

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF EDUCATION AND CITY COUNCIL  
September 8, 2011**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, and there being a quorum present, the Joint Meeting of the Board of Education of Independent School District 271 and the Bloomington City Council was called to order at 7 p.m. on September 8, 2011, by School Board Chair Chuck Walter and Mayor Gene Winstead. The Joint Meeting was held at the Mall of America. Present for the School District were Chuck Walter, Chair; Melissa Halvorson Wiklund, Vice Chair; Tim Culver, Clerk; Arlene Bush, Treasurer; Maureen Bartolotta, and Jim Sorum. Board Member Absent: Mark Hibbs. Administration Present: Les Fujitake, Superintendent; and Rick Kaufman, Executive Director of Community Relations. Present for the City Council were Amy Grady, Karen Nordstrom, Steve Peterson, Tom Hulting, Tim Busse; Gene Winstead, Mayor; and Mark Bernhardson, City Manager. Councilmember Absent: Vern Wilcox. City Staff: Larry Lee, Community Development Director. Guests from Hennepin County: Kimberly Spates, A-GRAD Coordinator; Mike Opat, Chair of the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners and Dennis Hogan, a representative for Commissioner Randy Johnson; and from the City of Minneapolis: Mike Christenson, Director of Planning and Development and representative of CEOs for Cities.

Board Chair Walter and Mayor Winstead welcomed the members of the School Board, City Council, guest speakers and the audience. A special thank you was extended to Dan Jasper, Vice President of Public Relations for the Mall of America, for hosting the meeting and to Tom Ringdal and his BEC TV staff. This session was broadcast live and will be rebroadcast.

In February 2011, the City and School District leaders adopted a resolution calling for joint sessions to further explore how to help provide children with opportunities to succeed and lead, and how to share a commitment and accountability across all community members for our children's education. This meeting was the second joint session between the School Board and the City Council since May 2005. The first joint session was in April where we reviewed collaborative efforts, strengths of the City, strengths of the School District as well as academic challenges.

**Pathways to Graduation/Academic Progress**

Superintendent Les Fujitake indicated that the plan for tonight is to share information to stimulate conversation on the following topic: our children, School District and City have thrived because our community values education. Joint efforts of the City and School District have enhanced the social and academic success for Bloomington students and their families. The alliance of Minnesota CEOs for Cities was formed to keep Minnesota strong and vibrant. Referencing the Itasca Report of April 2010, which focuses on the 13 county metro area and the restoring of job growth in the Minneapolis/St. Paul region, findings indicate that metro area strengths include: base of large companies, high quality of life, research and idea generation and superior human capital. Such evidence is in Minnesota and Bloomington. In 1990, Minnesota ranked 6th in the country having the highest percent of its population with a high school diploma. According to the 2000 census, Minnesota moved up to a rank of second in the country and that rank was maintained according to the 2009 census. Community leaders were invited to the joint session to share information/statistics and discuss projects targeted to help maintain the strength of our community—superior human capital. Maintaining our strength will help ensure that our children, School District, and City continue to thrive.

**A-GRAD (*Accelerating Graduation by Reducing Achievement Disparities*) Programs**

Mike Opat, Chair of the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, and Kimberly Spates, A-GRAD Coordinator, reported on the program for Accelerating Graduation by Reducing Achievement Disparities. A-GRAD was formed to address the challenge that achievement gaps and current graduation rates in Hennepin County are unacceptable. While Hennepin County does not provide K-12 education, it has an enormous stake in educational success of children and youth. In October 2006, the Hennepin County Board recognized the importance of education on the local economy and the community, acknowledged that ethnic differences in high school graduation rates contribute to other socio-economic disparities and passed a resolution that initiated a twenty-year collaborative effort to ensure all Hennepin County youth graduate from high school. In 2008, an Advisory Board was established to examine county education investments, graduation rates, achievement gap disparities, best practice strategies and models. A report of findings and recommendations was reported to the Hennepin County Board. In February 2009, a formal policy was adopted that All Hennepin County departments' financing, contracting and staffing decisions that impact children, youth and families will support strategies for increasing high school graduation rates. A governance structure was established.

The goal of A-GRAD is to increase graduation rates in Hennepin County. The target population was identified as at-risk children and youth birth to 21 in Hennepin County. Emerging Strategies include: support student preparation for an engagement in school, support parent and family engagement in school and support environment that provide opportunities for learning.

### **CEOs for Cities**

CEOs for Cities is a civic lab of today's urban leaders catalyzing a movement to advance the next generation of great American cities. Mike Christenson, Director of Planning and Development, presented on the topic of graduation as the best economic development program. He shared what the City of Minneapolis is doing to prepare our future work force. He focused on the importance of education and emphasized that graduation is a special force in Minnesota, graduation rates are growing, graduation increases pay, graduation reduces unemployment, graduation relates to tax base growth and graduation will become even more important in the future. Mr. Christensen highlighted Minneapolis Promise, sharing the impact of how summer jobs, career plans and scholarships work together to boost college participation and presented statistics on graduation/education affects jobs. By 2018, 70% of jobs in Minnesota will require post-secondary education. He focused on the STEP-UP program co-chaired by Mayor Rybak and US Bank CEO Richard Davis. Results indicate that Minneapolis Promise is helping to increase graduation rates for students of color and helping to get closer to the goal of closing the achievement gap. Next steps include a review of the project description with key sponsors, inviting Minnesota business leaders to help, determine best practices and build the system and report metro graduation rates annually. CEOs for Cities is working on a *Talent Dividend Prize*, which is a \$1 million prize to be awarded to the metropolitan area that exhibits the greatest increase in the number of post-secondary degrees granted per capita over a three-year period. This \$1 million prize will be used to launch a national promotional campaign centered around talent development for the winning city.

### **Discussion – Take Aways**

There was discussion on how to begin similar initiatives in Bloomington and how long it would take to put together these initiatives; working with the Chamber of Commerce and local business to be able to help students with internships and summer jobs to gain experience; seeking input from businesses to determine what employers are finding deficient in job preparation, explore ideas with businesses surrounding working with the schools on graduation rates. The work of Debbie Belfry with "Prepare Bloomington" whereby Bloomington businesses have adopted school. Efforts of the Chamber of Commerce to work with students was acknowledged. Amy Grady shared her opportunity to observe Mayor Rybak speaking to 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in Minneapolis and how expressing the care of the community and promise of helping students find jobs. It is making a difference in students graduating and moving on to higher learning institutions. Tim Busse inquired about the Pre-K investment focused upon by Art Rolnick. Superintendent Fujitake highlighted what the school district is doing to have students ready for Kindergarten and reading at grade level by grade three. Karen Nordstrom highlighted the Metro Alliance for Healthy Families, an early intervention with at-risk parents, which is having good success in Dakota County. Mayor Gene Winstead stated that the City needs to maintain safe and friendly neighborhoods and that we need to work as a community to provide that environment. He cited the Georgetown project of a few years ago; a collaborative effort of the School District and City.

### **Closing Remarks**

Chair Chuck Walter commented that each time the City Council and the School Board meet there is more clarity. The expectation is to continue these discussions. He expressed appreciation to those who helped organize the joint meeting: host, guests, city and school district communications staff and BEC TV. Mayor Gene Winstead commented that the City Council and the School Board serve the same constituents and one of the reasons people look at cities and rate cities is on the quality of their schools and the education being provided. It is important for the two entities to work together and make it better for all parties concerned and he looks forward to future sessions.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.