

SAULT STE. MARIE AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SAULT STE. MARIE, MICHIGAN 49783
ANNUAL MEETING, BOARD OF EDUCATION
Phone 906/635-6609

Minutes – Tuesday, April 27, 2021

284. **I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Sault Area Middle School, 684 Marquette Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

285. **A. ROLL CALL OF BOARD**

Board Members Present: Lisa A. Young, Melissa S. Pingatore,
Raymond J. DeWitt, Daniel L. Smith, Christine M. Curtis,
Caitlin L. Galer

Absent: Jay D. Wilson

286. **B. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

It was moved by Member DeWitt, supported by Member Young, that the Board of Education move to adopt the agenda as presented.

Yeas: Young, Pingatore, DeWitt, Smith, Curtis, Galer

Nays: None

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

287. **II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION AND CORRESPONDENCE**

A. INDIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM – Mrs. Amy Scott-Kronemeyer

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported Impact Aid is received to assist the district with lost property tax revenue due to the tax-exempt status of students who live on and/or parents who work on federal property, increased expenditures due to enrollment of federally connected children, and for students with special needs who live on federal property.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported Impact Aid and Title VI funds are used to offset teacher and paraprofessional salaries, technology, after school programming, and general fund items. She indicated payments are received based on an algorithm of qualified students enrolled.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported Title VI funding is received to meet the needs of Indian students.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported Impact Aid is received for students based on specific federal properties. She noted the largest number of students are connected to the Sault Tribe, Bay Mills, and U.S. Coast Guard.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported this was the first year the district digitally receiving 506 card data, and the result were good.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported the Indian Education Formula Grant was used to assist with increasing professional development, increasing the graduation rate, decreasing the dropout rate, and decreasing absenteeism.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported the Title VI Indian Education Grant had legislative rules in establishing projects to improve student outcomes.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported the three main goals of the Indian Education Grant were to increase student scores on state mandated tests, increase the graduation rate, and decrease chronic absenteeism. She noted chronic absenteeism is defined as being absent for more than 20% of the number of days available in the school year.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported state tests were not administered last spring due to the pandemic shutdown and consequently there were no students with chronic absenteeism.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported there were 649 or 32% of students with 506 cards. She noted a moderate rate of fluctuation in the number of students over the years.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reviewed the Title IV grant funding from 2014 to the present. She noted next year's funding would be allocated based on this year's data due to the number of students who did not return after the pandemic shut down or were not counted during the shutdown.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported on the graduation rates from 2017 through 2020. She noted concern for the district's rate over the last two years as it had dipped below the state's rate. She confirmed the graduation rate was based on students graduating with 4 years of high school and it sometimes takes students a bit longer. She reported she would be reviewing student data to see where they had gone.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported the dropout rate was why the district had made increasing the graduation rate one of its main goals. She reviewed the percent of dropout rates by males, Native American males, white males,

females, Native American females and white females. She stated she will be looking into how to improve the rates.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported she is aware some students left in person schooling to attend online schools and then they never actually attended. She stated she would like to see what can be done to follow up with those students and how she can assist them in completing their education.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer presented the “awesome” Indian Education Program Committee consisting of Sandy Sawyer, Tan-A Hoffman, Lindsey Gregg, Brittany Gillett, Vanessa Owaski-Patzwald, and Heather Syrette. She noted the Program Committee, Program Staff, and herself meet Monday nights prior to the regular school board meetings to provide insight, guidance, and to stay on top of things. She stated they encourage parent engagement and would like more parent involvement especially for those with Native American students.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer introduced the Program Staff Advisors Erika Laitinen-Odbert, Jennifer Blair, and Symantha Morley who work in the school buildings to help the committee meet its goals.

Symantha Morley reported on the academic services she provides to students one-to-one, in small groups, and through proctoring standardized tests. She noted a lot of time is spent on helping students learn how to manage their time and stay organized. She indicated the behavior plans and new teaching of social and emotional zones have helped a lot with student growth.

Mrs. Morley reported on the food, clothing, hygiene, and diabetic supports she provides to students and families.

Mrs. Morley thanked three local churches and other groups that have helped supply food and other items to the food pantry with much needed support.

Mrs. Morley reported on the Seven Grandfather Teaching Bulletin Board and the Michigan Tribal Elders program as some of the cultural supports offered to the students.

Mrs. Morley reported literacy, math, and cultural supports are provided to students at Washington and Lincoln schools as well as at the After School Program.

Erika Laitinen-Odbert reported on the academic, attendance, and cultural support she provides Middle School Native American students. She noted the open communication she has had with parents and staff.

Mrs. Laitinen-Odbert reported she monitors student attendance for face to face and Virtual Blue instruction, works with administration and probation officers on truancy protocol, and utilizes the SRSS assessment data to see if additional supports are needed.

Mrs. Laitinen-Odbert reported on the literature bulletin board, the medicine wheel board, the orange shirt day, virtual events, and the Indigenous peoples day that were used for cultural awareness and support.

Mrs. Laitinen-Odbert reported she offers additional support by being the PBIS team coordinator to promote positive behavior and intervention, coordinates the Kidz Klozit to support students and families with food, clothing, and hygiene insecurities.

Mrs. Laitinen-Odbert reported she works on mental health safety and supervision plans to support students. She noted mental health safety had become very labor intensive during the pandemic.

Mrs. Laitinen-Odbert reported she works with students to schedule WIN time and SHACC appointments.

Principal Sandy Sawyer reported on the Malcolm High School data due to the recent resignation of its Native American Advisor.

Mrs. Sawyer reported on the student demographics at Malcolm. She noted the continuation of monitoring student check in/check out times, the printing of progress reports, and the scheduling of parent meetings for academic progress. She stated there are no unexcused class times and students have to earn restricted Flex Fridays with good grades and attendance.

