

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

Minutes – Monday, February 14, 2022

208. **I. CALL TO ORDER**

President DeWitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Sault Area Middle School, 684 Marquette Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie and viewable via Zoom: <https://eupschools.zoom.us/j/91030370570> Meeting ID: 910 3037 0570.

Senior Mackenzie Anderson of the Administrative Services and Accounting program led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

209. **A. ROLL CALL OF BOARD**

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

Absent: Jay D. Wilson

210. **B. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

It was moved by Member Smith, supported by Member Young, to adopt the agenda as presented.

Additions to the Agenda:

Item III. E. Overnight Travel Request - Robotics - Escanaba

Item III. F. Overnight Travel Request - Robotics - Midland

Item VI. Closed Session 8(a) - Periodic Superintendent Evaluation

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

Nays: None

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

211. **C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Regular Meeting - January 10, 2022

Special Meeting - January 19, 2022 - 5:30 p.m.

Special Meeting - January 19, 2022 - 6:00 p.m.

Closed Session - January 19, 2022 - 6:00 p.m.

Closed Session - January 19, 2022 - 6:00 p.m.

Closed Session - January 19, 2022 - 6:00 p.m.

It was moved by Member Smith, supported by Member Galer, that the Board of Education approve the minutes listed above with Member Curtis abstaining from the January 10 minutes.

Member Curtis indicated she needed to abstain from the January 10, 2022, minutes because she was absent.

Yeas: Young, Galer, DeWitt, Smith, Pingatore

Nays: None

Abstain: Curtis

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

212. **D. *BUSINESS REPORT AND APPROVAL OF BILLS – Mrs. Michelle Bennin***

Mrs. Bennin reported on the January bill lists and highlighted the increase in revenues on the statement of revenues and expenditures. She reported cash flow was healthy and the district was moving forward in preparing the 2023 budget.

It was moved by Member Galer, supported by Member Pingatore, that the Board of Education approve the January General Fund Bill List in the amount of \$2,358,665.42 and the Food Service Bill List in the amount of \$47,820.14.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

II. *COMMUNICATIONS*

213. **A. *REPORTS TO THE BOARD***

1. *Recognition*

Ms. Rondeau reported on the following outstanding teacher and employee of the month recipients. She will present them with the helpful Teacher and Employee of the Month tee shirt and \$50 in Chamber Bucks sponsored by Doug LaPrade Insurance and Parker Ace Hardware.

- a. Teacher of the Month (Kelly Beaumont) – Ms. Jessica Rondeau
- b. Employee of the Month (Kerry Bell) – Ms. Jessica Rondeau

2. Washington School – Dr. Sheri McFarlane

Dr. McFarlane reported on activities at Washington School surrounding Valentine’s Day, Kindness Week, Quote of the Day, and March is Reading Month.

Dr. McFarlane reported Kindergarten Round-up was presented on WSOO’s Perspective and will be held virtually March 8 through 10 with an open house in May and testing in August. She indicated teacher encompassed assessment tools for letters, sounds, print, and directionality would be included for a more thorough understanding.

Dr. McFarlane reported there were currently 144 students enrolled in Kindergarten and 112 in first grade.

3. Lincoln School – Mrs. Diane Chevillot

Mrs. Chevillot reported on the \$2,500 HSAT Staff Wellness Grant and its focus on recognizing and supporting staff.

Mrs. Chevillot reported on Kindness Week and Snowtastic Day. She reported on the number of students planning to compete in Michigan History Day and the Science Fair.

Mrs. Chevillot reported on the preparations being made for the Fairy Tale themed March is Reading Month.

4. Sault Middle School – Ms. Jessica Rondeau

Ms. Rondeau reported on the efforts made to address the social and emotional learning coming out of the pandemic. She noted the activities planned for Family Fun Night, Kindness Week, Parent Teacher Conferences, Seventh Grade Boyne Ski Trip, and Eighth Grade Mackinac Island Trip.

Ms. Rondeau indicated 19 teams were scheduled to participate in the STEM ROV Competition at LSSU.

Mrs. Rondeau indicated enrollment had increased so that there were no open seats for Schools of Choice students for second semester.

Ms. Rondeau reported on the addition of a double ELA class for eighth grade students and the projected staff openings for next year.

Mrs. Rondeau reported on student assemblies for internet safety, youth gambling, and teen dating and violence.

