

WELCOME NANCY SEBRING



Dear Nancy Sebring,
 Welcome to Iowa's largest school district and to the City of Des Moines!

As Iowans, glad for the return of intelligent, compassionate natives, we welcome you back! As Des Moines students, parents, grandparents, and family members, we welcome you! We need your help to keep the schools in our many traditional neighborhoods where children feel they belong and school attendance is not determined by busing schemes. After almost a decade dictated by downtown CEOs and powerful construction

interests, we hope to return to a system supporting smaller learning communities as the best practice in educating children.

As teachers persevering through a difficult time but still doing our best for a diverse population of students, we want you to help us create a new era and atmosphere of true collaborative practice so that we can do our jobs well, yet still have time for ourselves and our families.

As staff members, assisting educators, driving school buses, maintaining our buildings and supplying support for the diverse needs within our schools, we welcome you and urge you to eliminate the atmosphere of intimidation and hostility. We hope that you will review the qualifications and management style of principals, many whom were trained into top down style of leadership. This will be essential to improving the care of, climate in, and quality of each school.

cont. on pg. 2 →

SCHOOL BOARD SESSION WITH DR. BILL ATTEA



MISSION

SSOS is a broadbased group improving DSM public schools by working toward the following conditions:

- increased morale throughout DMPS
- rigorous oversight of fiscal decisions
- open practices
- ethical planning
- good opportunities for all students
- good research & full discussion prior to decisions
- elimination of all bullying K-12
- re evaluation of Schools First & PPEL

INSIDE...
 more SEBRING
 BOARD WORKSHOP
 LEGAL UPDATE

As school volunteers believing public education to be the most vital use of tax funds, we will support you through whatever storms you face if you remain true to an honest educational mission. We are educated, creative, generous and care about a wholesome life for our next generation. We pledge our best efforts in helping you change a system in deep need of repair. First, deconst the duplicitous *Schools-First* project. Returning Des Moines schools to excellence is the most important use of public funds. It will be a challenge due to our rapid addition of many languages and life-styles.

As professionals with expertise and connections to many boards, commissions, and agencies, we interact with others who care about education and will help to improve it, no strings attached. The effort is daunting, but we can help you secure the support you need. You must resist the snares of special interests who misdirect building funds and resist selfish proposals by CEOs living in isolation from the concerns of the majority of Des Moines families. Please pay respectful attention to those families and neighbors in the communities where the schools exist but are threatened and we will help you secure increasing resources to implement wiser, more creative models to dispel the hopelessness in some areas of our district.

Together, placing students first and teachers and our very best principals next, we can create better learning opportunities in all sectors of our town. Welcome to our world which will soon be yours to remodel and lead!

*Volunteer Members
Save & Support Our Schools*



LEGAL UPDATE:

On Thursday, June 8th attorney Bruce Johnson filed a Petition for Judicial Review on behalf of Marc Wallace, and four other parents in Polk County District Court. The petition requests a review of the decision of the Iowa State Board of Education in the matter of school closings voted by the Des Moines School Board on July 12th, 2005.

BOARD WORKSHOP: CLARIFYING ROLES IN GOVERNANCE

On May 6, all seven members for the DM School Board met from 8:00 AM until Noon with Bill Attea of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates in a dense session to clarify appropriate roles of elected board members as these differ from the duties of the Superintendent.

Focused on trusteeship, governance, and accountability, the first part was a lecture with questions. Then came a shorter segment which separated members into two discussion groups. The session closed with an intense analysis and discussion of the *Board Compact* defining standards of ethics and procedures.

Dr. Attea, working from his own experiences in high-level educational leadership and his firm's copyright materials, also stressed principles drawn from Covy Leadership *Habits* and from John Carver *Principles of Governance* for non-profit officers.

Also attending the session was search-process coordinator Laura Sands, on loan from the ISEA, and observers: attorney Nelda Mickle, reporter Bert Dalmer, and Nan Stillians.