21, 2014. Mr. Walker made the motion. Mrs. O'Brien seconded and the committee unanimously approved.

Overview of Purpose of Committee - Dan Elsener, Chair

Mr. Elsener introduced himself and the committee. The committee members were asked as members of the State Board of Education to be part of the taskforce to look at school turnaround efforts in Indiana. Before today's meeting, the committee hosted a meeting in Indianapolis, one in Gary, will host one in Evansville, and upon conclusion of the committee hearings will have recommendations for the State Board and possibly the State legislature on this issue.

Mr. Elsener stated the committee is going to look at the successes and challenges of turnarounds. They will look at not only the short-term and the schools we are working with now to advance learning, but also in the long-term what is in the laws and regulations on the approaches to this issue that the committee should reconsider. The committee will take input today and at other committee meetings across the state but will also be consulting national experts. When there are chronically challenged and failing schools across the country, other states have addressed this need to do some kind of intervention. There has been learning and expertise across the country the committee will tap into. Mr. Elsener introduced Claire Fiddian-

Green, Special Assistant to Governor Pence on Education Innovation. The committee will bring the recommendations from the research back to the State Board and share with the legislature.

Mr. Elsener stated there were over twenty schools that were under statute in need of intervention. Through a number of expenditures, resources, time, and consultants, many of those schools got off the turnaround list. They made big moves, strong leadership and turned the tide on school performance, culture, and attendance. The State Board not only prefers it but it is a principle and inherent in American and among Hoosiers, local control. Government needs to be closest to the people it serves, not from the state level. The counterbalance is the moral obligation that every student receives a safe and reasonable education. If there is continuous evidence that the schools are not serving the students well, the Board went through serious discernments, reviews and hired consultants and concluded some schools required intervention.

In 1999, Gov. O'Bannon signed into law, Public Law 221, authored by Rep. Greg Porter, which passed the House 93-1 and the Senate 50-0. The legislature understood the morale obligation that if a school was chronically failing, something had to be done, so they gave the State Board authority to intervene. Through this process of learning, it has been insightful.

History of School Turnaround Efforts in Indiana – Claire Fiddian-Green

Presentation at: <http://www.in.gov/sboe/2567.htm>

Ms. Fiddian-Green stated framework for school turnaround began with Public Law 221 enacted in 1999. Required the State Board to place every school in Indiana in a performance category, including academic progress and academic watch. Then in 2011, thru rulemaking the Board changed the category names to grade letter names, but it was still the same way in calculating those categories that determined Roosevelt as a turnaround academy. In 2012, the A-F rules were changed and were used for the 2011-2012 academic year. In 2013, the law was amended to put A-F categories in state law.

Ms. Fiddian-Green cited the statutory definition of “turnaround academy” under IC 20-31-9-4. She presented the federal requirements of the NCLB Waiver and defined the waiver’s commitment for turnaround academies in regard to rejoining the local education agency. Ms. Fiddian-Green explained the exit options during the fifth year of intervention added in 2014 in IC 20-31-9-9.

Ms. Fiddian-Green provided a review of state activities under Public Law 221 for school quality reviews, school monitoring activities in year five from 2010-2011, and public hearings held at each of the 7 schools under intervention.

Public Comment

Mr. Elsener opened public comment. Robert Buggs, representing the Education Committee for the NAACP asked the committee how the dollars follow the student when the student moves to a public charter school from a traditional public school. Mr. Elsener answered the parent knows best how to educate their children and has the option to choose what school best serves their child. The policy has been in place since 2001, with newer voucher options available. The money follows the child. Mr. Walker responded that Mr. Buggs bring up a very important issue that also affects the turnarounds; generally there is a count date, so there is a lag of time between the funds actually following the child. The same situation with turnaround, so a second reconciliation date was added where an estimated number of students were calculated, then a second date was added so the turnaround operators were only getting money for the students actually in the school. Mr. Buggs asked why maintenance operations remain with the school corporation when the state takes over a turnaround school. Mr. Walker responded the law was written that way and he would like further study in this process.

Presentation by Gary Community Turnaround School Operator: Edison – Donna Henry, Principal, Theodore Roosevelt College & Career Academy and Thom Jackson, CEO EdisonLearning.

Presentation at: <http://www.in.gov/sboe/2567.htm>

Ms. Henry presented the successes, transition and operating challenges of Theodore Roosevelt College & Career Academy.