5. Malcolm High School – Mrs. Sandy Sawyer

Mrs. Sawyer reported Malcolm students had participated in the Festival of Trees event for the teen foster home, Charcuterie Boards for Hospice, a student Fashion Show, and the United Way Dessert Auction.

Mrs. Sawyer reported she was looking to permanently fill a paraprofessional position that is currently filled with long term substitute.

Mrs. Sawyer reported on the Roque Wall and Black History Month celebrations.

Mrs. Sawyer reported preparations for Parent Teacher Conferences and Parent Engagement scheduled for the first week in March.

6. Sault High School – Mr. Carl McCready

Mr. McCready reported on plans for FASFA night, Senior Class events and graduation.

Mr. McCready reported CMU, Aquinas, LSSU, and Finlandia had made school visits and MCAN was enabling students to visit Northern Michigan and Ferris State. He noted a couple of students had taken the ASVAB test for possible enlistment into the military.

Mr. McCready reported Parent Teacher Conferences were scheduled to be held in the cafeteria this week.

Mr. McCready reported on the Veteran's Day Assembly and the Thankful for College Cash event.

Mr. McCready reported a large number of students in the junior class had been inducted into the National Honor Society.

Mr. McCready reported the Band and Choir Holiday Concert was hosted in the gym and was very well received.

Mr. McCready reported the Lunch Bunch designed by Mrs. Sherman was back and students who qualified but are unable to attend, are allowed to go to the library and pick up a B-Dubs lunch.

Mr. McCready reported on the following activities students participated in since November - Veteran's Day Assembly, A *Christmas Carol* play, Santa Visits, Cash for College, and a Red Cross Blood Drive.

Mr. McCready reported on the positive effects of offering MAP testing earlier than usual to allow for more time and effort between exams.

Mr. McCready reported Mrs. Gardner's Computer Science Class had received a diversity award.

Mr. McCready reported on February being CTE Education Month and senior business students' would be participating in mock interviews later in the month.

Mr. McCready reported student report cards and transcripts should be uploaded into MiStar tomorrow.

Mr. McCready reported the district band festival was scheduled for Thursday and Friday in the gym, and Meet the National Guard was scheduled for Friday.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Mr. McCready confirmed the blood drive was open to the public.

Mr. McCready reported Sault High was 1 of 7 high schools in the state to offer CTE programs in its building (10 programs plus work-based learning). He reported there were 451 students (a 24% increase from 2016 to 2021) currently taking 656 CTE courses and some were 2-hour blocks.

Mr. McCready contrasted a 95% high school graduation rate of students who concentrated in CTE courses compared to the state graduation rate of 82.1%.

Mr. McCready reported the 2021 follow-up survey indicated 67.5% of CTE concentrators were continuing on with their education, 57.1% were employed, and 3% were in the military.

BPA Global Marketing students Abigail Walther, Claire Erickson, Mackenzie Bell, and Hannah Maurer presented their comprehensive business plan for BPA competition. They reported on the requirements and the areas of study they drew from that earned them first place at regionals and the opportunity to move on to state competition in March.

President DeWitt thanked the CTE staff and students for all their presentation.

B. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer introduced Mr. R.J. Naughton of PFM Financial Advisors to present the steps necessary to move forward with a bond proposal.

1. R.J. Naughton; PFM

Mr. Naughton indicated he had previously worked with the district on a couple of bonds and indicated it may be possible to tie into existing one.

Mr. Naughton presented taxable value history and projections for the next 2 years. He noted the projected debt levy would decrease at the end of the 2026/27 fiscal year.

Mr. Naughton reported bond proposals have to stipulate what the purpose of the bond is for.

Mr. Naughton presented a possible May 2024 bond proposal for 22.8 million dollars for 20 years. He noted if the district needs less, the bond would be for a shorter bond time, and this would be a maximum amount with a no mil increase.

Mr. Naughton reported on Michigan's average millage passage rate for a no mil increase based on when it was proposed.

Mr. Naughton reported a sinking fund does not allow for as much money as a bond millage and it would be limited to 10 years as opposed to 30 years.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Mr. Naughton reported there are between 40-50 school districts working through bond proposals each year.

Mr. Naughton reported on the rise in interest rates as the cost for materials increase due to supply chain issues.

