

- I. The regular meeting of the Watertown-Mayer School Board in the Watertown City Hall on Monday, December 20, 2021 was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Feldt. Board members present: Feldt, Thompson, Burns, Schulz, H. Guetzkow, Danielson and J. Guetzkow. Absent: None.
Administration team members present: Superintendent Schuler, HS Principal Hennen, MS Principal Guertin, ES Principal Pauly, SPED Director Gronseth, Community Ed Director Dimmler, Director of Teaching & Learning Vieau, Activities Director Szymanski. Absent: None.

Public Comments

Nine speakers signed in with their contact information to address the school board. Eight of the nine who signed in, addressed the Board. The speakers expressed concern regarding: recent communication to families regarding threats made to the school and/or to other students, the overall safety of students in all the schools, the time frame between the time the threat was reported to the time where families were informed of the threats and how improvements could be made, concern for the mental health needs of the students in the district, and policies for disciplinary action by the school by those students who made threats. Several thanked the administration for what was done to handle the recent threats in general.

- II. **Visitor requests and consideration of agenda.** MMS (Motion made and Seconded by) H. Guetzkow and Danielson to approve the agenda as presented. Passes 7-0.

III. **Consent Agenda**

MMS Burns and Thompson to approve the following consent agenda items: Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 22, 2021; Personnel consent agenda; and Business consent agenda. Vice Chair Thompson pointed out that the Personnel Consent Agenda includes the Custodial Contract for 2021-2023. Passes 7-0.

IV. **Recognitions/ Presentations/Showcase**

Commander Mike Wollin from the Carver County Sheriff's Office presented information to the board regarding the recent incidents of threats made to the school and/or students. He reported that 2 of the 3 threats have resulted in arrests of individuals and the third was more of a response for protection. Commander Wollin stated that in all circumstances they did not feel that students were in harm's way and that their commitment will be to thoroughly assess each and any situation for credibility and threat liability. Superintendent Schuler expressed his appreciation to the Commander and his team of officers who have been very accessible and quick response and for taking time to address the board and answer questions.

V. **Action Items**

- A. Superintendent Schuler pointed out that there is additional language in Policy 709 to ensure compliance with federal transportation mandates and guidelines. Both Attachments 709A and 709B are forms in use now for reporting. MMS H. Guetzkow and Feldt to approve second reading of Policies 707, 709, 709A and 709B. Passes 7-0.

709B - Add this Attachment

- B. Superintendent Schuler presented Policy 723 - **Post-Issuance Compliance Policy for Tax-Exempt Governmental Bonds**. This is a new policy to the district necessary for compliance with the refinance of governmental bonds. Superintendent Schuler confirmed that the procedures outlined in the policy are already being done, however, it has not been a formal policy. MMS Burns and J. Guetzkow to approve first and only reading of Policy 723. Passes 7-0.
- C. Superintendent Schuler presented the first reading of the 2022-2023 School Year Calendar. Director H. Guetzkow requests a version of this calendar be made for those color-blind. One date in April was found to be in error and will be corrected for final reading in January. MMS Feldt and Schulz to approve the first read of 2022-2023 with noted corrections. Passes 7-0.
- D. Superintendent Schuler and ICS Representative Chris Vogel presented on the Resolution of the Quarry Ave. Extension Fee Agreement. This agreement allows ICS to enter into conversation with the Township regarding the soft costs of tarring the section of Quarry Ave. ICS Rep. Vogel clarified that the grant received to tar Quarry Ave. does not cover these soft costs of construction. Design drawings for the traffic updates using Quarry Ave. will be available before it goes out to bid in March or April of 2022. MMS Burns and Thompson to approve the Quarry Ave. Extension Fee Agreement. Passes 7-0.

VI. **Review/ Information Items:**

- A. Referendum Project updates were given by ICS representative, Chris Vogel. Superintendent Schuler reported that another walk-through was done of the locker rooms last week along with coaching staff, teaching staff and Activities Director Szymanski. The hope is to have the project bid in February or March of 2022 to update flow, privacy, storage, bathroom and office needs in these locker areas. The goal is to update these locker room areas during the summer hours. Mr. Vogel talked again of the traffic flow improvements to begin the summer of 2022. Mr. Vogel gave updates as to material delay lists becoming shorter. He noted that the school store located outside the cafeteria on the HS side is complete except for some punch list items. He noted that there are 50-60 punch list items remaining at the Middle school besides the office area. The renovations for the Middle school and District offices are set to resume January 1, 2022. Questions were asked and answered.

VII. **Administrative Reports**

ES Principal Pauly presented her school improvement plan. Included were specific building goals, action steps, deadlines, resources and responsible parties. Questions from Board Directors were asked and answered.

Verbal administrative reports were presented.

ES Principal Pauly reported that the ES is averaging 52-72 kids absent per day for various reasons - some symptomatic, choosing to keep kids home, because of masking, vacations, etc. Additionally, 1-2 staff on average have been out each day and they have been in need of building subs every day. Principal Pauly stated that she is slowly seeing some improvement in subs with the new incentives, however, there are still struggles with staffing issues, and she has been thankful for administrative support from Supt. Schuler and Teaching & Learning Director Vieau for stepping in and helping where

needed. Principal Pauly reported that staff has already seen improvements in each grade level with the use of new curriculum and that staff has really embraced the social emotional curriculum in addition to really reflecting on practices of All Means All. Principal Pauly stated that there is a lot of socioeconomic need right now with many students across all grades.