Mr. Walker asked about the attendance rate. In 2012, a third of the students were not attending. Mr. Walker asked what is being done to address it and what feedback is the school receiving from the parents. Ms. Henry responded in year-one, they did not have a full-time truancy officer. However, after the first-year there was a need for a full-time truancy officer who could manage those absent students. When a student misses three consecutive days of school, the learning coaches, who work with the small groups, contact the parents to identify the reason for the absence. If a response is not received, the truancy officer steps in. In the first year of the truancy program, 73 truancy referrals were filed with the Gary Police Department. The bulk of truancy comes from 18-19 year-old students because there is no accountability. The feedback from the parents has been they are grown. However, they are still in school. Some parents believe the charge of parental neglect is harsh. However, it is their responsibility to ensure their child attends school. Theodore Roosevelt hosts parent meetings where parents can discuss challenges they are facing with their children and receive feedback

from other parents who may have experienced a similar situation. Mr. Walker asked if the prosecutor's office had been prosecuting the truancy referrals. Ms. Henry responded yes, parents have to go to truancy classes, are fined, and can receive jail time. Some parents refuse to pay the fine or attend truancy classes, and opt to serve the jail time. Mr. Walker asked if this process is making a difference in the numbers. Ms. Henry responded when parents are inconvenienced, they will step up and follow-up with their children. A small percentage of parents will go through the entire truancy discipline process, but there remains a small group who continue to struggle.

Mr. Elsener asked what causes students to want to be in school on a consistent basis outside of consequences. Ms. Henry said when students are able to experience success they want to come back. If they have been part of the truancy program, positive behavior and positive attendance incentives, such as open gym, etc. We discuss raising their GPA and improvement in their grades, so they are part of the discussion.

Mr. Elsener asked about transition and operational challenges, how could these successes been greater. Ms. Henry replied the turnaround process is very emotional. Community support impacts enrollment, accountability, and parental-involvement. Outside of the facility, changing the culture was the greatest challenge. Once there is a change in student mindset, the process is smoother.

Mr. Elsener asked the status of current enrollment. Ms. Henry stated current enrollment is 570 students across grades seven-twelve. Last year, ended at 549 but started at 610. Next fall, estimated 600.

Mr. Elsener asked Ms. Henry what changes in the transition process should be made in law and policy to accelerate success. Ms. Henry replied it is important for both parties, the TSO and the school district to meeting and define roles and responsibilities of each party.

Ms. O'Brien asked about attendance at parent meetings. Ms. Henry said they begin well, approximately 20 families represented at each meeting across grades seven-twelve. Ms. O'Brien asked about daily professional development for teachers and how much time is spent mining data versus discussion of teaching strategies. Ms. Henry responded one day of the week is dedicated to data, but the type of data analysis will change on a monthly basis. For example, Thursday will be data analysis, Monday, Tuesday, and Friday are for pedagogy practices, Wednesdays are for meetings with guidance and truancy counselors, time to identify needs of services.

Ms. O'Brien asked Ms. Henry to provide recommendations to improve state grant process and funding streams which had been previously stated as untimely. Ms. Henry stated the cumbersome part is rewriting the grant every year, and recommended a 3-4 year grant cycle. Mr. Elsener reconfirmed a three-year runway to predict more long-term.

Mr. Walker asked how the legislature could craft a better model for defining how TSOs and the district divide and operate facilities, buses, food service. Ms. Henry said those conversations need to occur in year zero, rather than year one of the turnaround process when the TSO is in the building. Mr. Walker asked in Ms. Henry's experience if those facilities items he mentioned if it works better to have all the building maintenance on the TSO versus divided between the district. Thom Jackson, CEO, EdisonLearning requested to respond to Mr. Walker's question. Mr. Jackson said he believes and the literature on turnaround shows that there must be a collaboration between the district and the turnaround partner. There are roles for each. The most recent report by Mass Insight fundamentally supports that, beginning with and encouraging local control. Without the triad and definition of roles among the state, district and turnaround partner it will delay, frustrate, and endanger the turnaround effort. The Mass Insight study fundamentally concludes that in the absence of the triad collaboration there is no successful turnaround but a race to the mediocre, not a race to the top.