Mr. Naughton reported a preliminary filing date needs to be addressed before a vote goes out to the voters; for example, you need to file in December 2023 for an election in May 2024.

Mr. Naughton reported last November in Michigan there was a very high election turnout and 11 districts proposed bond mileages with 100 percent passage and 9 were millage increases. He reported on the need to be considerate of all items on a ballot.

Upon inquiry from Member Galer on what the advantage of a sinking fund is compared to a bond millage other than the duration and maximum

dollars, Mr. Naughton reported there are a couple of differences in which the funds can be spent (sinking funds can be used for maintenance, and bond millage funds can be used for technology), and sinking funds can be used while a debt millage is falling off.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer thanked Mr. Naughton and stated she had been asked to reach out to him for possible considerations.

2. Safe and Healthy Schools

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported on the number of positive COVID cases and attendance rates since January. She stated cases seem to be trending downward as projected after the two week holiday break. She noted there are now two health department contact tracers which is enabling nurse Michaels to get back to helping students, working on vaccinations, and monitoring/scheduling student needs.

3. Growth Report (NWEA MAP)

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported lower grade level benchmark assessments indicate students came in with lower skill sets due to the disruption of in person learning. She stated the lack of in person interaction with students and staff play a big role in learning literacy and math. She reported the district anticipates hiring more staff to respond to the students' needs.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported on the need for Summer School intervention and the difficulty of having teachers continually modify their curriculum to meet the fluctuating needs of the students throughout the year.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported virtual and in person parent-teacher conferences were available later in the week.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the District School Improvement Team (DSIT) has been working on the Portrait of a Graduate. She stated a survey had been sent out through multiple online sources in an effort to receive at least 500 responses for a desired model.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the District School Improvement Team had been looking into the specifics of land acknowledgement, social media guidance, and cyber bullying.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported DM Burr hours were down 60 per day and the district is working to keep the buildings cleaned. She stated the EUPISD contract had been reduced and central administration was cleaning most of its building.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported on the difficulty of trying to retain and attract caring and talented individuals who want to work. She asked the Board to approve the Merit Pay action item later in the agenda to assist in this area.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the enrollment and budgeting season had begun. She indicated the fall student FTE was 1,953.95 and the winter 1,972.50. She noted careful consideration will be given to what the state allocates.

215. C. **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

President DeWitt opened the meeting to public comment.

Keith Erickson thanked the Board for allowing BPA students to present their project. He expressed the need to support Career Center efforts in teaching hands-on as well as academic skills.

III. ACTION ITEMS AND BOARD REPORTS

216. A. **PERSONNEL**

New Hires

Mrs. Chevillot presented the following.

1. Cynthia Brown – Special Education Paraprofessional – Lincoln School

It was moved by Member Galer, supported by Member Pingatore, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Cynthia Brown as part-time Special Education Resource Room Paraprofessional for Lincoln School.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

Ms. Rondeau presented the following.

2. Ernie Beaumont – Grades 4 and 5 Boys Basketball Supervisor – Sault Area Middle School

It was moved by Member Curtis, supported by Member Young, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Ernie Beaumont as Grades 4 and 5 Boys Basketball Supervisor for Sault Area Middle School.

Yeas: Young, Galer, DeWitt, Curtis, Smith, Pingatore
Nays: None
Absent: Wilson
Motion Carried.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer presented the following and noted the former maintenance position moved over to a full-time busing position.

3. David Cunningham – Mail/Food Truck Driver – Sault Area Public Schools

It was moved by Member Smith, supported by Member Galer, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of David Cunningham as part-time Mail/Food Truck Driver for Sault Area Public Schools.

Yeas: Young, Galer, DeWitt, Curtis, Smith, Pingatore
Nays: None
Absent: Wilson
Motion Carried.

217. **B. *DM BURR – Mrs. Michelle Bennin***

Mrs. Bennin reported on the 7 unfilled custodial positions and the need to attract and retain employees. She stated the contract adjustment would be for a monthly rate increase from \$69,761 to a not to exceed amount of \$80,205 for competitive wages. Mrs. Bennin reported the general fund budget line item was projected to increase just a little over \$125,000 for the year, and the range for the increase was due to the contracted hours billed.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Mrs. Bennin reported the custodians are currently paid \$12 per hour, but the projected wage and number of potential candidates would have to be determined. Member Smith suggested the increase may be more for retention than hire.

