

Manitowoc Public School District
Board of Education Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Board President Stacey Soeldner. Members present were: Mr. Chris Able, Mr. Biff Hansen, Mr. Matthew Phipps, Ms. Stacey Soeldner, Mr. Matthew Spaulding, Mr. Kerry Trask, and Mr. Tony Vlaselica (attending virtually, but not present for roll call). Also present were Superintendent James Feil (attending virtually), Assistant Superintendent Jame McCall, Directors, and Executive Assistant Katy Emmett.

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 amount of public input requests (12), Board President Soeldner allowed each person two (2) minutes to speak. Public Input included three individuals who support Stacey Soeldner and to “stay the course” and also support Superintendent Feil. Two individuals shared concern regarding the possible violation of our ethics policy with Superintendent Feil actively supporting Stacey Soeldner as a Board candidate. One individual spoke about Act 20, the process our State Legislative Committee used to determine which reading curriculums were approved, and concern that SFA is not an approved curriculum with DPI. Another speaker shared concern about how the Board changed the language in some of our policies at the Board Professional Development meeting which does not support “All Learners”. The next speaker was a representative from Gays Against Groomers who shared reinforcement of providing a neutral environment for our students and protecting them from discussions about gender identity and queer theory. The MEA President shared concern for Superintendent Feil stepping back from the meet and conifer meetings with the MEA to discuss what is happening in the district. A gentleman spoke about the increasing cost of SFA and what is being spent on this one curriculum, concern about the committee of the whole structure and the need to set a deadline for what committee structures our district will adopt to make informed decisions. Another individual shared that any other curriculum utilizing all of the science of reading components would have likely shown the same gains in our reading scores with the amount of time allotted, and our dedicated staff, with a much lesser cost to the district. In closing, the last public input shared support for inclusion at our schools and a reminder that we are in a public education environment. Public input concluded at 6:32 p.m.

The Consent Agenda was presented to the Board. The following items were asked to be removed from the Consent Agenda; February 27, 2024, Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes at the request of Board President Soeldner, the Personnel Report and the Second Read policies: po2260, po2266, and po2521, at the request of Board member Hansen. A motion was made by Chris Able, seconded by Matthew Spaulding, and unanimously carried (7-0) to approve the March 6, 2024 Special Board of Education Professional Development Session Minutes, Monthly Financial Report, Payment of Vouchers, Monthly Donation List, and Second Read Policies under agenda items “G” as presented. Board President Soeldner made a motion to amend the February 27, 2024 Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes, seconded by Matthew Phipps. The amendment includes a correction in the date in the second to last paragraph. The minutes state a date of March 2021 for our next Special Board of

Education Meeting, this is to be corrected to March 2024. Motion to approve was made by Chris Able, seconded by Matthew Phipps, and unanimously carried (7-0).

Directors Katie Eichmann Lee Thennes spoke on being committed to supporting all students and staff regardless of the language corrected in the most recent policies.

The Director of Human Resources, Mike Nault noted a correction to the Personnel report. There was an error in the lane step for a teacher, Lane 1, step 6.9. Biff Hansen asked Mike Nault about the progress of filling the positions of Special Education teachers. Mike stated that we were able to hire one teacher. Motion to approve amended Personnel Report made by Chris Able, seconded by Biff Hansen, and unanimously carried (7-0). Motion to approve Second Read policies po2260, po2266, and po2521 made by Matthew Spaulding, seconded by Matthew Phipps. Further discussion about policies was made by Biff Hansen and Chris Able. Biff Hansen pulled the policies in hopes of there being some reconsideration. The motion passed (4-3) with Board members Hansen, Able, and Trask opposing.

Board President Soeldner then turned to the Board of Education Student Representative Ely Reed to provide a report. Ms. Reed provided an update from Lincoln, the Middle Schools, and Elementary Schools, and meetings with Board Members Able and Hansen. Lincoln students have just taken the ACT and will provide that update when more information is available. Student Senate is hosting a School Board forum for all candidates on March 20th at 6:30 p.m. in the Lincoln Auditorium. Students and audience members will get to present questions. Ms. Reed was able to get contact information for the Wilson student council members and will be meeting with them so she can better represent all students within the district. The Committee recap included a discussion of the facilities and possible suggested improvements such as a new cafeteria, a commons area, and adding more things to attract more students to our school. Ms. Reed also commented on promoting our schools more and getting the word out about our programs and other student opportunities that are unique to our district.

Elementary Principals Matt Heller of Franklin and Lisa Delsman of Jefferson presented the mid-year AGR (Achievement Gap Reduction) report. Principal Heller discussed Franklin's AGR report stating Franklin is seeing overall gains in in both reading and math and very strong reading growth. Principal Delsman spoke of the Jefferson AGR report and stated Jefferson is seeing great gains in reading and some gains in math as well.

