

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
Manitowoc Board of Education
September 22, 2020

A virtual special meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Board President Dave Nickels at 12:00 p.m. Members present were: Ms. Lisa Johnston, Mr. Dave Nickels, Mr. Richard Nitsch, Ms. Meredith Sauer, Ms. Elizabeth Williams and Ms. Kathy Willis. Also present were Superintendent Mark Holzman and Board Secretary Laurie Braun. Board Member Catherine Shallue was absent.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Board members logged into BoardBook and verification of virtual connection to the meeting was confirmed.

A motion was made by Richard Nitsch, seconded by Elizabeth Williams, and unanimously carried (6-0), to approve the minutes from the September 8, 2020 Regular Board and Closed Session Meetings.

Curriculum Committee Chairperson Meredith Sauer reported on the September 17, 2020 meeting. Ms. Sauer shared an overview of the building action plans and the SMART goals they are setting. "SMART" represents, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. These goals, along with additional data will be used as a foundation for each building when they give their yearly school showcase presentations to the Board. Ms. Sauer also shared how our EL teachers are working closely with the classroom teachers to create a more comprehensive plan for our EL learners. An update from the Student Learning Liaisons team was shared including their duties and work with teachers and administrators, and some of the professional development they have participated in. A motion was made by Meredith Sauer, seconded by Richard Nitsch, and unanimously approved (6-0), to accept the minutes of the September 17, 2020 Curriculum Committee meeting.

Director of Human Resources Joyce Greenwood-Aerts presented the Personnel Report consisting of hiring four (4) professional staff personnel, one (1) support staff, and one (1) level movement. Director Greenwood-Aerts also presented an Addendum to the Personnel Report for Board members to view. By the request of Board member Nitsch, clarification was provided on the qualifications of the four (4) General Education Behavior Specialists. Ms. Greenwood-Aerts explained all of these individuals are certified teachers who applied for and have a passion and interest in this area. Each of these individuals will be working with Lynette Simonar addressing the disproportionality issue in our district. Board member Lisa Johnston requested a meeting for the Personnel Committee to view the employee exit interviews in their entirety. Board President Dave Nickels explained that this can added as an agenda item to their committee meeting and then discuss the process of how this can be done. On a motion by Lisa Johnston, seconded by Richard Nitsch, the Board unanimously approved (6-0) the Personnel Report and Addendum as presented.

Superintendent Holzman provided an enrollment update. Mr. Holzman shared last Friday, September 18, 2020, was the third Friday. We have until the end of this week to count students. The numbers we are currently seeing reflect a decline in approximately 50, 4K students. We do feel the majority of this is due to COVID and families are keeping students this age at home. Superintendent Holzman also stated that in speaking with other districts like Manitowoc, they are seeing the same thing with their 4K and 5K classes. We are also seeing an increase in students attending 100% virtual learning in the open enrollment McFarland online virtual school. These families have been contacted and made aware that we do offer 100% virtual learning in our District. The preliminary numbers have also shown a slight decline in numbers from grade to grade up until we are at the junior and senior high school levels. Overall, the preliminary enrollment numbers from 4K through 12th grade is reflecting a decline in approximately 160 students. We will continue to monitor this and will have the official third Friday count at the October Regular Board meeting.

School Forest Coordinator Kelly Vorrone provided a School Forest report/presentation. Ms. Vorrone explained the total number of student and adult in-person visits was down when compared to the previous year, due to COVID-19. This year also included the 6th grade camp moving to the middle school level. Students were unanimously in favor with the new mix of 6th grade students from surrounding elementary schools. Ms. Vorrone explained she continues to bring the School Forest to students virtually with activities that incorporate what students are currently learning in the classroom. Ms. Vorrone also shared through the grant partnership with the Maritime Museum, the fire pit at the School Forest is getting an upgrade, a special education beach cruiser was added to enable all kids with access to the beach, and forest experiences are being improved for all learners. MPSD students and staff continue to benefit from the amazing learning opportunities the School Forest has to offer.

On motion by Richard Nitsch, seconded by Meredith Sauer, the Board unanimously approved (6-0) designating Lee Thennes as the District's Youth Options Coordinator.

Mr. Holzman presented a draft of a unified letter that will go out to the community stating we will continue to follow the mask mandate that was just reinstated by Governor Evers this morning, as well as follow the "Three W's": **W**atch your distance, **W**ash hands and **W**ear masks. All of the public school districts within our county, including Roncalli and associated private schools, have agreed to follow these protocols. We continue to work with the County Health Department and are committed to do what we can to keep everyone safe and healthy.

The Report of the Superintendent closed with a District Activity Update. Mr. Holzman shared that unfortunately as expected, we have seen some positive cases of COVID in our district. He recapped our communication process of how we are reporting and counting cases and how we are able to contact trace those who may have been in close contact with that individual. The model has shown we are not exposing students and staff because we are able to maintain the 6 feet social distance, we are wearing masks and eliminating touch. To date we are not seeing the same positive numbers in our district as we are seeing throughout the county. Again, we continue follow our plan and work with the County Health Department to keep our students and staff safe. Board member Lisa Johnston requested an update on staff workload.

Superintendent Holzman stated starting a new school year usually creates some stress and to start in a model we have never done before during a pandemic certainly adds to those stresses. This certainly is not the model we want to be in. We had conversations with the elementary staff and surveys have been sent out to the secondary staff. We will evaluate these survey results and make changes as necessary. This Thursday is a teacher/staff development day which will hopefully help staff collaborate and develop some things to help them balance the blended and virtual schedule workload. We will continue to keep an open dialogue while maintain the needs of staff and students.

Board President Dave Nickels commented on the WASB training video for board members. WASB will create the training video and personalize it to the needs of our district. Board members were in agreement that this would be a good learning tool for current and incoming board members.


It was noted that the 2020 WASB Fall Regional Meeting/Workshop will be held virtually October 21, 2020. Board members will be receiving virtual meeting details in the upcoming weeks.

Future meeting dates included; Personnel Committee and Buildings and Grounds will be scheduling a meeting in the next week. Finance and Budget Committee will schedule before the second Tuesday Board Meeting and the Curriculum Committee has a meeting scheduled October 15th.

The Board, upon not receiving a 1st and 2nd motion, agreed not to move into closed session.

On motion by Richard Nitsch, seconded by Elizabeth Williams, and unanimously carried (6-0), the meeting adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Braun, Secretary



Dave Nickels
Board President