

Eau Claire School Board Agenda
Monday, August 5, 2019
Generated by Meta Miske

Members present

Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

Members absent

Aaron Harder

1. REGULAR MEETING – CALL TO ORDER

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, President Eric Torres called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. Board Secretary Meta Miske confirmed that the meeting had been properly noticed and was in compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

2. PUBLIC FORUM

Mark Goings said the options being voted on later in the meeting are the results of the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee's work. Mr. Goings complimented the Board for using a collaborative system to consider changes as he believes it creates a different feeling regarding decisions. He said he hopes the Board will continue to use a collaborative style of decision making. Mr. Goings said as the District and Board works to earn the trust of the community and inspire the minds of the students it's important to remember that the staff is a large part of earning that trust.

3. BOARD/ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

3.1 Superintendent's Report

Dr. Hardebeck reviewed the Board's calendar of events.

Dr. Hardebeck indicated she would ask to be recognized again upon approval of the Employment Report.

3.2 Board President's Report

President Torres congratulated Dr. Hardebeck for her re-election to the position of Vice President At Large for the Urban Superintendents Association of America.

President Torres went to Madison last week for a training to learn how to execute grant funds for the Family Resource Center. He said there are many opportunities for the Board and District to collaborate and further connections through curriculum development and services to parents in the form of resources designed to help parents learn how to be good parents.

4. OTHER REPORTS

4.1 School Board Committee Reports

Policy & Governance met earlier in the day and is working on two initiatives: Policy 662.3 Fund Balance to better define what makes a healthy fund balance and Policy 751.5 Student Transportation in Private Vehicles.

4.2 Legislative Update

No update to share.

5. CONSENT RESOLUTION AGENDA

Motion by Laurie Klinkhammer, second by Tim Nordin, to approve the following consent resolution items:

- Minutes of July 22, 2019
- Minutes of Closed Session - July 22, 2019
- Human Resources - Employment Report

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

Dr. Hardebeck welcomed Paul Uhren as the new principal of South Middle School; his hire was approved at the July 22, 2019 Board meeting. Mr. Uhren has served several other districts as a principal, Director of Teaching & Learning, and most recently as Superintendent of the Ladysmith School District. He has his Bachelor's and Master's from UW-River Falls and received his Superintendent certification from Winona State University. He has a new grandbaby in Eau Claire and two of his children graduated from North High School so he is very connected to Eau Claire.

Dr. Hardebeck congratulated Dr. Joe Eisenhuth on his transfer from Assistant Principal/Athletic Director at North High School to Principal of Sam Davey Elementary School. Prior to joining the ECASD, Dr. Eisenhuth was the President and CAO at Regis Catholic Schools and previously held positions as an elementary principal, elementary teacher and coach. He holds his Doctorate in Education from Edgewood College.

6. INDIVIDUALLY CONSIDERED RESOLUTION(S)

6.1 Approve Gift from the Ulrich Trust

President Torres said at the last meeting the District received a donation for updates to the track at Memorial which will then be called the Ulrich Track. The District received a check for \$50,000 and the total gift will be \$250,000.

Commissioner Bica suggested the Board evaluate gifts and use the District's equity structure to review athletic facilities at all schools moving forward.

Motion by Joe Luginbill, second by Laurie Klinkhammer to accept the gift from the Ulrich Trust.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

6.2 OPEB Committee Recommendations

Ms. Abby Johnson and Mr. Dan Wilson were present to talk through the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee recommendations. Ms. Johnson reminded the Board of the charge of the committee and recommendations from the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee which had been presented at the July 22, 2019 meeting. The Board has been asked to vote on the committee's recommendations. Ms. Johnson reviewed possible cost savings of each recommendation.

Commissioner Luginbill reminded Board members that the initial discussions about changes to OPEB showed savings over 30 years and these recommendations reflect about \$350,000 in savings for one year which makes these recommendations significant.

Option 1: Shifting the HRA contribution date. Mr. Wilson explained that employees on District insurance receive their HRA contribution on July 1 each year. Anyone who resigns or retires after July 1 keeps the HRA deposit, but a new hire may receive a HRA contribution as well causing the District to pay twice for the same FTE. The OPEB Ad Hoc Committee recommendation is to move the HRA deposit to September so the District avoids double payment as a result of summer retirements and resignations. The committee had discussed the concern of medical bills incurred during July or August. However, the committee felt those bills could be addressed if employees contact their medical provider and arrange a payment plan until the HRA contribution is made. The recommendation is to implement the change July 1, 2020.