Mrs. Sawyer reported on the incentives provided for reinforcement of positive behavior, attendance, manners, goal setting, and grades.

Mrs. Sawyer reported in school suspension and lunch detention is utilized to reduce tardiness and absenteeism. She stated she works on following the truancy protocol with the county.

Mrs. Sawyer reported the school helps assist students with completing job and college applications.

Mrs. Sawyer reported students are given social and emotional support with the assistance of a social worker one day a week in school and one day a week virtually. She stated online communication has been used heavily to stay in touch with students who are under quarantine but it has been challenging.

Mrs. Sawyer reported she was very thankful for the community donations that have helped support students in need of clothing and other necessities as the new McKinney Vento rules have made those funds unavailable.

Sault High Native American Advisor Jennifer Blair reported she provides academic support to students by weekly monitoring student grades and attendance. She noted she focus on ninth grade at-risk students in hopes of getting them on the right path for graduation.

Mrs. Blair reported on the lunch learning program she provides for academic, social and emotional support.

Mrs. Blair reported she often makes phone calls home when students are absent to so see if there is anything she can help with.

Mrs. Blair reported on the number of Native American students who participate in CTE and advanced classes.

Mrs. Blair reported on the number of students who were provided intervention services, Lunch Learning, and SAT preparation. She indicated she works with Brimley and Rudyard Schools for possible awareness and adaption of services.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer indicated the data shows the advisors are constantly monitoring and reaching out to students. She stated she is very proud of their work.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported the committee plans to keep the same three goals for next year but is looking at professional learning in culture competency, adding an Ojibway language class, dual enrollment with LSSU, and following up with graduates to see if they have any suggestions to help get kids back in school and to keep them engaged.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported the committee is always looking at getting more parental involvement and improving services for students.

Mrs. Blair reported on the classroom teaching posters and the cultural activities at the high school. She noted Josh Biron of the Sault Tribe had been a wonderful cultural resource for youth activities.

Mrs. Laitinen-Odbert reported she is working on a calendar for next year to help parents plan to join events ahead of time or when they find they have an opening in their busy schedules.

Mrs. Laitinen-Odbert reported several cultural awareness activities conducted at the Middle School. She noted the orange shirt day was to support awareness of residential boarding schools. Mrs. Casebier's class

read a book about dream catchers and then made some. Mrs. Wagner's class read about fry bread and made some. She reported some students read about being water protectors which tied in with their math and science, and shared a greeting in Ojibway to each of the classes.

Mrs. Blair reported on the cultural awareness activity "Rock your Mocs", the Ojibway language translation posters, the making of dream catchers in art class, and a showcase on cultural awareness for future generations in memory of her grandfather Cub McKerchie.

Upon inquiry from Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer, there were no questions.

Member Galer commented on the great job the committee and staff had done.

President Smith thanked the committee and staff for their presentation.

B. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Alan Walther thanked the Native American Parent Committee and Staff for their work. He expressed disappointment for the increase in the number of COVID-19 tests done on Middle School athletes.

288. III. BOARD GOVERNANCE AND BOARD POLICY ISSUES

President Smith expressed his sentiments about COVID procedures and stated he wasn't going to micro manage a building that had 60% of its students out due to quarantining. He suggested in the future, the Board adopt a policy that all student activities be cancelled when the building it closed.

Member Pingatore indicated she would not be in favor of a vote for student athlete COVID testing because the tests are not being used for what they were designed for. She stated sports teams seem to be on the forefront, but the same thought process should be applied to all student groups.

President Smith indicated he thought sporting activities were cancelled at the Middle School due to that school being held virtually.

President Smith confirmed the Middle School closure for the second week was mandated by Dr. Hall and had not been voted upon by the Board. Member Pingatore indicated she did not have a problem with the Middle School going virtual as it would be hard to teach face to face with the majority of students out.

President Smith indicated he would ensure the Board was informed of additional school testing and closures going forward.

President Smith expressed concern for the COVID vaccines.

Member Young stated she stands behind the opposition letter for testing spring athletes that the Board had approved at an earlier meeting.

Member Curtis stated she understood why other schools would want to protect their athletes while our school had a large population under quarantine, but she would prefer to raise the topic with Dr. Hall.

Member Curtis stated she was in support of allowing students to participate in positive activities.

Member Curtis raised the possibility of ending senior activities 14 days prior to graduation so the students could feel comfortable and safe participating in their graduation ceremony.

Assistant Principal Jeanine Sherman indicated prom and senior trips were cancelled but the awards ceremonies and graduation were on schedule with social distancing.

289. **IV. FUTURE PLANNING**

President Smith reviewed future events.

May 10 – Regular Board Meeting – Middle School – 7:00 p.m.

May 13 - EUPSBA Meeting - 5:30 p.m.

May 17 – Native American Awards – Strahl Theater – 1:30 p.m.

May 18 – CTE Awards – Strahl Theater – 7:00 p.m.

May 19 – Sault High Academic Awards – Strahl Theater – 7:00 p.m.

May 27 – Malcolm Graduation – Strahl Theater - 7:00 p.m.

May 30 – Sault High Graduation - 2:00 p.m. (location to be announced)

June 14 - Regular Board Meeting – Middle School – 7:00 p.m.

290. **III. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board at 8:09 p.m., it was moved by Member DeWitt, supported by Member Galer, that the meeting be adjourned

Yeas: Young, Pingatore, DeWitt, Smith, Curtis, Galer

Nays: None

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

Daniel L. Smith, President

Lisa A. Young, Board Secretary

Judy L. Sirk, Recording Secretary