HS Principal Hennen thanked the Sheriff's office for all the work they have done with them the last several days. Principal Hennen brought attention to the work of the current Dean of Students who serves grades 8-12 and the two full-time counselors. The Dean of Students has already had over 800 contacts with kids this year and both counselors have had 230 direct check-ins each so far this year. This data is broken down further with 20% of these visits being 45 minutes or longer with 55% being related to socio-emotional needs and 45% being related to academic/ collegiate needs. Principal Hennen wanted to acknowledge that making these kinds of contacts would have been hard-pressed without the addition of our second counselor this year. The past few weeks have been minimally affected by COVID and overall, has been fully staffed except due to some professional development opportunities. NHS recently sponsored a Parent's Night Out where they had 68 children in attendance, and Student Council, spearheaded by Claire Brandenburg, recently held an event where tie blankets were made by students, alumni, and community members to donate to a local hospital.

MS Principal Guertin gave his COVID update: at the time of the meeting there were 2 confirmed cases, 2 quarantined due to close contact and 22 "ill". There is a lot that has been happening including a recent band and choir concerts as well as upcoming trips again to Wolf Ridge. Principal Guertin expressed his appreciation in working with the Carver County Sheriff's department and for their professionalism not only with staff, but with students. Principal Guertin also thanked parents for being the eyes and ears of our buildings and to share concerns and ask questions.

CE Director Dimmler gave her COVID update: reported that they are averaging 4-5 absences a day across their programming with an average of 23 per week. At this time, they are averaging 2 staff a day absent because of illness. Staff has been working hard to help cover where needed. The new Community Education catalog was released on December 10th, but the hard copy is not yet out because of supply shortages - they hope this will come out in January. Director Dimmler announced that Community Education received a MRAC grant for \$15,000 to support their Summer Youth Theatre Program and they have recently hired a building supervisor to help provide support to evening events. The recent Art to Remember event raised about \$1,000 for the ECFE & YR Preschool and they are set for an Open House and registration January 27th for YR preschool.

Teaching & Learning Director Vieau expressed thanks to all staff and administration for stepping up to cover shortages in staffing so far this year. Review of the Science and English/ Language Arts will be starting in January and MCA testing is just around the corner as well. Director Vieau reported that they recently completed assessments and all grades have made improvements and in 5 of the 8 categories assessed the results were greater than expected - things are moving in the right direction.

Director Szymanski announced the Royal ExCEL award recipients: Mercedes Burmeister and Albert Rundell and the Triple A Nominees: Maris Heun and George Janikula. Director Szymanski reported that there were many worthy candidates for these awards and it was a hard decision to make. Director Szymanski reported that there was increase of 14 participants in the fall season and there was an increase of 1 for the winter season, although MS boys basketball has not started yet. Recently, a survey was sent to student participants and received a 100% response rate. In this survey, 99%

reported that they would encourage others to participate in their extracurricular activity and the majority responded that they felt cared and concerned for by their coach. Director Szymanski gave an update regarding boys soccer and stated that the previously approved dissolution of the cooperative is in process, but nothing has been finalized.

SPED Director Gronseth reported that there are still para openings available and that there is continued evaluation of needs. She did report that Mr. Madsen who was previously helping at the ES will be continuing to help with speech pathology at the middle and high school starting in January. Director Gronseth reported that IEPs have increased this year - in 20-21 there were 334 students and this year there are 367 students with IEPs - she contributes much of this to early identification and an increase of referrals for early-aged children for assessment.

Superintendent Schuler reported that staffing shortages are still a concern as well as staff burnout. Daily requests from each building continue to happen and the current substitute pool is not deep, but he commends all the current staff for stepping up and getting through it. Superintendent Schuler expressed concern for families and students with the recent threats that have occurred and acknowledged that anxiety in general is a very real thing. He reported that there is planned an administrative meeting tomorrow to discuss how to better support students and their mental health needs. He confirmed that the individuals who recently made threats have not been in the buildings and they will continue to work with the Sheriff's office to follow appropriate protocol. Supt. Schuler commends families and students for their reports and doing the right thing about reporting them. Director H. Guetzkow clarified that communication is happening with students about the seriousness of the consequences if verbalization of threats are made as well as the influence of social media and its usage. Director Danielson inquired about the frequency of safety drills. Supt. Schuler clarified that the district is required to complete 5 drills per year which includes lockdown drills which is now using the Raptor system for communication to each classroom. Director Burns thanked school administration, Supt. Schuler and the Carver County Sheriff's office for all the work they've done, especially the past week.

VIII. Discussion of issues or open comments by School Board Directors.

Director Thompson reported that the Personnel committee is currently waiting on dates for Food Service contract negotiations.

Director J. Guetzkow thanked Finance Director Raiter for her time in explaining and breaking down the details for the Finance committee.

Chair Feldt announced that he is in the early planning stages for a board retreat and to please contact him for ideas.

Supt. Schuler stated that the Resource and Training Board is currently looking for other active board members. The requirement is to be an active current board member of a school district. He clarified that the Resource and Training group is the entity that helps provide competitive pricing for districts, currently hosts the LEEA and ESS awards and will be the entity through which district employees will receive their health insurance this coming year.

IX. MMS Burns and Thompson to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM and was duly passed 7-0.

Chair

Clerk