Commissioner Luginbill asked if the committee discussed a specific date in September for the HRA deposit. Ms. Johnson said a specific date can be challenging for implementation in the event it falls on a weekend or holiday, but the committee likes September because school year employees have returned to work.

Motion by Joe Luginbill, second by Tim Nordin to shift HRA contribution date from July to September starting July 1, 2020.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Tim Nordin

Abstain: Charles Vue

Option 2: Earn HRA like married couples instead of automatic contribution. Mr. Wilson said employees currently can earn a premium share reduction by completing wellness steps. Since married couple employees do not pay a premium, they instead earn their HRA contribution by completing the same wellness steps. Ms. Johnson said there are very few ways the District can spend funds associated with the

premium share reductions including administrative fees and wellness items. By having employees earn their HRA contribution, the District will have a more flexibility with how the savings from unearned HRA's can be spent. The recommendation is for this to be implemented January 1, 2020 because that would give employees one calendar year to complete the steps to earn the HRA contribution for 2021. The District would see the impact in 2021.

Commissioner Luginbill asked if the technology concerns associated with the website to complete the wellness steps had been resolved. Ms. Johnson said the technology problems occurred a few years ago. Since then there is a new platform and no complaints have been received. Commissioner Nordin clarified that the committee's recommendation impacts the fiscal year of 2021. Ms. Johnson confirmed that was accurate.

Motion by Tim Nordin, second by Lori Bica for employees to earn HRA like ECASD married couples instead of automatic contribution starting fiscal year 2021 contribution.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Tim Nordin

Abstain: Charles Vue

Option 3: No HRA contribution for retirees after retirement. The current practice is that the year after an employee retires, they receive an additional HRA contribution. For example, an employee who retired June 7, 2019 received a July 1, 2019 HRA contribution. The committee recommends that the last year worked is the last year an employee receives the contribution as it is an active employee benefit. The committee recommends an implementation of 2021 to give employees a one-year notice if they are considering retiring.

Commissioner Vue asked why retirees received an additional HRA deposit in the first place. Mr. Wilson said he thinks it was negotiated alongside insurance premiums being capped at the next year's rate to be consistent in looking at the year following retirement for benefits. Ms. Kay Marks agreed with Mr. Wilson's statement.

Motion by Joe Luginbill, second by Tim Nordin, to discontinue HRA contribution for retirees year after retirement starting July 1, 2021.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Tim Nordin

Abstain: Charles Vue

Option 4: Grandfather based upon meeting eligibility instead of fixed date. This option is associated with the original OPEB scenarios A, B, C, and B1. The recommendation only applies if the Board decides to make changes to OPEB. The current grandfathering scenarios force eligible employees to retire in order to keep their benefits. This recommendation would allow employees to remain eligible regardless of when they retire in order to allow employees to work until they want to retire. The committee cannot recommend an implementation date because scenarios A, B, C, and B1 aren't currently on the table for discussion. A vote on this option would indicate that if the Board voted on scenarios A, B, C, and B1 later, this would be the system for grandfathering, thus setting the parameters for the future.

President Torres asked if there is a limit to the dates, for example must an eligible employee retire within eight years to retain the benefit. Mr. Wilson said that there's no limit and if an employee waits to retire, they would be closer to Medicare eligibility and may receive little or no OPEB benefit.

Motion by Commissioner Luginbill, second by Laurie Klinkhammer, to table Option 4 and consider when the Board considers changes to OPEB.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Tim Nordin

Abstain: Charles Vue

Option 5: Lock Insurance Rate at year of retirement instead of year after. Currently retirees choose between the year of retirement or the year after for their insurance rate. The recommendation is to lock insurance rates at the last year worked. The committee recommends a 2021 implementation to give employees a one-year notice to plan.

