

YPSILANTI COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
Administration Building, Professional Development Room
1885 Packard Road, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Monday, March 16, 2015

The Regular Meeting of the Ypsilanti Community Schools Board of Education was called to order by President Sharon Irvine at 5:35 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENT

Meredith Schindler, Ellen Champagne, Celeste Hawkins (6:48 arrival & early departure), Sharon Irvine, Maria Sheler-Edwards, Sharon Lee, Brenda Meadows

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ABSENT: None

REQUEST FOR CLOSED SESSION – Section 8(b) OMA, Student Discipline

A motion was made by President Irvine, supported by Trustee Schindler:

14-15
0124
THAT the Board of Education convene in closed session under Section 8(b) of the OMA to consider a student disciplinary matter, pursuant to the request of the parent/guardian - student #2014/15.0316.01. A roll call vote was recorded as follows: Trustee Schindler/Yes; Trustee Sheler-Edwards/Yes; Trustee Lee/Yes; President Irvine/Yes; Trustee Champagne/Yes; Trustee Meadows/Yes. Vote 6/0, Yes.

The meeting was called to closed session at 5:37. The meeting reconvened to open session at 6:42 p.m.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Superintendent Lisiscki added two Action Items/Approval of: 1) 9i - Field Trip, YCHS FIRST Robotics, and; 2) 9j - Field Trip, YCS Special Olympics. 3) President Irvine moved Item 9h, "Resolution to Renew Superintendent's Contract", to the last item of the Action Items. 4) President Irvine switched the Comment Items. Item #10/PC #2, Agenda Items will be first; Item #7/PC #1, General Comments will be second.

PUBLIC COMMENT #1, Agenda Items (Agenda Adjustment – Item Moved)

Lisa Brown, parent, said she is against the Balanced Calendar. She stated the former Board was going to search for a Superintendent. She believes this should still happen.

Parent Emily DePauw spoke on behalf of the Estabrook configuration. She has four children. She opposes Balanced Calendar and Grades 1-8 at Estabrook. She also commented on a Superintendent search. She stated there was a promise of a new start with a new Superintendent with new ideas. The Superintendent would be a neutral leader.

Jill Clouse, parent, opposes Balanced Calendar. She would like Estabrook to have Grades 1-5. She commented on a Superintendent search. The vote was for a complete change. A new/fresh start. She does not feel unity. She thanked Superintendent Lisiscki for stepping in when Scott Menzel left.

Greg Myers, parent and former YCS Board member, commented on a Superintendent search. He voiced that a search at this time is not a good idea. He agrees "us v. them" is not productive. Our

District needs consensus. MASB is a leading authority in Superintendent searches. It would take a year to do a thorough search. We should not rush through the process. We need to take our time to make an informed search and in choosing the best qualified candidate.

PRESENTATIONS

Quarterly Focus School Update, Estabrook Elementary: Principal Karla Graessley and Katie Dryer of Bright Futures gave a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation included survey results: positives, perception data and room for improvement. Also included were student learning measures (NWEA, etc.). There was discussion of data teams and data collection. Katie Dryer shared the Bright Futures program offers a focus on increasing academic achievement. There are 33 students enrolled. The Family Learning Institute is volunteer based, and is dedicated to closing the achievement gap. It is a self-run program, with volunteers supplied by the principal. Ms. Graessley shared focus school concerns.

Ypsilanti Promise: Committee Chair Karen Gabrys said remarkable things at happening at YCS. Ms. Gabrys shared she is also a Rotarian. "The Promise" is to students (and YCS) that if they do good work, college will be there for them. There are levels to The Promise. For example, some may choose a Bachelor's Degree. It is a "4+1/60 college credits before they leave" program. For those who may not have done well in high school, they can still realize their dream of a GED. The Promise is to the students and the community. Kalamazoo's Promise program has increased enrollment. A positive impact has been that families are buying homes to be a part of the schools. Ms. Gabrys said they are close to filing non-profit paperwork. They are identifying donors to move forward to make a difference in YCS and the community as a whole.

Resolution to Renew Superintendent's Contract *(Agenda Adjustment – Item Moved)*

Topics Included: Prior to voting, President Irvine stated the agenda item is to vote for a renewal of Superintendent Lisiscki's contract, and not to conduct a search. The renewal would be a one-year. If renewed, the terms of the contract would be identical to what is currently in place. Prior to voting, Superintendent Lisiscki read a statement dated March 16, 2015, addressed to the Members of the Board of Education (*statement "enclosed" at end of Board packet*). Superintendent Lisiscki said she would assist in creating a viable succession plan. She gave a date of June 30, 2016 as a retirement date. She expresses interest in launching and anchoring The Ypsilanti Promise program. The current leadership represents the direction the community said they wanted to proceed in. Trustee Sheler-Edwards thanked Superintendent Lisiscki for the desirable MASB scenario. It takes courage to hand off the ball. We would already be behind in a search, but we did not search. We worked together as a Board. A search takes times. Never as a Board has there been discussion of this topic. Many are here to support the direction of the District. There is concern with a possible non-renewal, which would create a compressed window to engage the community. Trustee Sheler-Edwards encourages taking time on "the why" and "the what" with the community. Ideally, we would offer a 3-5 year contract to offer stability. Superintendent Lisiscki said she will step aside in 15 months to allow time needed to conduct a search. Trustee Sheler-Edwards offered a possible December 31, 2015 contract expiration.

