

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

**Minutes – Monday, February 8, 2021**

185. **I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Smith called the electronic meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom:  
<https://eupschools.zoom.us/j/92574565033> or Dial in: +1 646 876 9923 Meeting  
ID: 925 7456 5033

186. **A. ROLL CALL OF BOARD**

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

Absent: None

187. **B. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

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

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried.

188. **C. SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH FIRM – Superintendent Hall**

Superintendent Hall reported Michigan Leadership Institute and Michigan  
Association of School Boards were the two leading search firms in the  
region. He indicated MLI was chosen by straw vote to present first.

1. Michigan Leadership Institute

Charles Andrews and Co-host John Scholten introduced themselves as  
former superintendents with several years of experience. Mr. Andrews  
acknowledged he was regional president and would be our main contact if  
MLI was chosen.

Mr. Andrews reported on MLI's profile from 1999 to its purchase by  
Genesee ISD two years ago. He noted MLI works with a team of

seasoned administrators that have a proven track record for successful placement of superintendents throughout the state.

Mr. Andrews reported MLI guarantees its search for the superintendent who is the right fit for the district or until the Board is pleased with its selection. He stated the firm will use all its services and experience to benefit the district.

Mr. Andrews estimated there would be approximately 35-45 candidates who would apply for the position.

Mr. Andrews reported on the great legal support, graphic arts, and resources MLI has to offer and noted any revenue generated from the search would go to student support services in the Genesee ISD area.

Mr. Andrews reported on MLI's extensive FOIA knowledge for conducting interviews and the mentoring and governance workshop they provide after the candidate is hired.

Mr. Andrews reported very good candidates are not always the right fit for certain districts and MLI has a variety of contacts throughout the state to assist with recruitment.

Mr. Andrews reported MLI extends the search out two years if the new superintendent should leave within a year of being hired, other than for family or health issues, and they mentor new Superintendents for a full year.

Mr. Andrews explained the three-stage process of Planning and Preparation, Implementation, and Finalizing the right candidate for the Board.

Mr. Andrews reported the district's cost is \$6,200 plus direct expenses not to exceed \$800.

Upon inquiry for questions, Mr. Andrews stated MLI does not push candidates specifically out of MLI's academy nor those without experience, they look for candidates who might be the best fit and present all of them to the Board.

Members Curtis, Pingatore, and Galer indicated their questions had been answered.

Upon inquiry from Member Young, Mr. Andrews reported MLI does not favor candidates who have gone through their academy because it is not their decision to make, and they do not want to compromise their position of presenting all qualified candidates.

Upon inquiry from Member Wilson, Mr. Andrews reported MLI uses the same superintendent search sites as any other firm and they receive applications from all over the country. He noted with the increased number of superintendents retiring this year, there will be a need to secure a candidate as soon as possible.

Upon inquiry from Member DeWitt, Mr. Andrews indicated if a chosen candidate had not been through one of MLI's superintendent workshops, they would typically provide a scholarship to cover the cost for them to attend a workshop.

President Smith thanked Mr. Andrews and Mr. Scholten for their presentation and indicated someone would be contacting them on the Board's selection.

## 2. Michigan Association of School Boards

Joe Powers introduced himself as search consultant for MASB and acknowledged his experience and that of a retired superintendent.

Mr. Powers reported MASB conducts the most searches within the state and has a long record of placing the right candidate in the right district. He reported if MASB was selected, the search team would ensure candidates met the profile and had adequate credentials before placing them in a three-tier tool for the Board. He noted MASB uses the Revelus application platform and all applicants are viewable by the entire Board and MASB is beholden only to the district.

Mr. Powers reported this spring is supposed to be one of the most intense times with multiple openings across the state. He stated he is looking forward to starting the process with our district and would follow all COVID regulations.

Mr. Powers reviewed MASB's timeline for securing a new superintendent and indicated each candidate would be assigned a number until an offer had been given and accepted for an interview.

Mr. Powers reported on the possibility of customizing questions for the Board to gain a candidates' awareness about specific financial awareness, facility planning, bonding, and negotiations.