Motion by Tim Nordin, second by Lori Bica, to lock insurance rate at year of retirement instead of year after starting July 1, 2021.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Tim Nordin

Abstain: Charles Vue

Option 6: Modification of cap based on individual's need. Mr. Wilson explained that retirees currently keep the benefit they retire with. For example, if an employee retires with a family plan, they receive that benefit until eligible for Medicare regardless of whether they remain on a family plan or not. This option would mean as a retiree's insurance needs change the cap is modified to meet their updated needs. This change would require employees to meet with a designated District contact to work through a calculation to determine needs prior to retirement. The committee feels this impact to employees is manageable because it treats everyone evenly based on their needs rather than the plan they retired with. The committee recommends an implementation date of July 1, 2021 to allow employees one year to plan and choose to retire under the current system if they are eligible.

Motion by Joe Luginbill, second by Laurie Klinkhammer, for Modification of cap based on individual's actual needs starting July 1, 2021.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Tim Nordin

Abstain: Charles Vue

Option 7 and 8: Lock Insurance Rate Increase at 5% and Lock Insurance Rate Increase at 3%. Mr. Wilson said these options mean if insurance rates increase by more than 3% or 5% annually, the OPEB liability would only increase at the rate determined by the Board which would provide predictability.

Commissioner Bica asked Mr. Wilson to share the committee's conversation regarding 3% versus 5%. Mr. Wilson said there was a cost savings discussion. 3% is better for the District while 5% is better for the employees. Mr. Wilson was unsure how the committee selected 3% and 5%. Industry standard is an 8% annual increase right now.

Commissioner Bica asked if given the vote on Option 6, would the committee want to have more discussion about Options 7 and 8. Mr. Wilson said Option 6 was never linked to Options 7 and 8 in conversation and there had been no discussion about how they impacted each other. He assumes the committee would like to discuss. Ms. Johnson said Option 6 is about the plan retirees need and Options 7 and 8 are about the cost of the plan so the options are somewhat segregated.

Commissioner Luginbill asked if the Board could get a better estimation of the potential savings of Options 7 and 8 now that Option 6 was approved. Ms. Johnson said she could work with the actuaries to formulate an estimation, but it would take time. Ms. Johnson said the District is due to have a new actuarial study in 2020 and it would make sense to add this item as part of the study to save money and not require a separate study.

Motion by Joe Luginbill, second by Lori Bica to table Options 7 and 8 for further consideration until after scheduled work with an actuary in 2020.

Discussion: Commissioner Bica asked if they could include a range in the study, not just 3% and 5%. Ms. Johnson said she can ask the actuaries to look at other items and ranges if the Board directs further studies on OPEB. Commissioner Nordin asked if we wait until the study in 2020, would the OPEB Ad Hoc Committee still support enacting a change in 2024 or would they want to change the implementation date. Mr. Wilson said he could not speak for the committee, but he and Ms. Johnson aren't sure where an implementation date of 2024 came from as part of the committee's ranking process. The biggest concern of the committee has been making sure there's plenty of communication and time for the employees to make decisions.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Tim Nordin

Abstain: Charles Vue

Option 9: Grandfather based upon years of service instead of age and years of service. The recommendation only applies if the Board decides to make changes to OPEB. This recommendation would

support employees who had completed the required years of service in the District but do not meet the age criteria. For example, an employee with 25 years of service may be 55 and can retire, or they may be 49 and miss out on benefits they worked their whole career for. This option was ranked lowest by the committee.

Motion by Lori Bica, second by Joe Luginbill, to table Option 9 until it's determined if further changes will be made to OPEB.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Tim Nordin

Abstain: Charles Vue

Dr. Torres thanked Mr. Wilson and Ms. Johnson their work. He encouraged them to continue meeting and creating other good ideas for reducing the budget deficit.

7. ADJOURN TO COMMITTEE

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS/ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

8.1 Mentor Program

Jim Schmitt provided the Board with an update on the Mentor Program which will begin its third year this fall. The first cohort has finished the revised two-year program at the end of the 2018-19 school year; the previous program was a one-year program. The Teaching & Learning Department has also done several things to make the program better and streamline the payment process.

The program aligns to almost all areas of the strategic plan but especially focuses on high quality staff, creating a collaborative culture between the mentor and mentee, and supporting student growth through staff development. When the new program was developed, they looked at research about beginning teachers and learned that their students performed better when a strong mentor program was implemented. The ECASD's first cohort's data is embargoed right now, but the plan is to have student data moving forward to show the benefits of the program. Research also showed that teacher commitment and retention is benefited by the mentor program. The District average turnover rate is 8%, but the turnover rate for those in the mentor program was 6%. Mentoring not only reinforces best practice in classroom instruction but also benefits the mentor in terms of professional development.