It was moved by Member Galer, supported by Member Curtis, that the Board of Education approve the contract adjustment with DM Burr for a monthly contract rate not to exceed \$80,205.

Yeas: Young, Galer, DeWitt, Curtis, Smith, Pingatore
Nays: None
Absent: Wilson
Motion Carried.

218. **C. *OVERNIGHT TRAVEL REQUEST – Mrs. Megan Burkitt***

Mrs. Burkitt presented the travel request. She stated she had traveled with EF Tours 4 times over her teaching career and they have been well organized, safe, and offered a nice educational component to the tours.

Upon inquiry from Member Curtis, Mrs. Burkitt reported all of the students are academically sound thus far and they have been aware of the academic requirements/expectations from the start.

It was moved by Member Curtis, supported by Member Smith, that the Board of Education approve the overnight travel for students to travel to France and Spain through EF Educational Tours as presented.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

219. **D. *OVERNIGHT TRAVEL REQUEST - Mrs. Kellie Greener and Mrs. Heather Suggitt***

Mrs. Lussier presented the BPA travel request and indicated 32 students had qualified for the event.

It was moved by Member Smith, supported by Member Curtis, that the Board of Education approve the overnight travel for students to participate in the Business Professionals of America Leadership Conference and attend the leadership seminars in Grand Rapids as presented.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

220. **E. *OVERNIGHT TRAVEL REQUEST – Ms. Jeanne Shibley***

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer presented the following.

Upon inquiry from President DeWitt, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the team had fundraisers and sponsors to help offset the travel costs.

It was moved by Member Smith, supported by Member Galer, that the Board of Education approve the overnight travel to Escanaba for the FIRST Robotics Team as presented.

Yeas: Young, Galer, DeWitt, Curtis, Smith, Pingatore
Nays: None
Absent: Wilson
Motion Carried.

221. **F. *OVERNIGHT TRAVEL REQUEST – Ms. Jeanne Shibley***

Upon inquiry from President DeWitt, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported 10 students were planned to attend the competition.

It was moved by Member Curtis, supported by Member Smith, that the Board of Education approve the overnight travel to Midland for the FIRST Robotics Team as presented.

Yeas: Young, Galer, DeWitt, Curtis, Smith, Pingatore
Nays: None
Absent: Wilson
Motion Carried.

222. **G. *MERIT PAY – Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer***

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported \$25,000 was established in 2011 for teacher merit pay and in 2018 it was attached to teacher evaluations and included FICA and retirement. She requested the amount to be doubled and all-inclusive following the current process in place.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer confirmed the merit pay would continue to be based on the teacher's evaluation.

President DeWitt raised for discussion the possibility of setting the amount of merit pay every January so it would coincide with district finances.

Member Curtis indicated she did not want to back down from an amount a teacher had already earned.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer confirmed \$25,000 was expensed in merit pay annually and it was prorated and could be driven down pending the number of teachers qualified to receive it.

Member Galer reported there should be other ways to adjust the budget if necessary. Superintendent Kronemeyer reported the total amount had not been adjusted since 2011.

It was moved by Member Curtis, supported by Member Young, that the Board of Education increase the Merit Pay to \$75,000 including FICA and Retirement.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

223. **H. *BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT REPORTING Sec. 98b – Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer***

It was moved by Member Pingatore, supported by Member Curtis, that the Board of Education approve the Benchmark Assessment Report as presented.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

224. **I. *BOARD COMPENSATION – Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer***

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported on the board compensation policy that had been dormant in the district manual for several years. She sought input on how to proceed.

Member Galer indicated she was in favor of following the policy as it was only \$30 a meeting, many other boards receive at least that much, and it might help someone choose to serve on the board who would be at an economic disadvantaged for child care or mileage. She further stated members could donate the money back if they didn't want it.

Member Smith reported the board stopped receiving compensation when the district economic outlook turned bad and busing was eliminated. He stated it had been close to 30 years since then, and if you cannot donate 2 to 3 hours a month for a meeting, you probably shouldn't be on the board. He further stated it's the same respect if you serve on the board and come unprepared or are in a hurry to get out for Monday night football or the like. He stated it is a thankless job but you have to want to do it for the kids.

