

MANITOWOC PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2023

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Board President Stacey Soeldner 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.

Public Input began at 6:01 p.m. Due to the large amount of public input requests (17), Board President Soeldner allowed each person one (1) minute to speak and if time allowed they would be asked to come back and continue if needed. The Board received received public input requests from some individuals who could not be in attendance and Board President Soeldner read the information; one community member shared support for Superintendent Feil and the majority of the School Board members, a student shared his support and personal success while attending the McKinley Virtual Academy, several McKinley Staff shared their sadness for the possible closure of the K8 virtual academy, the misinformation being shared and lack of communication to staff. Several McKinley Virtual Academy parents shared the reasons they chose McKinley Virtual Academy for their students, the benefits it provides for their student(s) that include a new way for their student to learn and grow. Several community members also spoke in person including one person expressing support for the new Whistleblower Protection Policy being proposed, several people shared their support for the McKinley Academy Virtual program and the hardship it would be for those 28 students who would be displaced and put back into a school setting they left because it didn't work for them. One MPSD staff/community member spoke on behalf of the teachers in the district stating our staff is tired with all of the new changes being implemented in the district and the need to slow down a bit because of staff burn out. Another community member is appreciative for CEP being reinstated and asked the Board to look into options and work with our Food Service vendor to discuss "Grab N' Go" breakfast and lunch options, and to reduce using district funds. A current McKinley Staff member shared the support for the students and staff and McKinley and the specialized small group learning they offer. A former MPSD employee spoke about the importance of inclusion in the classroom and community. Members of the public who did not finish their input were asked if they would like to complete what they had to say. Public input concluded at 6:42 p.m.

The Consent Agenda was presented to the Board. The following items were asked to be removed from the Consent Agenda; the Personnel Report at the request of Board member Hansen, the Payment of Vouchers at the request of Board member Vlastelica, and the Washington & Wilson Washington D.C. and Gettysburg, PA travel requests at the request of Board President Soeldner. A motion was made by Chris Able, seconded by Matthew Phipps, and unanimously carried (7-0) to approve the 10-24-23 Meeting and Closed Session minutes, the Monthly Financial Report, the Monthly Donation List, and the Track & Football Cosortium and Varsity Baseball Skill Development out-of-state travel requests as presented. Director Erdmann provided clarification to the Payment of Vouchers and Board member Vlastelica requested the Payment of Vouchers be presented as a snapshot or in a simplified way and to include how it currently reflects on the budget. Director Erdmann agreed to provide a revised version by the December meeting. A motion to approve the Payment of vouchers was made by Matthew Spaulding, seconded by Chris Able and carried (5-2), with Tony Vlastelica and Matthew Phipps opposing. Director of Human Resources provided additional information regarding staffing and it was requested to include current staff vacancies on the Personnel Report. A motion to approve the Personnel Report was made

by Matthew Spaulding, seconded by Matthew Phipps and unanimously carried (7-0). Clarification to the Supervision Stipend for the Washington DC Student Trip was provided. A motion to approve both the Washington and Wilson Middle Schools Washington DC and Gettysburg, PA trip was made by Matthew Phipps, seconded by Chris Able and unanimously carried (7-0).

Assistant Superintendent Jame McCall provided a brief overview of the MPSD Report Card. Ms. McCall stated that the report card data was released today and the plan is to go through the report card information with the Board at the November 28th meeting. The goal is to help the Board understand the what and the why of the data when broken down and all of the information that is incorporated into our achievement score. We also want to take a more in depth look at our Fastbridge assessment data and our SFA data to have a comprehensive look at how our students are doing at this very moment. Some of the Board asked for improvement to the communication provided to the Board and the possibility of receiving information before it is released to the public.

Chris Peterson, the new Tech Ed Teacher at Wilson Middle School was introduced. Mr. Peterson shared what has been accomplished to date, current projects and his vision for the program moving forward. Mr. Peterson stated that students deserve a good learning environment with a diverse curriculum which helps students explore their interest and recognize their strengths. We will strive to put the right components in place to allow our students to be successful and see Manitowoc as a leader in the Tech Ed field. Mr. Peterson shared a slideshow of before and after photos of organized Tech Ed areas at Wilson and how this will help pair the physical space with an enriching curriculum. He also feels that by connecting with our local businesses we can build a partnership that will benefit not only the students, but the district, local businesses and our community. Mr. Peterson shared that we will be working towards bridging the gap between our middle schools and the high school. Creating this partnership with students and staff will enhance the future of our skilled trades. The Board thanked Mr. Peterson for his presentation and dedication to improving our Tech Ed Program at MPSD.

