

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
Manitowoc Board of Education
August 23, 2016

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Board President Keith Shaw at 12:15 p.m. Members present were: Ms. Linda Gratz, Ms. Barbara Herrmann, Ms. Elizabeth Williams, Mr. Dave Nickels, Ms. Karen Rohrer, and Mr. Keith Shaw. Also present were Superintendent Mark Holzman and Board secretary Rebecca McLafferty.
Member absent: Ms. Catherine Shallue

Directors present were Ken Mischler, Debby Shimanek, and Joanne Metzen. (Director Jason Bull was not present due to EduClimber training.)

Discussion revolved around filling current vacancies prior to the first day of school. In response to an inquiry as to whether paraprofessionals are required to pay a financial penalty for terminating employment prior to the beginning of the school year, Director Mischler indicated that paraprofessionals are at-will employees without contracts and therefore no penalty.

Director Chris Dupré arrived at 12:20 p.m.

Discussion revolved around the hire of a teacher that failed to notify the employing district in a timely manner. The hire is pending, with options available.

On motion by Barbara Herrmann, seconded by Elizabeth Williams, the Personnel Report was unanimously approved (6-0) as submitted.

Superintendent Holzman referred to the Directors' Report that was included with this packet. This new monthly report is a means to communicate with the Board of Education. Board members were encouraged to contact Directors with any questions.

Superintendent Holzman began the Board retreat by asking Board members to prioritize meeting topics. Suggested topics for today included mission/vision/core beliefs, followed by goals, grade alignment, boundary discussion, money, personnel, and buildings and grounds.

The District's original mission statement was established years ago, with a second sentence subsequently added to it. It was the consensus of the Board that it needs to be updated to something short, meaningful, and memorable. It was noted that in order to gain community/public/staff input for a new mission statement would require substantial planning and time.

Catherine Shallue arrived at 12:30 p.m.

The MPSD does not have a vision statement. Short statements were created for use during the referendum campaign. Some key points to include in a future mission statement would include

safety, self-reliant/productive citizens; learn at a high level/rigorous learning. Karen Rohrer suggested gathering input from marketing people who are experienced with creating taglines, or something simple/easy to remember.

Superintendent Holzman proposed that part of his role this school year would be to continue collaboration with community resources to reevaluate and potentially update the mission statement. At that point, a vision statement could then be explored. Dave Nickels and Karen Rohrer indicated that the 7-person school board does represent the community and should be able to sufficiently represent the community in this endeavor, to alleviate spending countless hours in meetings. Catherine Shallue thought that attending PTO meetings would be a good venue to gather input. Town hall meetings were also suggested. Linda Gratz stressed the importance of gathering input from community stakeholders.

Elizabeth Williams inquired about the public speaking form requirement at School Board public input sessions. She was informed that the Board's procedure is common practice.

After further discussion regarding the District's mission/vision statements, it was clarified by Superintendent Holzman that the topic of 'Revision of District's Mission Statement' would be placed on future Board agendas until it is completed, unless directed otherwise.

In regard to District 2015-2016 goals, Superintendent Holzman reviewed the three current goals and the District's accountability to achieve each specific goal.

- Goal 1: All students will perform at the meets or exceeds level on the common classroom and district reading, language arts, and math assessments.
- Goal 2: Identify and increase MPSD school community positive character traits.
- Create a comprehensive communication plan for internal and external stakeholders.

Superintendent Holzman talked about various methods of communication, including the MPSD Messenger, which all Board members received. He will continue to create new types of communications, also for community residents not otherwise connected to the District. Karen Rohrer stressed the importance of setting goals and purposes for communications in order to improve content. Linda Gratz asked if the District was tracking participation of after-school activities and was informed that Athletic Director Dave Steavpack is tracking after-school activities, not exclusive to sports.

Considerable discussion was held regarding grade alignment. It was the consensus of the school board that this is an item of keen public interest. Under former Superintendent Swanson's leadership, a space study was done to ascertain what additions/adjustments might be required. Some items of concern were: teacher space would overlap; scheduling problems; LHS would need adjustments, etc. Board President Shaw said the issue was also addressed under former Superintendent Crubaugh. At that time, the community wanted kindergarten back in neighborhood schools, with grade 6 to a middle school, and grade 9 to Lincoln High School. Schools were very well attended at that time and district enrollment has changed, along with technology, etc.

Barbara Herrmann questioned education benefits of changing the grade alignment. Considerable discussion questioned different models. Answering an inquiry, Superintendent Holzman contributed that generally junior high schools are less costly to operate than middle schools. Junior high models have less sections. Director Shimanek indicated that some infrastructures have been built to support middle schools options, and ELA is moving in that direction.

Another issue mentioned was bussing costs in relation to the different models. Bussing is streamlined now in regard to district lines for bussing and boundaries for walking.