Member Young indicated she agreed with what Member Galer said on the stipend and indicated the policy could always change in the future.

Members Curtis and DeWitt indicated they were leaning toward rescinding the policy after hearing from Member Smith.

It was moved by Member Pingatore, supported by Member Smith, that the Board of Education eliminate the board compensation policy.

Yeas: DeWitt, Curtis, Smith, Pingatore

Nays: Galer, Young

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

225. **J. *GIFTS AND DONATIONS – Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer***

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer presented the following.

1. International Antique Auto Club donated \$200 to the Homeless Program.
2. First United Presbyterian Church continues to provide support to Lincoln School students for snacks as needed.
3. Employees of the Chippewa County Health Department donated \$173.82 in dress down money to the Homeless Program.

President DeWitt thanked the community for their support.

It was moved by Member Curtis, supported by Member Smith, that the Board of Education accept the above donations with thanks and appreciation.

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

Nays: None

Absent: Wilson

Motion Carried.

226. **IV. *BOARD GOVERNANCE AND BOARD POLICY ISSUES***

President DeWitt reported he was planning to attend the MASB Board President workshop.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Mrs. Bennin reported there were no COVID relief funds in the fund equity line item of the budget as it had been moved into the capital project fund line item.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the district had not received ESSER funds for the high school project yet, but it was typical in MEGS to have multiple adjustments and resubmissions.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Mr. McCready reported Mrs. Menard had placed Challenge Day for discussion in the spring in hopes the event can take place in the fall. He stated there is a lot of fundraising that has to go into supporting the challenge.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Ms. Rondeau indicated it cost \$10,000 - \$12,000 for 40 students to participate in the past. Mrs. Sherman reported it cost the high school \$30,000-\$40,000 for 3 days and that was with getting other schools in the area agreeing to utilize the presenters at their schools. Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer indicated some At Risk money could be used to support the efforts. Ms. Rondeau indicated she had requested 2% money two years ago for this and never received it.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Mr. McCreedy reported there hasn't been a graduation party since COVID. He stated the volunteer numbers had gone down and no one wanted to step up. He stated once it was shut down with COVID there had not been any discussion or comments about it until now. He reported it had been community driven in the past.

Upon inquiry from President DeWitt, Mr. McCreedy reported volunteer efforts had started long before February, it was held at LSSU, and there were giveaways for some large ticket items like a car, TVs, and other large items. Mrs. Lussier reported the first graduation party was for the Class of 1986.

Member Smith reported on the need to use ESSER funds to possibly hire 2 mental health professionals/counselors for the high school and 2 for the middle school. He referenced the increased number of expulsions, mental health issues coming out of COVID, the number of attempted suicides over the past two years, and a student from another school who was struggling before breaking down and doing carnage. He stated especially now, we need to do everything we can for our kids.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the district increased the number of counselors at Malcolm from 2 to 4, there are Native American Advisors at all schools except Washington, and there are academic counselors at the middle and high schools. She indicated the SHACC could probably use one more counselor for more advanced needs and would check into the cost of possibly hiring one.

227. V. ***FUTURE PLANNING***

March 14 - Regular Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

April 11 - Regular Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

April 25 - Annual Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

May – EUPSBA Meeting

May 3 – Evening with the Arts

May 4 - Board Budget Workshop - 5:30 p.m.

May 5 - Budget Presentation - 4:30 p.m. & 5:30 p.m.

May 9 - Regular Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

June 13 - Regular Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

Upon inquiry from Member Smith, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the Governor indicated what her plan was but did not discuss the money to support it.

228. **VI. *CLOSED SESSION – M.O.M.A. 15.268 §8(a)***

It was moved by Member Smith, supported by Member Curtis, that the Board of Education move into closed session at 9:24 p.m. in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act §15.268, Sec. 8(a), for periodic superintendent evaluation.

Yeas: Young, Galer, DeWitt, Curtis, Smith, Pingatore
Nays: None
Absent: Wilson
Motion Carried.

The Board reconvened in open session at 9:40 p.m.

229. **VII. *ADJOURNMENT***

There being no further business to come before the Board at 9:40 p.m., it was moved by Member Curtis, supported by Member Pingatore, that the meeting be adjourned.

Raymond J. DeWitt, Board President

Christine M. Curtis, Board Secretary

Judy L. Sirk, Recording Secretary