An SFA Building Update was shared from each Elementary Building where the Principal, SFA Facilitators and/or Solutions Coordinators and staff provided the highlights of SFA along with some of the concerns. Madison Elementary shared they have seen a 7% increase in student reading achievement but continue to work on student behaviors. Jackson Elementary shared they have many school-wide celebrations with an increased proficiency of 3% and many students moving 1 to 2 levels, 115 students participating in tutoring and an attendance rate of 96%. Jackson continues to struggle with the shortage of substitute teachers, student behaviors and having leadership pulled from classrooms to address behaviors. Jefferson Elementary shared they are experiencing significantly less behaviors in the morning with SFA and students have seen an overall growth of 4% and the students are proud to become readers. Jefferson staff is experiencing difficulty with time commitment for the solutions teams to collaborate with the 4 to 5 week rotation and there are also Wifi issues in the building. Riverview shared they have great systems in place for supporting student growth and have seen a 5% increase in the 1st quarter. A barrier and also a strength is the dedicated staff at Riverview wanting to have all of the answers while still learning along the way. Student behaviors and finding time to collaborate and learn together has been a challenge. The 4K and Early Childhood is all day SFA with the focus on oral language and expressive vocabulary which supports our youngest learners. The goal was to reach 20% in oral and expressive language and we have surpassed both with 37% in oral language and 75% in expressive language. We also have a strong focus on social and emotional skills through our GAT (Getting Along Together) Curriculum within SFA. Preschool Challenges are finding the time to collaborate and adapting to some of the hiccups when implementing a new curriculum. Franklin Elementary shared their greatest asset has been the staff. Franklin began the year with 40% of the students reading at grade level and they are now

at 45%. 60% of the students at Franklin are receiving tutoring or reading support. Challenges at Franklin include working to receive information in a timely manner. Franklin houses a large number of students with special needs and we need to be sure we are programming well for every student. Franklin is also very appreciative of the PTA and community partnerships. Wilson and Washington Middle Schools want both schools to be on the same page so they working together via group emails and chat groups to help with the collaboration piece. Wilson shared 35% have moved up a grade level, the solutions team address challenges each month through advisory and they are working on attendance and tardy numbers. Some struggles at Wilson are staff shortages and the class sizes are larger than they should be due to the shortage of staff. The team continues to work on student behaviors and student stains due to a schedule change at both schools. Washington Middle School shared this is the first year we have seen any growth with 100 students moving up a level in reading proficiency. Every staff member at Washington is part of a solutions team and have set smart goals. Some challenges at Washington are finding the time to do the work the solutions teams would like to implement, reorganizing staff due to all of the change, and behavior and discipline issues acknowledging that providing new structures for some students is difficult because it is new. The Board had the opportunity to ask the staff questions and provide comments. The Board is encouraged with the information presented and thanked the staff for their hard work and the impact they are making on our students.

Assistant Superintendent Jame McCall provided an update of the Curriculum Transparency Project. Ms. McCall shared what the Curriculum Database looks like on our website. Some areas are still being worked on; in progress or under curriculum review and it will state that when applicable. The database shares curriculum for Elementary K-5, Middle School 6-8, and High School 9-12. Staff will provide feedback and the database will be updated during the summer each year so everyone is receiving the same information. This database is online and Live for anyone to view.

A review of the McKinley K-8 Virtual Academy was shared by Assistant Superintendent McCall. Ms. McCall stated we need to find the definition of what McKinley is. After some review, it was discovered that McKinley used to be a 9-12 Charter School which transformed to McKinley at Stangel. Ms. McCall shared the pillars of excellence; student success, infrastructure and funding, with funding being the focus. The online K-8 enrollment is currently 28 students, with 9.85 FTE, with one FTE equivalent to \$100,000. The staffing for 28, K-8 online students is approximately \$863,000. The resources being put into this program are out of line with the resources that are going into the regular classroom setting. Ms. McCall shared the K-8 enrollment history along with the student achievement data, which does not show the results of a 1 to 1 student to teacher ratio. The cost of the Virtual K-8 program was provided showing the balance of \$653,895 being underwritten by MPSD which does not include the cost for the secretarial staff, principal or support services. One option shared with the Board is to continue as is, however adjusting contact time within schedules because some classes are not meeting direct instruction time requirements. Another option would be to transition student to in-person learning at semester while supporting families and students during this transition. This would require a mutual agreement with MPSD Board of Education and the McKinley Board. The recommendation provided to the MPSD Board is to dissolve the McKinley Online Program K-8 at semester, providing a cost savings of \$431,545. Some of the Board expressed concern for the students who will have a difficult time transitioning back to an in person setting. Board member Able stated we really need time to thoroughly review the contract before making a decision. We also need to be concerned with the fact that we are failing to comply with the hours of instruction time for those students to learn. As a district we will need to look at what other virtual options are out there for some of these families. Lengthy discussion took place surrounding the options, the cost and having the time to really review all of the information presented this evening.