Mr. Walker asked Mr. Jackson if he is comfortable with the current statute as written in regard to busing, facilities, and food service. Mr. Jackson said in a word no. Mr. Jackson said the statute should describe what happens in year zero. Year zero should be about evaluation of the school because that's making sure the students are first, but year zero should also be about bringing the parties together to map out those roles. The roles should be very specific in terms of transportation and what does that mean in terms of authority and funding. Identify which dollars follow the student, is it per pupil funding or is it local tax dollars. If its local tax dollars, what is the impact on the entire district. Must give the district the opportunity to be at the table and part of the long-term conversation. Gary has challenges with facilities and with a shrinking tax base. Mr. Walker asked if Mr. Jackson thought the statute should be silent in regard to defining roles and allow the parties to negotiate at the outset. Mr. Jackson clarified he thinks the statute should be designed that the parties have to work in out in year zero. Turnaround high school cannot be viewed in a vacuum because there is so much more going on in the district, what about the feeder system, what's going on at the middle school. If there is a challenge in the high school, that challenge was probably matriculated over time. Year zero should be about a collaborative quality analysis but also a collaboration among the state, district and turnaround partner.

Mr. Elsener stated the legislature defined a turnaround school, but a turnaround school is set in a system of context, culture and process, it is a systemic issue; that will be one of our big challenges as the committee looks at the research.

Mr. Jackson said one of the things he finds consistent in underperforming school districts across the country, anecdotal, not research-based, is the lack of the right kind of funding. Often school districts are challenged by a deteriorating tax base. Cannot simply to look at the per-pupil funding without looking at the deteriorating facilities. Mass Insight emphasizes capacity building, building capacity at the local level, but it is not just about the classroom, it is about the building itself. If the district does not have the funds to improve the facility itself, when the students walk into the classroom, they will not feel like their learning environment is conducive to learning. Mr. Jackson challenges the Board that the way underperforming school districts are funded may be just as much of a problem.

Ms. O'Brien recollected the observation year process in year zero, which was negative in many settings. Mr. Jackson responded that although partners may agree on objectives, they may disagree on tactics. Year zero is set up to be fundamentally antagonistic. Year zero should focus on collaboration. Mr. Elsener added the intent of the transition year was for all parties to understand the situation, and the long-term goal was always to get the school and students back in the district. Mr. Jackson said EdisonLearning uses a school improvement plan and includes the district at the table. The greatest challenge in the first year at Roosevelt was the price of change, and identifying who was going to pay for school infrastructure because the district didn't have the money to improve any of its schools. Ms. O'Brien stated she does not want to delay improvement any further. Ms. O'Brien recommended developing a two-tiered process that begins before year six, build the partnership with resources and the district, hopefully solving the problem before it requires state intervention. Mr. Elsener addressed concerns regarding operating budgets. Ms. O'Brien restated her preference for a two-tiered approach. Mr. Elsener recalled recruiting teachers and investing many resources, maybe too much school focus, and not enough district focus. Mr. Jackson added research shows turnarounds shows three-five years, in his experience it is closer to five. Mr. Jackson stated the root of the feeder system must be analyzed, because a high school cannot be turned around in a vacuum.

Mr. Elsener asked Mr. Jackson if he is aware of any situations across the country where there is a chronically failing high school and takeover of the entire feeder system and whole pipeline is addressed over five-year period. Mr. Jackson replied there is a movement emerging on that model. Entire districts for example are converting to charter. Mr. Jackson recommends going

downstream. Charter schools are public schools and EdisonLearning advocates schools that work for kids and adults who collaborate. Mr. Walker added that there are schools downstream in the Roosevelt pipeline now, what should be done? Mr. Jackson discussed pre-k through third grade and 100% emphasis on literacy by third grade. Mr. Jackson proposed a lead partner approach with the district to address problems and build capacity so the school can be returned to the district at the end of the contract.

Presentation by Gary Community School Corporation - Dr. Cheryl Pruitt, Superintendent, Gary Community School Corporation.

Presentation at: <http://www.in.gov/sboe/2567.htm>

Dr. Pruitt presented on the transition and operational challenges and what has been learned by their experiences. Dr. Pruitt provided historical perspective, she began her tenure in July 2012, Mr. Jackson took over EdisonLearning this year, and Ms. Henry became Principal two years ago. A lack of clear expectations was one of the challenges. If the district would have had clear expectations it would have decreased the confusion, as well as the reservation and tension that was created in the community. Turnaround in a district makes a community with existing challenges have even more challenges. Gary has the most charter schools per capita in the nation. Gary is dealing with vouchers, low property taxes, and a lot of community issues that are not isolated to the school district. The goal is how to serve these children who live in this community. The appearance of punitive actions after year-zero and year-one, the district found itself in court frequently and the newspapers publicized it, which made it more difficult. Focus on improving the district overall without adding to the financial burdens. GCSC was not part of the contract or at the table, must include the district in the contract. Provide a person directly assigned to the district and operator to identify goals and help meet goals. In regard to operational challenges, keep some of the maintenance staff from the district. Identify building defects prior and determine dollars to assist in improving the historical building needs. Identify who does what, when, where and clear expectations. The expectation at GCSC was to maintain a relationship to resolve conflict. All parties must be at the table to create a trusting and working relationship.