The program comes at a cost; the mentor pairings meet August through June and both mentors and mentees can receive a \$100 each month. The cost the first year was lower because there was only one year of pairings; the cost increased in the second year since most pairings continued, so there were both first- and second-year mentor pairings. Sometimes pairs cannot meet because of schedules which can reduce cost, but the estimated maximum cost is \$210,000 per year.

A survey regarding the District's Mentor Program indicated 98% of mentors value the program and agree it is a quality program. Responses from the mentees were slightly lower, but mentees indicated they appreciated getting timely feedback from their mentor. Mr. Schmitt invited the Board to visit www.ecasd.us/mentor to view details of the program including a timeline with several monthly topics which guides conversations for mentors and mentees.

Amanda Judnic teaches 5th grade at Robbins elementary and just completed the mentor program with Lisa Johnson as her mentor. For new graduates teaching is an overwhelming and highly demanding profession. She appreciated having Ms. Johnson as a go-to person to show her the ropes and welcome her into her position. Ms. Johnson helped her with lesson planning, classroom management, Educator Effectiveness and My Learning Plan, and there was a great deal of collaboration that resulted in mutually beneficial tools. Ms. Judnic said they'll continue the relationship beyond the defined program.

Ms. Lisa Johnson said she was apprehensive about the program based on past experiences, but she said the restructure, trainings, and support have been very beneficial in making the program a success. Ms. Johnson said it has re-energized her toward teaching, has her thinking about best practice, and she appreciates the valuable discourse about teaching and students. She gets new ideas and new experiences from the relationship which is very motivating. Ms. Johnson said she and Ms. Judnic will continue to collaborate.

Commissioner Nordin asked if there's plans to follow mentees for retention rates to see if the benefits will

hold. Mr. Schmitt said they'll continue to collect data regarding retention rates and other data, and also indicated the Human Resources department uses the program as a recruitment tool.

8.2 Family Engagement Survey Results

Jim Schmitt said the sixth Family Engagement Survey was completed in the spring of 2019. Last year participation had declined with feedback that the survey was too long or that it's time to take a break from the survey and try focus groups. This year they received data from about 1,600 families (14% of families). The survey is available in English, Hmong, and Spanish. The survey is deployed to all Skyward e-mail addresses and is kept open from February through the end of the school year. Mr. Schmitt said it is time to try and collect data in a different way.

The survey measures family engagement for family partnerships, feedback loops, and to meet ESSA and Title I requirements. There has been an emphasis on families being the first teachers which has changed the District's strategies. Families have said they want their children to feel connected to the schools so the District will work on educating the whole child and intertwining academic and behavioral learning. Principals will receive their survey data at the August 6-7 Principal Retreat and will then work on their School Improvement Plan (SIP) with their building leadership teams to build and strengthen family partnerships.

Surveys show that ECASD families perceive a much higher educational quality than others. 83% of families would grade ECASD an A or B in educational quality. 80% of the Eau Claire area community would grade ECASD as an A or B while the national average has only 53% of people rating their area schools as an A or B in educational quality.

There weren't significant variations between the 2018 and 2019 survey results. The goal is 80% in all areas; Safety and Behavior, Principal Leadership, and Family Engagement all need some work to improve those numbers. Safety and Behavior has increased in the school safety area (the referendum work helped with this increase) and "all students are aware of safety and security" has also increased. Customer service continues to be an issue, and "schools using family input to improve instruction" decreased in the last year.

The survey also asks about how families receive information and how they want to receive information. Email is ranked highest both for how families receive and want to receive information.

Anne Hartman, Family Advisory Council (FAC) representative from Memorial, was present to talk about family engagement. Ms. Hartman's children went to private school until one of her children asked in 7th grade to go to South. Ms. Hartman wanted to get involved because she was accustomed to family involvement at the private school. Ms. Hartman said there aren't as many family involvement opportunities at the middle and high schools so she joined the Falcon Advisory Council at South and later joined FAC. Ms. Hartman said FAC is a good way to get to know what ECASD is all about, ask questions and be informed. FAC meets monthly and learns about the happenings in the District. All FAC representatives give reports about the happenings at their schools and Dr. Hardebeck provides an update on District initiatives and issues.