Mr. Powers reported on the unified vote for the final candidate.

Mr. Powers reported MASB provides on-going support for new superintendents and a price break for additional facilitated support.

President Smith indicated the Board was familiar with MASB and the training it offers before opening the meeting up for comment.

Members Curtis, Pingatore, Young, and Galer had no unanswered questions.

Upon inquiry from Member Wilson, Mr. Powers reported MASB has access to a vast network of potential candidates and they have already reached out to make some aware of the district's opening and what Sault Ste. Marie has to offer.

Upon inquiry from Member DeWitt, Mr. Powers indicated MASB conducts a state background check on potential candidates, but they would be happy to do a more extensive check for an additional fee if the Board wanted. Mr. Powers further confirmed a fingerprint and criminal FBI check would only be needed if the candidate was not currently working in a Michigan school system.

Upon inquiry from Member DeWitt, Mr. Powers estimated the Board would receive approximately 15 quality candidates out of a pool of 25-30 applicants. He acknowledged he usually seeks quality applicants who may be a good match for the district rather than quantity, but he would do whatever the Board wanted him to do.

President Smith thanked Mr. Powers for his presentation and indicated someone would contact him on the Board's decision.

189. **D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Regular Meeting - January 11, 2021  
Closed Meeting – January 11, 2021  
Special Meeting – February 3, 2021  
Closed Meeting – February 3, 2021

It was moved by Member Wilson, supported by Member DeWitt, that the Board of Education approve the minutes listed above as presented.

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

190.

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

Mrs. Bennin reported on the January financial statements and acknowledged receipts for winter taxes, Impact Aid, and the first of two CTE mileage drawdowns.

Mrs. Bennin reported on an increase in projected cash flow due to actual state aid awarded and a less than anticipated total expenditures over a fourteen-month period.

Mrs. Bennin reported on the receipt of \$2,895.54 from the state Meal Debt Forgiveness grant which is being used to cover student meal debt through September 30, 2020. Mrs. Bennin reported she applied for and received funds through the 31K Meal Debt forgiveness grant for student accounts in 2020.

Upon inquiry from President Smith, Mrs. Bennin confirmed this year’s free meal program will continue as long as there are enough funds from the state to cover it.

President Smith confirmed the business report was reviewed by the Finance Committee.

Upon inquiry from Member DeWitt, President Smith reported the Career and Technical Education courses were enhanced by funding from the EUPISD millage a few years ago.

It was moved by Member Wilson, supported by Member Pingatore, that the Board of Education approve the General Fund Bill List in the amount of \$2,546,239.28 for January.

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

**II. COMMUNICATIONS**

191.

**A. REPORTS TO THE BOARD**

1. Extended Continuity of Learning Plan – Mrs. Amy Scott-Kronemeyer

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported Virtual Blue enrollment increased by 16 students for second semester.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported student attendance remained very high with two-way communication reporting between 84% -100% weekly.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported a program survey is scheduled for April to determine if teachers, parents, and students feel there is a need for extra services or supports.

Upon inquiry from President Smith, Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported a virtual student may be absent from class similar to that of a face-to-face student because of a family vacation, over sleeping, they forgot, or they just didn't want to work.

Upon inquiry from Member Curtis, Mrs. Kronemeyer indicated the increase in enrollment may be due to the timing of the enrollment date. She indicated there had not been many changes in the program since its inception.

Upon inquiry from Member DeWitt, Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported the cohort group of parents and students who are in the program are very happy and prefer the flexibility of being able to learn at any time.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported on the impact of mathematics and reading due to the spring learn at home order for students in grades 3 through 8. She compared the forecasts by typical growth/summer loss, COVID slowdown, and COVID slide. She noted the closure had students start their summer slide a quarter of a year sooner, and the students who fell the furthest were those who had not been solid readers prior to the closure. She thanked teachers and parents who helped students rebound up to this point.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported the program's goal was for 50% of the students to meet their projected growth on the NWEA Reading/Math Assessment from the fall 2020 to winter 2021.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported the average student achievement percentile ranking in reading and math as of February 1 for Early Elementary (Kindergarten and Grade 1), Upper Elementary (Grades 2-4), and Grades 5 through 10. She presented the breakdown by female and male and by Native American and White.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer indicated she did not include a differentiated assessment by grade level because cohorts need to contain a minimum number of 30 students in order for them to be valid.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported she was pleased with the students' test results and stated it was a testament of the hard work and dedication the teachers provided to their students.

