

Board Briefs

Springfield Public Schools Board Meeting

November 10, 2008

Water Energy Learning Labs (WELL)

Coordinator Stuart Perlmeter reported to the Board about WELL, which for nearly 10 years has provided a rich set of resources to teachers and students to help improve science instruction and learning. Water and energy science, classroom instruction, teacher training and assistance, field experiences, community gardens, curriculum development, equipment, and materials are part of this award-winning Water Energy Learning Lab program, funded by Springfield Utility Board (SUB) grant monies. In spring of 2008, SUB agreed to continue WELL funding for five more years.



The program provides a comprehensive, hands-on curriculum that teaches water quality and energy principles to students at many grade levels. The high school water chemistry program is designed to introduce all science students to the basic equipment and techniques used in water analysis.

High school students who elect to participate on advanced water teams work in partnership with various local, state and federal agencies to assist in data collection and assessment of the health of various watersheds in the community. The teams also offer free well water testing to the community, and to date they have examined more than 850 private area wells.

Some highlights of WELL accomplishments in 2008 are: 1) the Hamlin Garden Project, supervised by Paul Cesmat and Sue McCumsey, with raised vegetable beds, greenhouses, a pond, benches, and flower gardens: 12 students work in the garden two days each week; 2) the annual electric car races, supervised by Mark Bray: teams of 3-4 students design, build, test and race electric cars; 3) a groundwater contamination simulation at Parson Creek.

Ongoing and future projects include 1) continuing the wetlands restoration behind Agnes Stewart Middle School, and in the future, development of the site as a wetlands education center; 2) building a native plant nursery and learning center over the next three years in partnership with the [Walama Restoration](#); and 3) building and testing wind turbines to promote wind power, manipulating variables to increase wind generator output. More than 50 teachers attended training workshops for the wind turbine project.

School Improvement Presentations

In a set-up similar to a science fair, all District schools presented School Improvement displays to the Board. Most displays were comprised of colorful, engaging three-panel data boards, while some used advanced multimedia technology.

Moving from station to station, Board members perused thoughtfully designed and engaging displays that included state testing results and additional data to illustrate student ability levels in reading, math, writing, and other subjects. Displays provided information about each school's current learning environment, behavioral issues and concerns, attitudes and student attendance, as well as how staff engages adult/parent involvement to influence student progress, and outlined future goals and challenges, particularly in reading, math, and writing.

[View representative photos online in the SPS gallery](#)

American Education Week

Board member Garry Weber read the American Education Week Proclamation into the record, declaring November 16-22 as the 87th annual observance of American Education Week. [Proclamation](#)

New Schools Construction

At both Maple and Thurston elementary schools, erection of tilt panel walls has been completed. Use of form liners on portions of the north and south walls of the schools have enhanced the appearance of these walls, breaking up a monolithic look. Done in response to Board feedback during the design process, these articulated walls saved \$19,000 from originally specified costs.

Welcome walls are completed at each school. These unique walls were created from shaping forms laid into concrete and then tilted up along with the other walls. Those who have seen the Welcome Walls expressed appreciation of the artistry of the walls, which illustrate each school's unique history, neighborhood, and environs. [View construction photos in the online SPS gallery](#)

Financial Report

Brett Yancey, director of business operations, provided a General Fund revenue and expenditure report to the Board, highlighting information about revenue resources, such as property taxes, and basic school support payments, along with expenditure projections.

As he did at the October 13 Board meeting, Yancey again discussed the current economic concerns (both nationally and locally). Revenue is contingent upon both income and property taxes being collected as forecasted.

To assist in offsetting any potential challenge, the state has established a Rainy Day Fund, although the next biennium continues to be challenging. The estimated ending fund balance for the 2008-09 fiscal year is \$4,013,437, which represents approximately 4.3% of the District's total budget. December 4 is the first Budget Committee meeting.

More details will follow regarding the latest round of predictions provide by the state since the Nov. 10 Board meeting.

Next Board Meeting:
December 8, 2008, at 7 p.m.

Visit the [SPS website](#) for more details about any of the above information. Minutes are made available after Board approval at the next meeting.





American Education Week Proclamation

WHEREAS, public schools are the backbone of our democracy, providing young people with the tools they need to maintain our nation's precious values of freedom, civility and equality; and

WHEREAS, by equipping young Americans with both practical skills and broader intellectual abilities, schools give them hope for, and access to, a productive future; and

WHEREAS, education employees, be they substitute educators, custodians, teachers, bus drivers, or librarians, work tirelessly to serve our children and communities with care and professionalism; and

WHEREAS, schools are community linchpins, bringing together adults and children, educators and volunteers, business leaders, and elected officials in a common enterprise.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Springfield Board of Education do hereby proclaim November 16–22 as the 87th annual observance of American Education Week.

Please join us in celebrating this year's theme, "***Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility.***"

DATED this 10th Day of November 2008.

Nancy Bigley, Chair

Jonathan Light, Vice Chair

Laurie Adams

Al King

Garry Weber