A motion was made by President Irvine, supported by Trustee Sheler-Edwards:

THAT the Board of Education renews the current contract of Superintendent Lisiscki for one year, 2015/16. A roll call vote was recorded as follows: Trustee Schindler/No; Trustee Sheler-Edwards/Yes; Trustee Lee/No; President Irvine/No; Vice-President Hawkins/No; Trustee Champagne/No; Trustee Meadows/Yes. Vote 2/5, No – Motion does not pass.

Resolution of Non-Renewal of Superintendent's Contract: Alternative Resolution (due to above resolution not passing – Renewal of Superintendent's Contract)

A motion was made by President Irvine, supported by Trustee Schindler:

14-15
0126

THAT the Board of Education thanks Superintendent Lisiscki for her work and leadership in the successful merger of Willow Run Community Schools and Ypsilanti Public Schools, and provides her with immediate notice of the non-renewal of her contract. A roll call vote was recorded as follows: Trustee Schindler/Yes; Trustee Sheler-Edwards/No; Trustee Lee/Yes; President Irvine/Yes; Vice-President Hawkins/Yes; Trustee Champagne/Yes; Trustee Meadows/No. Vote 5/2, Yes.

Topics Included: President Irvine stated the Board of Education further directs the Board President to provide notice of contract non-renewal. Trustee Sheler-Edwards inquired on how we move forward. President Irvine said options will be considered. This will not be a nationwide search. MASB can do targeted searches. There are two communities that will be brought together as one. An interim is not ideal. Vice-President Hawkins commented time is of the essence. President Irvine said Thursday's Board meeting could include a presentation and follow up. Dates will be set on Thursday for further discussion.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Vice-President Hawkins, supported by Trustee Champagne:

14-15
0127

THAT the Board of Education approve the minutes of the March 2, 2015 regular meeting. Also, that the Board of Education approve the personnel matters as per the attached list dated March 11, 2015: New Hires and Resignations. Action Recorded: 7/Yes; 0/No.

Student Discipline

A motion was made by President Irvine, supported by Trustee Lee:

14-15
0128

THAT the Board of Education approve the EXPULSION of *Student #2014/15.0316.01* in compliance with State law and Board policy under MCL.380.1311a. A roll call vote was recorded as follows: Trustee Schindler/Yes; Trustee Sheler-Edwards/Yes; Trustee Lee/Yes; President Irvine/Yes; Trustee Champagne/Yes; Trustee Meadows/Yes. Vote 6/0, Yes. (Vice-President Hawkins not in attendance.)

Final Reading of Revised Board Policy, #5517.01 - Bullying & Other Aggressive Behavior Toward Students

Approval of Revised Board Policy, #5517.01 - Bullying & Other Aggressive Behavior Toward Students

A motion was made by Trustee Schindler, supported by President Irvine:

14-15
0129

THAT the Board of Education approve, as presented, NEOLA policy updates: #5517.01 Bullying and Other Aggressive Behavior Toward Students. A roll call "vote" was recorded as follows: Trustee Schindler/Yes; Trustee Sheler-Edwards/Yes; Trustee Lee/Yes; President Irvine/Yes; Vice-President Hawkins/Yes; Trustee Champagne/Yes; Trustee Meadows/Yes. Vote 7/0, Yes.

Approval of Revised Network Electronics Bid Award (Revised Motion Sheet)

A motion was made by Trustee Meadows, supported by Trustee Champagne:

14-15
0130

THAT the Board of Education award, as presented, the conditional purchase agreement with Sentinel Technologies, Inc. to purchase up to \$243,681 of network electronic equipment contingent upon E-rate funding. A roll call vote was recorded as follows: Trustee Schindler/Yes; Trustee Sheler-Edwards/Yes; Trustee Lee/Yes; President Irvine/Yes; Vice-President Hawkins/Yes; Trustee Champagne/Yes; Trustee Meadows/Yes. Vote 7/0, Yes.

Topics Included: Motion page revision included a revised amount to reflect the high bid from CDW Government, LLC, to reflect a revised quote: \$297,848.56.