President Smith thanked Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer for her impressive report.

Upon inquiry from Member Wilson, Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported teachers are meeting with parents and students are continuing to be identified for individual reading improvement plans. She reported the district is not aware of the state rescinding the third grade reading requirement nor spring testing at this point.

Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer reported the district is looking to provide a full summer school program for students in grades K-12 in hopes of avoiding the summer slide.

Superintendent Hall reported there is concern from the state on districts having to increase student retention due to the COVID and Mrs. Scott-Kronemeyer has been preparing to ramp-up and encourage parents to send their children to the summer school program.

Member DeWitt stated it was impressive to see students learning.

192. **B. *SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – Superintendent Hall***

Superintendent Hall reported sports had started back up and Mr. Lockwood has been reviewing MHSAA guidelines.

Superintendent Hall reported Face-to-Face Instruction was left off the agenda because of the stabilized rates among the community as reported by the hospital and health department. He stated administration did not have any concerns for students or staff to continue with face to face instruction.

Superintendent Hall reported the first round of COVID-19 vaccines were administered to almost 300 school employees and despite a little wait, they were appreciative of the opportunity and the health department did a good job.

Superintendent Hall reported in the interest of full transparency, he will be working with MASB on labor negotiations and superintendent searches after his retirement. He stated he wanted the Board to be aware of it prior to selecting a search firm for his replacement.

Upon inquiry from Member Wilson, Superintendent Hall reported the number of students on quarantine had dropped tremendously and people were feeling better since the vaccine rolled out. He indicated he would continue to gather updates on the situation.

193. C. **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

President Smith inquired on public comment and asked that they state their name and limit their comment to 3 minutes each.

Upon inquiry from Lindsey Gregg of Sault Youth Wrestling, President Smith indicated the Board had placed Facility Use further down on the agenda for discussion.

**III. ACTION ITEMS AND BOARD REPORTS**

Superintendent Hall presented the following candidates and indicated they were highly recommended.

194. A. **PERSONNEL**

**New Hires**

1. Joseph McLean – Grade 7 Girls Basketball Coach – Sault Middle School

It was moved by Member Wilson, supported by Member Pingatore, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Joseph McLean as Grade 7 Girls Basketball Coach for Sault Middle School.

Yeas: Wilson, Pingatore, Smith, Curtis, Lisa, Jay, Caitlin, Ray

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried.

2. Scott Church – Freshmen Girls Basketball Coach – Sault Area High School

It was moved by Member DeWitt, supported by Member Galer, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Scott Church as Freshmen Girls Basketball Coach for Sault Area High School.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried.



3. Daniel Jackson – CTE Welding Specialist – Sault Area Career Center

It was moved by Member Pingatore, supported by Member DeWitt, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Daniel Jackson as CTE Welding Specialist for Sault Area Career Center.

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

4. Michelle Forrest – Support Paraprofessional – Sault Middle School

It was moved by Member Young, supported by Member Wilson, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Michelle Forrest as Support Paraprofessional for Sault Middle School.

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

5. Elizabeth Foster – Special Education Paraprofessional – Sault Middle School

It was moved by Member Wilson, supported by Member Pingatore, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of Elizabeth Foster as part-time Special Education Paraprofessional for Sault Middle School.

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

195. **B. *EXTENDED CONTINUITY OF LEARNING PLAN – Mrs. Amy Scott-Kronemeyer***

It was moved by Member Wilson, supported by Member Young, that the Board of Education affirm the current Extended Continuity of Learning Plan.

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

196.

