

MANITOWOC PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Board of Education Meeting Minutes  
October 24, 2023

Board President Stacey Soeldner called the Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 6:00 p.m. Members present were: Mr. Chris Able, Mr. Biff Hansen, Mr. Matthew Phipps, Ms. Stacey Soeldner, Mr. Matthew Spaulding, Mr. Kerry Trask, and Mr. Tony Vlastelica. Also present were Superintendent James Feil, Assistant Superintendent Jame McCall, Directors, and Executive Assistant Laurie Braun.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Network connection and access to BoardBook were confirmed.

The Consent Agenda was presented to the Board. On motion from Matthew Phipps, seconded by Matthew Spaulding, the Board approved the consent agenda as presented (6-1), with Chris Able opposing; consisting of the minutes from the October 10, 2023 Budget Hearing and Regular Board meeting, the Personnel Report and the second read of Policies 2411-School Counseling, 5310.01-Emergency Nursing Services, 5350-Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention, 5451.01-Wisconsin Academic Excellence Scholarship, 5451.02-Technical Excellence Higher Education Scholarships, 5771-Search and Seizure, and 5772-Weapons.

Director of Educational Programs Heidi Schroderus provided an overview of ACT 20 and what is coming in the months ahead. Ms. Schroderus explained that ACT 20 went into effect in July 2023 in response to the low reading scores in the State of Wisconsin. The big change will be shifting to the science or a phonics approach of teaching reading. Ms. Schroderus stated the SFA Curriculum meets the majority of the criteria that is required. The District is currently using the Fastbridge Assessment and will be looking to replace the PALS assessment with a different state recommended assessment. We will also be implementing individualized reading plans (IRP's) for struggling readers. This process will set goals and benchmarks for progress, weekly progress monitoring and strategies for parents to use at home. The District will also need to have a Board policy in place by July 1, 2025 that outlines a process for promoting students from third to fourth grade that did not complete their IRP. These students would receive intensive instructional services and progress monitoring and participate in an intensive summer reading program until they achieve their reading level. ACT 20 also requires a change in Professional Development for our teachers. Teachers will be required to complete science-based reading training by July 1, 2025, with specific training for our Reading Specialists. Ms. Schroderus shared a timeline for 2023-2024 and the 2024-2025 school years of work that needs to be completed for our district to be in compliance with ACT 20.

Assistant Superintendent Jame McCall shared a summary of the Curriculum Transparency Project extending praise to the department chairs for all of the work they put into completing this project. This resource will be available on our district website and will not only benefit our teachers but the community will have access to our units of our curriculum, and the scope and the sequence in which they are taught. This will especially be an amazing resource for new teachers in our district. This will be active and available on the website by November 14, 2023. The Board appreciated the information shared and thanked those involved with bringing this project to life.

Director of State & Federal Programming & Assessment Lee Thennes presented an update of the curriculum review and adoption process; in particular the social studies, science and writing process. Mr. Thennes shared last fall we established a new 6-year curriculum review cycle. This review cycle will help us to move the learning needle. We will be reviewing the Elementary Science Curriculum (K-5) materials

tomorrow with the goal to bring a recommendation to the Board by December and begin a pilot of that program in early 2024. The high school science team has completed review of their courses and curriculum and are bringing three recommended textbooks/resource adoptions to the Board for review later in today's meeting. These courses include Biology, Environmental Science and AP Environmental Science. Elementary Social Studies has requested materials to review. The team will be reviewing these in November and anticipate making a recommendation to the Board in January. Middle and High School Social studies are collaborating with the secondary department chairs to review their courses, curriculum and resources. The goal is to bring forward a recommendation to the Board in Spring. Mr. Thennes reiterated that we understand that needs may come up outside of the 6-year review cycle and we will address those as needed, while being conscious of the budget.

Superintendent Feil and Mike Schwarz, Manager of Buildings and Grounds provided an update of the Washington Middle School Pool. As part of putting together a long-range facilities plan, the assessment of our buildings has brought an area of concern with the pool at Washington Middle School. Mr. Schwarz shared pictures of the pool showing significant pipe corrosion underneath the pool. We believe we will be able to operate the pool through this school year pending no issues arise. More information will be provided upon the completion of the facility study. According to the information we currently have available a low-end cost estimate to repair the pool is \$390,000. It was also acknowledged the need to fulfill the lifeguard requirements at each pool has also been a concern.

A Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Update was shared. Superintendent Feil stated that the students who qualify for free and reduced meals continue to receive these. Clarification was provided about the students who pay for their lunch and not having funds in their account and reports of lunch trays being taken away. Mr. Feil shared that families receive multiple notifications of their lunch account balance and our food service department is very sensitive to the needs of students. Mr. Feil has also shared concern of food waste and stated that the majority of the food wasted is generated from the free meals because students are required to take three of the five items and if they don't like it, it gets thrown away. Over the years, our Food Service Department has worked to decrease the amount of food waste and continue to look at any possible solutions. Mr. Feil also noted we don't want to see our teachers using their personal funds to pay for student lunches. Currently 55% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced meals, if they choose to participate. Director of Business Services shared the importance of families completing the applications as it relates to our district's Title funding. Significant discussion took place regarding clarification to some of the questions and complaints surrounding the current lunch system at our buildings. Board member Hansen asked to make a motion to work with the DPI to reinstate the CEP Program so that 99% of the kids are being fed, students who have a zero balance are properly notified, and to get rid of the "yellow clip" that labels student lunches. Board President Soeldner stated this agenda item is not an actionable item. Board member Vlastelica stated that he agrees with Superintendent Feil on the principle that we shouldn't take more than we need, however this is an economic issue and if it is cost neutral it is not worth the huge distraction that it has come to be. Ms. Erdmann stated that DPI would be willing to work with us and do the necessary steps to assist us with getting CEP reinstated. Board President Soeldner stated she sees this as being an advisory issue and with the new information presented, Mr. Feil should explore the possibility of going back to CEP. Board Member Able stated there has been very little clarity as to what the actual cost is, and this is some of the struggle the Board is weighing. Board President Soeldner shared a recommendation to support reinstating CEP if it makes financial sense. Board member Hansen and Able stated they felt this should be a full Board vote rather than the Superintendent solely making this decision. The Board agreed to

have Superintendent Feil explore the possibility of reinstating the CEP Program and gave him the authority to do so. Superintendent Feil explained we need to get the focus back on education and will keep the Board informed of any updates from DPI as they come available.

The 2023-2024 Budget and Tax Levy were presented to the Board. Board President Soeldner asked for a motion to combine the adoption of the the 2023-2024 Budget and the Tax Levy. A motion was made by Tony Vlastelica, seconded by Chris Able, the motion passed (6-1) with Matthew Phipps opposing. Board Treasurer Tony Vlastelica made a motion to approve the 2023-2024 Manitowoc Public School District budget as presented at the Budget Hearing on October 20, 2023 with the final budget adjustments, in accordance with Section 65.90 of the Wisconsin Statutes, which includes General Fund Revenues of \$75,894,932 and General Fund Expenditures of \$76,162,008; total expenditures of all funds of \$94,038,829 with a tax levy of \$25,247,086 (mill rate is \$6.65). Chris Able seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-2), by a roll call vote, with Matthew Phipps and Matthew Spaulding opposing.

Director of State & Federal Programming and Assessment Lee Thennes presented three recommendations for Lincoln High School Textbook Proposals; AP Environmental Science, Terrestrial and Aquatic Environmental Science, and Biology. This recommendation would forward the textbooks for the 30 day review process as required, and will come back to the Board for final approval after the review is complete. A motion to accept the recommendation of the three LHS textbook proposals as presented was made by Biff Hansesn and seconded by Matthew Phipps. The recommendation passed unanimously (7-0).

Director of Human Resources Mike Nault provided a Substitute Teacher Pay Inceas Proposal. Mr. Nault shared some background information and how MPSD compares to other districts in our area, acknowledging the difficulty we are having filling our teacher vacancies with substitutes. It was brought to Mr. Nault's attention that a district in our area has no issues with filling teacher vacancies most likely due to the rate of pay. The daily and long-term rates were shared along with the approximate budget cost of \$27,000. Matthew Phipps made a A motion to approve the recommended substitute rate increase was made by Matthew Phipps amending the long-term sub assignment to reflect 4 days vs. the 5 days as presented. The motion passed (6-1), Board member Able abstained.

Human Resources Director Mike Nault present an Income Protection Program. This program would allow staff members to donate/contribute a personal day or vacation day to a co-worker in need who has exhausted his/her sick leave. This would move the decision from the District to co-workers who wish to help. A motin was made by Kerry Trask, seconded by Biff Hansen and unanimously carried (7-0) to approve the Income Protection Program as presented. The Human Resources Department will send out communication to staff in thIncome Protection Program: Staff member fell upon some hard times exhausted all of the individual's sick leave. We worked some magic to take care of this staff member from their coworkers. Allows a staff member to utilize a personal day and donate it to another staff member in need. The burden is not on the district to decide if an individual qualifies or not. These are rare instances. HR will send out a communication to staff with information provided to the Board this evening.

Board President Soeldner suggested due to the time, if the will of the Board would allow moving the First Read and Introduction of the policies listed on the agenda moved to the next meeting and the Board continue with the closed session. The Board was is agreement to move the policies to the November 14, 2023 Regular Board Meeting.

There were no additional remarks from the Board President.

Discussion of future meeting dates included not scheduling meetings for December 26, 2023 and March 26, 2024 due to holidays and staff being out of buildings. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Tony Vlastlica, seconded by Matthew Spaulding, and unanimously carried (7-0) by a roll call vote to move into closed session at 8:14 p.m. for the purpose of considering the following matter: the employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation of a publicemployee over which the government body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility pursuant to section 19.85(1)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes: The Superintendent Evaluation, Progress Goals, and Objectives.

The Board adjourned from closed session at 9:21 p.m.

On motion from Matthew Spaulding, seconded by Matthew Phipps, the Board unanimously voted (7-0) to adjourn from the October 24, 2023 Special Board of Education Meeting at 9:21p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurie Braun, Board Executive Assistant



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Board President, Stacey E. Soeldner