Approval of 2015/16 Traditional School Calendar

A motion was made by Trustee Sheler-Edwards, supported by Vice-President Hawkins:

THAT the Board of Education approve the 2015/16 traditional calendar. Action Recorded: 7/Yes; 0/No.

Approval of Estabrook Elementary Calendar Recommendation

A motion was made by Vice-President Hawkins, supported by Trustee Meadows:

THAT the Board of Education approve keeping Estabrook Elementary in a traditional calendar setting. Action Recorded: 7/Yes; 0/No.

Topics Included: Trustee Sheler-Edwards commented Balanced Calendar is successful at Holmes. Families and staff have embraced the calendar. Balanced Calendar can work in schools. She thanked Superintendent Lisiscki for allowing the community to voice their vote.

Approval of Overnight Field Trip, YCHS FIRST Robotics (Agenda Adjustment – Item Added)

A motion was made by Trustee Schindler, supported by Trustee Champagne:

THAT the Board of Education approve the overnight field trip of the YCHS FIRST Robotics: Robotics District Competition in Escanaba, March 2015. Action Recorded: 7/Yes; 0/No.

Topics Included: Sponsor Scott Heister said there are two teams. Both teams are traveling. YCS was asked by the State to travel to this competition, and, possibly qualify for State championships.

Approval of Overnight Field Trip, YCS Special Olympics (Agenda Adjustment – Item Added)

A motion was made by Vice-President Hawkins, supported by Trustee Schindler:

THAT the Board of Education approve the overnight field trip of the YCS Special Olympics: State Basketball Tournament in Acme, Michigan, March 2015. Action Recorded: 7/Yes; 0/No.

Topics Included: Sponsor Connie Shelton shared that this team qualified for State finals last week.

BOARD DISCUSSION

President Irvine commented on Trustee Champagne's recent Facebook post with regard to Loretta Lynch's nomination for Attorney General. There is concern throughout the community suggesting racism. The Board of Education will not tolerate discrimination (student, Board member, staff). We honor diversity.

Trustee Champagne stated she shared the article because of a racist Congress, though she did not carefully word the post. The post was done privately. If she meant for a public view, she would have reworded the post. It would have been the same message, but it would have been worded differently if a public post. She stated that it has been suggested that she resign from the Board. She commented she has mixed emotions about this, and resigning may be seen as guilt. Her comment was anti-racist. She feels bad about working on the issues at hand, and the pain that people may feel. She said someone choose to spread hurt and cause pain by sharing this post. For this, she is regretful. President Irvine followed up with a statement of so many dealings like this in an age of social media, which travel through time. Trustee Sheler-Edwards believes what Trustee Champagne shared. She suggests for a future meeting, discussion of Board behaviors and ethics. There should be consideration in bylaws and behavior in public. There should be a higher standard, both in real life and online.

President Irvine read a statement from Vice-President Hawkins. The message included that actions intentional or unintentional, as the Board of Education we will provide review of policy. If we do not have policy, we will revise policy to protect the District.

Trustee Schindler said she is Trustee Champagne's online friend. She stated Trustee Champagne posted a sarcastic concern for the Loretta Lynch nomination for Attorney General. A lesson is – sarcasm cannot be detected online. As of Saturday morning, no one had contacted Trustee Champagne asking her to clarify her comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT #2, General Comments (Agenda Adjustment – Item Moved)

Parent Peggi Smith commented on Trustee Champagne's Facebook post. "What's worse than a black male Attorney General is a black female." She did not appreciate this post, being a woman of color. The comment was not appropriate for a diverse community. Trustee Champagne asked if she could explain. Ms. Smith said she made a post and had another (J.C.) come to Facebook and slander her. She was barraged with profanity after her post, called out of her name and was told to get out of the District.

Former WRCS Board member Mark Wilde commented on the Facebook post. Mr. Wilde echoed comments of others. Clearly he was not the only one who had unfriendly comments directed at him. His concern is of racism. He suggested that if the post was done in humor – it was poor judgement. The post, done in private, offered no explanation of intention. The following day he said Trustee Champagne said the intention of the post was sarcasm.

Brandy Valerio commented on the employee health insurance payback. She said with the District withholding monies from her check to make up for the insurance underpayment, it will have a detrimental effect on her family. She stated she cannot buy supplies for the classroom if her family cannot eat.

Parent Diana Gonzales is a Facebook friend of Trustee Champagne. She said this is an injustice. Trustee Champagne has been an ally of the family. If you scroll down in Facebook, you would see Trustee Champagne is a voice against racism, sexism. Sarcasm does hurt. There has been a tradition of fighting racism and sexism in this District.