Ms. Hartman shared that at Memorial there is not a parent group for her to share FAC information with. She hopes that as her last child goes through Memorial, she can get a parent group started. Ms. Hartman said that FAC appreciates being asked about how to increase family engagement. One way the District did this was to ask FAC to review the school calendar before it was approved. Many working parents expressed challenges when children at different schools had different days off, so gathering family input through FAC helped improve the calendar. Ms. Hartman said FAC is a great way for families to be involved and represent their school.

President Torres thanked Ms. Hartman and Mr. Schmitt for their presentation.

Commissioner Luginbill asked with next survey or focus groups, if the District can look at specific subsets of families to identify the underserved and how the District can better serve them.

President Torres asked about the survey section regarding principal leadership: what are the areas that seem to be the weakest and is there a plan to address those? Mr. Schmitt said "conflict between school staff and families being handled in a professional manner" scored the lowest. Mr. Schmitt said the focus

group might help the District address this because it would allow a deeper look at whether the family was unhappy about the result or how it was handled.

Commissioner Vue asked if the survey shows how families perceive teachers in general and gave an example of his summer program which conducts a survey each year in order as part of efforts to improve the perception of high-quality staff. Mr. Schmitt said each school will receive results to review and share with staff in order to address perceptions of the staff. Dr. Hardebeck said the District may be able to work with K-12 Insight to add questions to better address the question of how teaching staff are perceived.

Commissioner Luginbill thanked Ms. Hartman her presentation and noted the importance of a strong FAC. One of the tasks of FAC is to bring recommendations to the School Board, and he would like to see it added to the School Board calendar to invite them to come forward more often with recommendations such as on school safety and mental health.

8.3 Technology Update and 1:1 Refresh Proposal

Jim Schmitt said the technology update and refresh are associated with the strategic priorities of support academic achievement, social emotional growth, and collaborative cultures. The last technology plan was in 2015, and at the time the focus was on engaging and safe technology and balanced assessment. State exams and assessments are entirely online except the Grade 11 ACT, so the District has had to become compliant. Canvas and Skyward are used as the student learning and student information systems. The expectation is that the students are living in a digital world.

James Martin shared the history of deploying devices to students starting in the Fall of 2013 with iPads for 3rd and 4th graders, 6th graders at DeLong and some instructional staff. There has been a transition from Chromebooks to HP Streams to accommodate apps that run better on Windows and Microsoft specific programs. There was a refresh in 2018 of the first batch of iPads. The Technology Department hopes to refresh the Chromebooks and the iPads for 5th graders, and 6th graders at South and Northstar plus some instructional staff.

Mr. Martin explained there is usually a five-year manufacturer window for refreshes. For example, the Chromebooks purchased in 2014 will not be updated by Google anymore so the District must put security measures in place to keep them working properly and safely. The recommended refresh is every four years, so the District is now beyond that recommendation at five years. The refresh plan is being driven by manufacturers discontinuing support so it is out of the District's hands.

The immediate need is for \$645,000 which is specific to 1/4 of the Chromebooks (replacing them with Windows laptops), as well as 5th grade iPads and 6th grade iPads at South and Northstar. Additionally, there's a need for \$439,00 in safety (Informacast and building public address systems) as well as \$1.27M for infrastructure which includes wireless access points, web filtering, network switches, firewall replacement, router replacement, and uninterruptible power supplies. Some of the needs are basic needs essential to conducting business, such as Skyward.

Mr. Martin said at the August 19 Board meeting, he will be asking for funding for \$645,000 to allow the Technology Department to begin ordering new devices to get in the hands of students hands as soon as possible and ensure it is included in the 2019-2020 budget. Mr. Schmitt said the other two items on the list would be a request on the October budget proposal because those items can wait until the budget is approved while the devices are an early and urgent expenditure.

9. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

9.1 Requests for Future Agenda Items

Agenda setting August 6 in the morning.

Dr. Bica asked for work session time to focus on the governance structure.

10. ADJOURN

Motion by Charles Vue, second by Tim Nordin to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried

Yes: Lori Bica, Laurie Klinkhammer, Joe Luginbill, Eric D Torres, Charles Vue, Tim Nordin

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.