A list of District Priority Goals; SFA Implementation, Culture Student/Staff, and Facilities Plan was presented to the Board. Superintendent Feil discussed the recent report from the Joint Finance Committee and the approved curricula for Act 20. Mr. Feil is requesting evidence from DPI for not approving the Success For All curriculum. Board members Kerry Trask and Biff Hansen discussed the high costs of Success For All and how costs are higher than what was presented initially including trade books and the additional cost for Facilitators. Assistant Superintendent, Jame McCall and the Director of Business Services, Angela Erdmann clarified that the initial costs for trade books were thought to be included in the original quote and was not clearly stated in the contract that MPSD would have to pay for that cost on top of the original quote price. Ms. McCall also stated that the Facilitators were mentioned in the February 14, 2023 presentation, but were not in the curriculum costs of the program. Matthew Spaulding and Tony Vlastelica discussed the lack of reading scores within the district, the money the district has spent being a positive move and an investment in our future. Superintendent

Feil and Mike Nault discussed our most recent staff survey from School Perceptions. The results of that survey will be presented to the Board at the second Board meeting in April. Mr. Feil also mentioned the Facilities Assessment will be presented at the Special Board meeting on March 21, 2023.

In a request from Board member Hansen, he asked how we can provide annuities to married staff members if one of the spouses does not receive the benefits. Mike Nault commented on the possibility of cash *in lieu of* benefits, and some of the options that we could possibly provide. Mr. Nault also commented that they would need to research what other districts are doing and collaborate with the Business Office on what options our district could provide. Kerry Trask made a motion for Mike Nault, Director of Human Resources, to conduct a study comparing annuities and salaries with similar districts. Mr. Nault will use Baird Analytics for teacher salaries and local comparisons for support staff. Biff Hansen seconded the motion. Matthew Phipps made a motion to amend to compare salaries with all companies within the county. Motion to amend did not carry (1-5). The vote to approve the original motion of the study carries (4-2) with Soeldner and Phipps opposing. Board member Tony Vlasetelica had left the meeting.

Superintendent Jim Feil presented the District Activity Update. Youth Art Month is open until the end of the month at the Rahr West Art Museum. Mr. Feil also recognized Emjay Neumann as the first female LHS State Wrestling Champ. Rising Phoenix applications are coming due and the Quarter Century and Retirement celebration coming up on May 29, 2024.

Unfinished Business included a discussion of the two annuities given to the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent and the difference between the two. Hansen inquired what the comparables were used to reach that agreement. Board President Soeldner mentioned the District utilized Exec Connect, a research firm that gave the comparables and advised to raise those by 3%. Ms. Soeldner also stated that they looked at previous administration positions and used that information as well.

Mike Nault proposed the new position of Bilingual Interpreter for our district. A motion to approve the position was made by Kerry Trask and seconded by Biff Hansen. The motion carried (6-0).

Director Lee Thennes presented the Proposed Youth Apprenticeship in Education positions. Each Elementary would get two youth apprentices who would work part-time with half days on Friday. These are paid positions. A motion to approve was made by Chris Able and seconded by Matthew Spaulding. The motion carried (6-0).

Kupper/Ratsch Funds were presented by the Director of Business Services, Angela Erdmann. A motion to approve was made by Chris Able, seconded by Matthew Spaulding, and unanimously carried (6-0).

The Board was presented with five (5) policies for the first read with suggested revisions. Motion to approve the first read of Policy 2431 - Interscholastic Athletics was made by Matthew Spaulding, seconded by Chris Able, and carried unanimously (6-0). A motion was made by Chris Able, seconded by Biff Hansen to approve the first read of Policy 2461-Recording of IEP Team Meetings, the motion carried (6-0). A motion was made by Chris Able and seconded by Kerry Trask to approve the first read

of Policy 5111.01-Homeless Students, the motion carried (6-0). A motion was made by Biff Hansen and seconded by Matthew Spaulding to approve the first read of Policy 5130-Withdrawal from School, the motion carried (6-0). A motion was made by Matthew Spaulding and seconded by Chris Able to approve the first read Policy 5420-Reporting Student Progress, the motion carried (6-0). A motion to reconsider Policy 2431-Interscholastic Athletics was made by Stacey Soeldner, seconded by Chris Able, and unanimously carried (6-0). Ms. Soeldner requested to amend Policy 2431 to include checking the box for the safeguards provided by the district, with a second from Matt Phipps. The amended motion carried (6-0).

Eight (8) policies with suggested revisions were introduced to the Board; Policy 1630-FMLA, Policy 3430.01-FMLA, Policy 4430.01-FMLA, Policy 5460.01-Diploma Deferral, Policy 5512-Use of Tobacco and Nicotine by Students, Policy 8820-School Day Closure, Policy 8710-Insurance, and Policy 8452-Automated External Defibrillators. The Board will also revisit Policy 2411-School Counseling and Academic and Career Planning, approved at the 10-24-23 Special Board Meeting due to it containing similar language as Policies 2260, 2266, and 2521.

Board President Soeldner reminded everyone that there will not be a Board meeting the week of Spring Break. Future meeting dates include the Special Board of Education Meeting on March 21, 2024, to discuss the CESA 10 Facilities Assessment Report.

A motion was made by Matthew Spaulding and seconded by Biff Hansen, and carried (5-1) by a roll call vote, with Chris Able opposing, to move into closed session at 8:36 p.m., to consider the following matter: the employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation of a public employee over which the government body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility pursuant to section 19.85(1)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes: Compensation Strategies for Staff. The Board allowed for a brief recess for the public to clear the Board Room.

As noted in Board member Kerry Trask's minutes, the Board adjourned from closed session at 9:00 p.m. and returned to open session. No action was taken on the item discussed in closed session. A motion to adjourn the 3-12-24 Regular Meeting was made by Biff Hansen, seconded by Matthew Spaulding and unanimously carried (6-0). The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Katy Emmett, Executive Assistant



Board President, Stacey E. Soeldner