Teachers Debbie Swanson, Marlo Bearman, Cheryl Plouffe and Erica Lamar spoke of the SLC at YCMS and the upcoming Sustainability Summit at the YCMS on June 11th. They extended an invitation to the Board to attend. The topic of discussion will be the environment. This is a celebration of student learning on sustainability and exploration of strategies to strengthen the community into the future. It is about creative change.

Teacher Jamie LaGoe commented she is saddened with the non-renewal of Superintendent Lisiscki's contract. Superintendent Lisiscki had a detailed plan with retirement. We will not find a quality candidate in three months. She does not have confidence in the Board. Our next Superintendent will have their work cut out for them: Willow Run v. Ypsilanti.

Greg Myers, parent and former YCS Board member, said he spoke at the Board retreat. He encourages consensus, agreement and is in support of us coming together. The community did not allow Peggi Smith to voice her thoughts. He stated the Board must continue to stop "a division". The entire community needs to be heard. "Thank you, Board of Education."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE: None

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

- Superintendent Lisiscki commented on the decision of the Board to not renew her contract. She said she has been asked to assist in the transition. She stated "we've done the unthinkable" and stated she will do what she can as long as the Board/community allows her to.

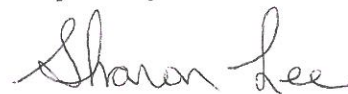
BOARD COMMENTS

- Trustee Sheler-Edwards talked of the communities coming together and healing. She commented of "a fresh set of eyes". She voted for the traditional calendar at Estabrook. She would like to continue with the Balanced Calendar at another building.
- Trustee Meadows thanked Superintendent Lisiscki for all she has done and for her support. She stated we need Superintendent Lisiscki's services to move ahead. She made comment on the Trustee Champagne's Facebook post, stating it was an irresponsible comment, as we are trying to move YCS forward. We need to come together. We need viable schools for our students. She encouraged Superintendent Lisiscki to apply for the Superintendent's position. She does not see this as an end, but a new beginning.
- President Irvine commented the consolidation was a lot of work. Superintendent Lisiscki, thank you for all you have done. A vision is moving passed the consolidation phase. She commented to Superintendent Lisiscki that her support in this transition is invaluable.

Board Meeting Adjourned: 8:50 p.m.

Enclosure: Letter from Superintendent Lisiscki addressed to the Members of the Board of Education, dated March 16, 2015

Respectfully Submitted,



Sharon Lee, Secretary
Board of Education
Ypsilanti Community Schools



Laura M. Lisiscki, Superintendent of Schools
Teresa Cornelison, Administrative Assistant
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March 16, 2015

Members of the Board of Education:

I am speaking before you tonight to ask that each individual board member deeply consider what this vote means for the future of Ypsilanti Community Schools students. I believe that tonight, this team is at the crossroads of the transition. Please make your decision and your vote based on what you believe is the best timing for the transition plan to be completed. If it is the decision of the Board to start the transition earlier rather than later, I will do everything humanly possible to assist in creating a viable succession plan. I will be more than willing to share my knowledge of the District's foundation, vision, and continued direction for the success of our students. I will thank the community for bestowing their trust in me to be part of this groundbreaking and forward thinking work.

I believe in the beginning of the consolidation talks, it was almost as if the community was being asked to do the unthinkable. Over time, the community-at-large trusted that I could be one of the leaders to forge for our students the mission that "Ypsilanti Community Schools is the first choice for an exceptional cradle-to-career education". I will forever be grateful and proud to know that I worked with the staff, students, and community to assist in defining what the new school district needed to be for our students. I'm humbled to have had the opportunity to listen to the voices of all concerned during forums and meetings to create the design pillars that now form the strong foundation of Ypsilanti Community Schools. I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to work through the transition challenges while maintaining consistent and continued focus on what was voiced over and over again related to the core values and commitments of YCS.

At this time, I will go on record as stating that I am submitting my resignation due to retirement on June 30, 2016. If, after tonight's vote, I am fortunate enough to continue working toward completing a longer transition of this consolidation during the daily operation of the District, I see a few things that must be in the forefront of my work:

1. Working closely with community members to launch and then anchor the Ypsilanti Promise for our students.
2. Completely anchoring the curriculum and instruction reset and incorporating the continuity of the cultural proficiency work to make sure that it is authentic and engaging for staff and students.
3. Aligning the central office, the building principals, the SLC leaders, and the SLC vision so that all the system processes and supports are obtainable to create a strong SLC concept for Ypsilanti Community Schools.

In conclusion, prior to making your decision tonight, please recognize that my leadership represents the direction in which this community said they wanted to go. I will hold true to that vision and that work as long as I am seated as the Superintendent of Ypsilanti Community Schools.

Educationally yours,

Laura M. Lisiscki
Superintendent of Schools
"Home of the Grizzlies"