Keith Shaw noted that if the issue of changing the district's grade configuration is at the forefront of community interest, then the Board needs to consider it. The community would need to be informed about costs that would be incurred, to see if the cost would change the community's desire to revise the configuration. Numerous space issues would have to be considered, including the need for a larger/improved cafeteria at Lincoln High School.

It was agreed that Superintendent Holzman would "go back and look into space utilization" to get an idea what that would look like.

The Board recessed from 2 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.

The Board continued discussion of grade level alignment with pros and cons of moves and whether 4K and 5K students should remain in the same facility. The Board would like information on cost, space, and school population/demographic data. It is too early to consider redistricting or the possibility of closing any schools. Philosophically, at this point the Board wants to know what the future might look like. This will be an on-going discussion, with all options being identified.

Board discussion revolved around school boundaries and the number of children that walk to school. Director Mischler showed the Board a color-coded map indicating school districts, which ties into the grade level alignment conversation.

The McKinley Academy charter will be up for renewal in June 2018. Any desired modifications would have to be addressed in the next months. Board President Shaw voiced concerns about its original concept compared to its current role. If specific goal requirements are not being met, perhaps the goals/charter should be revised. Goals should be attainable. Specific concerns involved the number of work study students placed and whether restructuring needs to be accomplished. Concerns should be documented. Superintendent Holzman was asked to look into McKinley's numbers to see if they support the goals. He will meet with Principal Kristin Lee.

Barbara Herrmann asked about the condition of the district's current budget. Director Mischler responded that the district basically has a balanced budget at this time. The current budget shows a reduction in the tax levy of 2.5%, which is not due to fund balance, but other factors

such as per pupil aid increase. Catherine Shallue asked about the effect of closing Manitowoc Company on the district. It is thought that the impact will be slight, and probably not seen until 2017. It is difficult to speculate how many children will be involved in the closure. It was asked if a projection could be made. Enrollment is important to offset school building fixed costs (i.e. heating/cooling/cleaning/administration and staff).

Superintendent Holzman talked about the importance of staff spending under budget while assuring that resources meet goals and needs. 80% of the budget is for staff. The Board will make budget decisions in September. Prior to the budget hearing, the school board must approve a proposed budget to present at the budget hearing. The publicized budget hearing must be held at least 15 days prior to the budget hearing. Director Mischler added that once it is approved, the budget can still be amended.

Elizabeth Williams inquired about effects of the referendum on the budget. After discussion, Director Mischler gave the example that if the District didn't have the \$2 million referendum, the \$1.2 million excess would be an \$800,000 deficit.

Addressing Board concerns about the tax levy, Dave Nickels indicated that the city's portion of the tax bill is significantly more than other entities. He indicated that the district has serious projects that need attention, such as Lincoln High School bathrooms and municipal field, or other projects not addressed in the budget. He felt that since the District has a healthy fund balance, that a portion of the fund balance might be used to accomplish some of those needed projects. Board opinions were aired regarding maintaining the fund balance, whether or not to raise the tax levy, and whether or not all referendum funds should be spent.

Discussion revolved around how much fund balance to keep in reserve. Superintendent Holzman addressed the importance of maintaining a favorable Moody's rating and eliminating short-term borrowing, which is accomplished through fund balance. For example, next year the district will use Fund 10's earmarked funds to pay off the sinking fund. Like any business, the district needs to be prepared for unknown expenses that may arise, such as the hire of additional staff or roof repairs, or other 1-time expenses.

Answering queries from Catherine Shallue, Director Chris Dupré indicated that the first-year \$600,000 referendum for facilities has been spent and there are ample projects for the second year. He has not yet addressed the remaining money from the \$5 million. Superintendent Holzman clarified that the Buildings and Grounds budget was not expended on Rubick Field improvements. He also clarified that Aurora donated funds in conjunction with their sports medicine contract.

Karen Rohrer referred to a list of facility concerns established with former Director Schulz and wondered about the relevance of that list.

The Manty Wellness Center is saving the district funds, which should improve after relocation to Dewey Street next year. Post-employment benefits were briefly discussed and it was noted that this will be addressed in the future.

Karen Rohrer asked Director Mischler could create a pie chart that would illustrate a budgetary breakdown. Some expenses might include cross-categorical expenses. She would like a breakdown of budgeted costs for core classes, co-curricular, special education, etc. Director Mischler said that he would create the requested pie chart.

Superintendent Holzman asked Board members how they wish to continue conversation on topics not addressed at this meeting. It was suggested that the 2nd Tuesday meeting begin at 11:30 a.m. (instead of noon), with a shorter agenda. This would allow for additional discussion. There will be a Buildings and Grounds update at the second Tuesday meeting in September.

On motion by Elizabeth Williams, seconded by Catherine Shallue, the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca McLafferty, Secretary

Keith Shaw
Board President