Mr. Walker would like to highlight the need for budget money appropriated when the state gets into turnaround. It is not fair to think the district can bring the building up to where it needs to be or to expect Edison to invest in it to bring it where it needs to be. There needs to be a separate appropriation for turnaround to address the health and public safety of the turnaround schools. Dr. Pruitt said Roosevelt is not the only building in the district that needs improvement. Mr. Walker said in regard to capacity, there was consideration to close

Roosevelt, and economic realities must be considered. Due to the work that was needed on Roosevelt the decision could have gone either way, but the decision has to be made at the local level and he commended Dr. Pruitt and the local board. Mr. Walker added, arguable, if the seats aren't needed the school shouldn't be taken over. Dr. Pruitt said partners need to identify gaps in district overall.

Mr. Elsener said Gary has a district with aging buildings, students have vouchers, charters, decreased population, so when do boards have to make timely decisions. He asked if historically the district did not face the realities to support the size of the buildings and the decreased population. Dr. Pruitt replied in 2008-2009, in 2008 tax collection was about 91-92%, then 97% the following year, then dropped to 41% and stayed constant. Buildings were built and buses were purchased not realizing that was going to happen, there were so many dynamics happening at that time including the complexity of how schools were funded. But the focus should be on the here and now, Gary has buildings that are old, and funding that we need. Mr. Elsener asked what percentage of over-capacity of buildings are in the district. Dr. Pruitt said the district just closed five buildings and decreased the number of employees by 800 over the past two years. The district is moving into the process of collective bargaining agreements. Also have the teacher evaluation model and need to look at agreements with other unions. Short-term and long-term solutions are needed.

Mr. Elsener asked what language should be assigned to identify a turnaround. Dr. Pruitt recommended something more collaborative to embed system change for academic improvement. Mr. Walker read the joint proposal and supports the idea of broader collaboration with Edison.

Recess

Sen. Earline Rogers

Sen. Rogers shared her experience in the legislature with Public Law 221, it went so well due to collaboration with every stakeholder at the table, including PTA, chambers of commerce, unions, principals, and teachers. The initial acceptance and charge of the legislature with education reform started with P.L. 221.

Sen. Rogers said she was involved in the initial turnaround discussions, and there was a very close relationship with the then IDOE and the GCSC. She recommended in regard to addressing problems in year-one, prior to the selection of the TSO, it would depend upon the agreement with the district. Congratulated the State Board of Education for their work and call a

moratorium to analyze and assess what is in place in education reform. Stopping to look at turnaround process and analyze will serve well. Sen. Rogers asked the committee to include the ranking minority members of the education committees when they get to the point of recommending legislation, so there can be the same collaboration as P.L. 221.

Update on National Consultant – Claire Fiddian-Green

Board Staff Update Presentation at: <http://www.in.gov/sboe/2567.htm>

Public Impact selected as national consultant.

Scope of work:

- Analyze progress made by the state’s eight turnaround academies.
- Develop lessons learned to date from Indiana’s eight turnaround academies.
- Identify lessons learned related to state intervention of failing schools.
- Draft recommendations and collaborate with Committee to refine recommendations.
- Write report and present to SBOE.
- Timeline Recommendations:
 - Additional Committee meeting in November
 - Final Report and presentation to full SBOE at December 3 meeting

Progress Update on IPS Lead Partners – Claire Fiddian-Green

Bob Guffin has been working with Theresa Brown, IDOE, the Department has gone back to a roster of vendors who responded to the RFP last year and asked three of them to provide scopes of work to replace TNTP to share at the October 15th State Board of Education meeting.

Next Meeting October 9, 2014, Indianapolis to focus on Charter Schools USA and Arlington.

Adjournment

Mr. Walker thanked everyone for coming to his district. Ms. O’Brien shared her gratitude for the tour of Theodore Roosevelt College & Career Academy. Mr. Elsener concluded by noting it is evident partnership is needed from day one of the turnaround process. Mr. Elsener adjourned the meeting without objection.