A motion was made by Matt Phipps to transition the McKinley Virtual K-8 with an end date July 1, 2024, Matthew Spaulding seconded the motion. Biff Hansen made a friendly amendment to the motion to include we look at alternatives for the students that we serve. Ms. McCall reminded the Board that we might want to modify the motion because we do not want to terminate the entire contract, only the K-8 Virtual portion. Matthew Phipps made a modification to his motion to include the K-8 Virtual Program portion of the contract. Board member Vlastelica asked if we could move this to the next meeting to allow Ms. McCall time to meet with the McKinley Board and get more information. At this time Board member Spaulding withdrew his second to the motion to allow the Board more time. Board member Hansen seconded the motion in order to allow discussion. Board member Hansen stated we need to make a statement that we are committed to educating these 28 students at least through the end of the school year. Board President Soeldner would like to know what options are available to these students before making a decision. Ms. McCall will come back to the Board with the options available to the students along with a staff model and schedule for this program if the Board chooses to keep the program. The motion on the floor did not pass with a vote of (3-4), with Board members Vlastelica, Spaulding, Soeldner and Able opposing. Ms. McCall and Director Thennes shared a preliminary timeline of how we can enhance the 9-12 program at McKinley Academy. We will define the goals and priorities of the program, curriculum design and implementation, resource and budget allocation, and finally the implementation of the enhanced program. By setting parameters or non-negotiables it will clearly define the sustainability of the 9-12 program.

Superintendent Feil shared an update to the District's reentry to the CEP program effective November 6, 2023. Mr. Feil shared the cost involved with this and the budget impact. Mr. Feil stated we have removed meals from the classrooms which has added an additional week of instructional time to the school year. The grab and go lunch/breakfast option has surfaced. The district will look into this option and check with other school districts such as Two Rivers to see if this could be a viable option for MPSD.

Lincoln High School Assistant Principal Lainey Longmeyer and staff presented seven (7) new course proposals; Theatre Performance & Production, Forensic Science, Business 101, Wisconsin History, Spanish Language: Advanced Communication, Intro to Construction Trades and Construction Trades III. Adjusted courses presented are Metal Fabrication, Intro to Engineering 1513, Construction & Building Trades II, CNC Technologies 1583, and 21st Century Communications. There were four (4) courses that will be removed and replaced with new courses presented above. A summary was shared for the new and adjusted courses and the rationale for the courses being removed. The Board had the opportunity to ask questions and thanked the staff for the information presented. A motion to approve the seven (7) new course proposals, the five (5) adjusted courses, and the removal of four (4) current courses was made by Chris Able, seconded by Matt Phipps, and unanimously carried (7-0) as presented.

Director of Human Resources Mike Nault presented a proposal and the reasoning to increase the Non-Athletic Stipends. Mr. Nault shared many of these departments have not had an increase in 10 years or more. Mr. Nault proposed a 4.5% Consumer Price Index increase for all Non-Athletic Stipends for the 2023-2024. This would be a cost of approximately \$14,000 and is budgeted for. He also suggests that we consider the same increase for both the Non-Athletic Stipends and the Athletic Stipends on an annual basis. A motion was made by Tony Vlastelica, seconded by Biff Hansen, and unanimously carried (7-0).

Mr. Nault next presented a proposal for the creation of two (2) advisor positions with stipends for the Manitowoc Robotics Team. Mr. Nault contacted 14 other school districts that have a Robotics Team and shared stipend comparables for these positions. The recommendation is to create two positions as Co-Advisors with a stipend of \$2,000 each. A motion to approve the recommendation as presented for the two Co-Advisor Robotics stipend positions was made by Chris Able, seconded by Matt Phipps and unanimously carried (7-0).

Board President Soeldner addressed the Board, and if there is no objection due to the time, we will push the First Read of Policies presented, the Introduction of Suggested Policy Revisions, and the closed session agenda item to the next Board Meeting, November 28, 2023.

Director of Student Services Katie Eichmann shared there is an open house for the new location of our Next Step Program, our 18-21 year old students with disabilities. This open house will take place tomorrow from 2-5 p.m. and is now located at 1402 Clark Street in the Clarkbridge Building. This program has a new name, Community U. The Board is welcome to attend.

Remarks from the Board President included a reminder of the WASB State Education Convention, January 17-19, 2024. Any Board member interested to please contact Laurie Braun for registration assistance.

Future Meeting Dates include the Special Board Meeting scheduled November 28, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

On motion from Biff Hansen, seconded by Tony Vlastelica, the Board voted (6-1) to adjourn the November 14, 2023 Board of Education Meeting at 9:49 p.m., with Board member Phipps opposing.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurie Braun, Board Executive Assistant



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Board President, Stacey E. Soeldner