

Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting
Willow Springs School District 108
Saturday, January 21, 2017

President Kent called the meeting to order at 9:20am.

Present: Doug Ciota, Renee Ristic, Jesse Estrada, Lauren McSweeney, Mary Ellen Weeg, Cindy McSweeney, David Kent,

Absent: None.

Also present: Lori Smuda, Principal; Frank Patrick, Superintendent

The President led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion 17-69: C. McSweeney moved and Weeg seconded that the Superintendent's Agenda be accepted as presented.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Finances

The superintendent reviewed the finances of the District. The District is in a healthy financial condition despite declining EAV and hitting the Tax Cap ceilings in the levy. The strategies the Board has employed are effective to meet the needs of the District.

Mr. Patrick also highlighted some other financial items to keep an eye on: pension reform, General State Aid, and potential property tax freezes.

Academic Progress and Programs

Mrs. Smuda and Mr. Patrick reviewed the academic progress of the District. The Illinois School Report Card was used as one snap shot. Highlighted were the high percentage of 8th graders passing algebra and the PARCC scores. As a whole, the PARCC scores were disappointing. However, the 3rd and 4th grades scored very well. The Winter MAP test data was not yet available as testing was taking place. That data will be shared at the February Board meeting.

The Board received updates on the new math program, the changed junior high schedule to increase math instructional minutes, and the new early childhood program.

Facility Needs

The long term building needs prepared by ARCON in 2011 has been completed with the gym floor replacement project in Summer 2016.

Other projects to consider with time: stainless steel railings on the external stairwells; bathroom replacement in the 1954 and 1975 buildings.

Personnel

There were 6 new staff members hired for this school year. This follows the 8 new members hired last school year. This amount of change is a lot of work to lead new staff into the Willow Family. We have also had an increase in the number of parenting leaves.

District Priorities

In determining priorities for the District, the Board made a list of items it was proud of doing. Items on this list: provide a positive educational environment; low student/teacher ratio; work with underperforming students and help them improve; all decisions put kids first; we teach/nurture and grow; keep kids safe; kids like to come here because of the family atmosphere that has been created; good, happy staff; communicate with parents; annually improve standardized test scores; prepare students to meet/exceed grade level standards; many extracurricular options; positive energy; provide resources to teachers; the improved math program; small class size in k-2; encourage independence and critical thinking at all levels; healthy fund balance; great facility and upgrades; providing appropriate technology for student and teacher use; respecting others' opinions; adapting to meet student needs; really knowing our students; teamwork; being fiscally responsible by running a conservative budget without sacrificing student needs; really know and understand our students; we nurture our students' talents.

The Board created a wish list of items. They will be reviewed and prioritized at the February meeting. Items on the list: 1:1 technology; strive to beat the state test averages with continued curricular enhancements; personnel for curriculum assistance; more opportunities for gifted students; heavy integration with Argo's new arts auditorium; more flexibility with student schedules; preschool for general education students; improve our math scores; continued work to provide a stable environment within all changes; update bathrooms; sidewalks down Nolton and from Nolton the front door; sports field; increase parent-teacher interaction through technology; security cameras both inside and outdoors; better nutritional lunch options; greater outreach and/or events with the community/village; continue to fund ebooks, more Kindles to students; foreign language program in the early grades; expanded arts/music/band programs; more variety in afterschool programming; examine student management techniques to increase student/staff safety; more information from Sterling; pep band; sound system for the gym; enhance the winter holiday program experience; have a mathletes team.

Other business:

The discussion of physical management techniques was tabled until the January regular meeting in order to provide enough time for discussion.

Motion 17-70: With the work of the Board completed, Weeg moved and Estrada seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

President Kent adjourned the meeting at 12:15pm.



David A. Kent, President



Cynthia McSweeney, Secretary

CM/fcp