

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
Manitowoc Board of Education
February 25, 2014

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Linda Gratz at 12:00 noon. Members present were Ms. Karen Rohrer, Mr. Lee Braunel, Ms. Catherine Shallue, Mr. Dave Longmeyer, Mr. Dave Nickels, Mr. Keith Shaw, and Ms. Linda Gratz. Also present were Superintendent Marcia Flaherty and Board secretary Rebecca McLafferty.

Superintendent Flaherty referred to the School Perceptions document, "Ten Tips to Help Plan Your Next Community Engagement Project", which had been distributed to all Board members.

The Board reviewed the document topics as follows:

Tip One: Define and communicate your district's most pressing needs using words that ordinary people like "Joe the plumber" can understand.

Superintendent Flaherty reminded the Board that educators often use jargon not familiar to the community. This survey should use common language. Also, the survey should make the community aware of specific relevant facts.

In response to the question, what would be the goal of the survey, Superintendent Flaherty explained the two-part purpose. First, the survey would act as an interactive newsletter, making the public aware of the district's pressing needs. The survey would make the public aware of the district's financial climate and programs and activities offered despite the financial obstacles. The survey should also make the community aware of district priorities.

It was agreed that the survey would not address a referendum in any way. It was the consensus of the Board that the survey address student learning facilities, and not athletic facilities. The importance of the survey remaining specific was emphasized.

It was suggested that three or four questions be included regarding buildings and grounds, such as parking lot improvements or capital improvements, keeping in mind a one-to-three year timeframe.

It was the consensus of the Board that the survey's first paragraph cite district accomplishments and positive statements. The second paragraph should outline district challenges, along with the message that the community's help is requested to prioritize.

Tip Two: Build Trust with Your Community—Everyday.

Numerous opinions were offered on this topic. It is hoped that the survey would inform the community and help establish trust through honest, straightforward knowledge of the district's financial efforts and accomplishments. It was noted that the community should not perceive the survey as a precursor to raising money.

Tip Three: View the Referendum as a Process, Not an Event.

Superintendent Flaherty reviewed the survey process timeline. Board members were asked to supply two or three items worthy of celebration in the district, to be shared at the March 11 Board meeting. Short articles written by administrators will be published in the Herald Times Reporter. Board members were also asked to supply names of influential community members.

Tip Four: Don't Leave Any of Your Staff Out of the Planning Progress.

Superintendent Flaherty expressed the importance of including staff and parents in the survey process.

Tip Five: Don't Do Anything that Undermines the Credibility of the Planning Process.

Due to its premature nature, this page was not discussed.

Tip Six: Don't Spend All of Your Time Talking with the People who Already Support Your District or Those Who are Uninformed or Opposed. Focus on the Influentials.

Superintendent Flaherty referred to her earlier request for Board members to provide names of influential community leaders.

Tip Seven: Use a Community-wide Survey to Gather Data and Educate Your Community.

Superintendent Flaherty suggested that it may be beneficial to continue the community engagement group after the survey is completed.

Tip Eight: A Community Survey Needs to be Seen as Objective, Unbiased and Inclusive.

The importance of an outside objective agency preparing the survey was addressed here.

Tip Nine: Make Data-Driven Decisions.

This section emphasized the fact that data will be provided to guide the Board's decisions. In May, Bill Foster will provide numbers to substantiate community climate and values.

Tip Ten: Hire School Perceptions!

School Perceptions has already been hired.

On motion by Lee Braunel, seconded by Keith Shaw, motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca McLafferty, Secretary

Linda Gratz
Board President