

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
Manitowoc Board of Education
January 28, 2014

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Linda Gratz at 12:00 p.m. 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.

The meeting began with roll call. Superintendent Flaherty introduced Bill Foster, President and founder of School Perceptions.

Foster gave the Board information on School Perceptions, a leading education survey research firm based in Wisconsin. The firm has done 250 community surveys in multiple states and has helped thousands of organizations collect data to plan and improve.

The company does not advocate for referendums, but remains objective, an outside entity saying "this is what your community wants" based on surveys. If a district does go to referendum, it is his job to say "your community wants X" and make sure that the ballot reflects this properly.

Foster emphasized that an engagement process is wanted, to reach out and talk to everyone. They do a paper survey which gives people the opportunity to go online, enter a code, and take the survey, or return the paper surveys. Normally, one survey is sent to each household. Additional surveys can be requested.

Foster talked about the importance of staff feedback, parent feedback, and non-staff/non-parent feedback (70%). An important survey characteristic is its ability to educate the community.

In response to a Board inquiry, Foster said that a resolution must be approved by the Board at least 73 days prior to going on a ballot. Summer is a bad time to survey because of the poor response rate. He suggested going into May and finish processing data no later than prior to the end of the school year. There would be a couple months for community engagement and a resolution could be set, if viable, for August/September for November. A resolution must be submitted to the board for approval. Whether or not the community supports the Board's intent, data must drive your decisions.

School-community relationships and support were discussed in regard to success ratios. Much has to do with staff satisfaction/morale.

Staff rates vary dramatically, depending on people's confidence in whether the data will be used. Foster reiterated that the district can gain much good data if the survey is designed properly.

Foster emphasized the importance of administering the survey and having results prior to meeting with the community, to avoid focusing on issues that the survey shows to be of low priority to the majority.

Surveys are taken anonymously and they are coded to insure one-time use.

In response to Board inquiry, Foster replied that survey data is extremely predictive, and can be within 1% accuracy. Good data is necessary to predict outcome.

Foster restated that the company's job is to be objective. Based on survey information, he can give suggestions regarding what the community wants, but the company does not advocate for what the Board desires.

Foster will prepare a formal proposal for the Board and will give members similar projects to review.

In response to timeline questions, Foster felt the Board should know in a matter of weeks if they wish to administer a survey. With 6 or 7 weeks to develop a survey, it could be deployed in early April. It would take about 10 days to print the survey and then it should be open for 2 or 3 weeks. It should be back in early May. Foster advised that the District wouldn't want to initiate and incur costs of a special election, but would perhaps join a special election.

Answering a Board inquiry, Foster said that the survey is usually put together by the superintendent and business manager. It is important to decide on the message to be relayed and the way the answer will be interpreted.

Foster indicated that he would send sample surveys for the Board to review. He asked the Board if there were other issues beyond budgeting that they would like tested. Board members will review sample surveys and bring input on survey topics to the February 11 Board meeting.

Director of Business Services Ken Mischler gave a presentation on the 2014-2015 budget. The statement that schools will receive more money under the revenue limit is basically a false statement. The District revenue limit amount allocated to the MPSD will go down again in 2014-2015. Per pupil allocation will increase \$75 per pupil. Districts have few alternatives to increase the revenue limit; one way is to increase enrollment and the other way is an operating referendum, to increase the revenue limit.

Mischler demonstrated various scenarios with an adjustable spreadsheet and indicated that approximately 75% of the state's school districts are in declining enrollment.

A Board member clarified that when legislators tell us that the state is giving \$75 more per pupil as a way to address our needs, it is not a true reflection of the complicated calculation.

Director Mischler's handout was referred to throughout the presentation. Mischler also discussed revenue sources, revenues and revenue limits, general aid, fund balance, school fees, and school referendums.

On motion by Catherine Shallue, seconded by Karen Rohrer, and carried, the meeting adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca McLafferty, Secretary

Linda Gratz
Board President