**C. *MIDDLE SCHOOL ROOF BID – Mrs. Michelle Bennin***

Mrs. Bennin reported the district contracted with EUP Engineers to assist with the Middle School partial roof RFP. She indicated the district received 5 bids with ASAP Roofing being the lowest at \$245,960 but after review and follow-up, Jeremy Gagnon of EUP Engineers and Tom Nelson Maintenance Supervisor recommended going with Great Lakes Roofing because of its local presence, other large scale work, and prior work with the district. Mrs. Bennin stated the project will be paid out of capital project funds.

President Smith confirmed there were no questions from the Board.

It was moved by Member Pingatore, supported by Member Young, that the Board of Education award the Middle School Roof Bid to Great Lakes Roofing & Insulation Services, Inc. for a project amount of \$254,000.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried.

197.

**D. *MASB BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION – Superintendent Hall***

Superintendent Hall reported there are various regions around the state that are voting for candidate(s). He recommended the Board cast a vote, but not for a particular candidate.

Superintendent Hall reported Brad Baltensperger was the incumbent from Houghton-Portage Township Schools, and Janice Van Gasse was from Norway-Vulcan Area Schools.

Member Curtis reported she had researched the candidates and was ready to make a recommendation.

It was moved by Member Curtis, supported by Member Wilson, that the Board of Education approve the vote of Janice Van Gasse for MASB Region 1 Board of Director.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried.

198.

***E. SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH FIRM SELECTION – President Smith***

President Smith stated he was the only remaining board member who had previously hired a superintendent search firm and even though he had his own opinion, he asked for comment and a recommendation.

Member Galer stated both firms had very extensive knowledge but preferred the Michigan Association of School Boards’ presentation and the idea that they actively recruit candidates for specific positions.

President Smith stated it seemed like Michigan Leadership Institute was bought out by Genesee ISD and questioned the need to change ownership.

Member Wilson stated he thought MLI was very well put together.

Member Young stated both firms had similar success searches and similar timelines but she was leaning more toward MASB based on the presentation.

Member Pingatore stated she was leaning more toward MASB.

Member Curtis stated MASB was a larger organization, offered good workshops, and felt it would have a larger pool of qualified candidates.

Member DeWitt indicated he was inclined to go with MASB as MLI’s initial paperwork was addressed to another district which gives the appearance that they may not be focused on the details. Members Pingatore and Curtis indicated they had noticed the same mistake.

It was moved by Member DeWitt, supported by Member Galer, that the Board of Education hire MASB for its Superintendent Search Services.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried.

Superintendent Hall indicated he would notify the search firms on the Board’s decision.

199.

***F. FACILITY USAGE – Superintendent Hall***

Superintendent Hall reported after considering recent COVID data from the Health Department, War Memorial Hospital, discussions with DM Burr Manager and our Maintenance Director, the district is comfortable with opening facilities up to non-student groups providing they follow all

necessary physical distancing, masking, and state restrictions. He noted the district will continue to monitor the situation for possible adjustments.

Upon inquiry from President Smith, Superintendent Hall reported he did not think the district would have to wait two weeks after sports started up to open facilities to outside groups.

President Smith stated he was comfortable with opening the facilities as long as Dr. Hall was okay with it.

Member Wilson indicated he was looking forward to allowing the Employee Wellness Group back into the school.

Upon inquiry from Member DeWitt, Superintendent Hall reported all sport teams are required to wear masks when possible, and if not, there may be some level of testing available.

Upon inquiry from Member Young, Superintendent Hall reported COVID concerns for non-student groups coming back into the buildings would be handled by the principals at the elementary and middle school level, and the Athletic Director at the high school. He stated it would be incumbent for the administrators to talk with the outside groups about protocols and to ensure they are cooperating with them.

Member Young stated she is fully supportive of getting outside groups back in the buildings.

President Smith called for a motion.

It was moved by Member Pingatore, supported by Member Young, that the Board of Education allow outside groups access to school facilities providing they follow MDHHS guidelines regarding masking, social distancing, and crowd size.

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

200. **G. *GIFTS AND DONATIONS***

Superintendent Hall reported on the following donation and stated it was very appropriate now that the cold weather has set in.

1. Courtney Moon donated new boots and coats for students at Washington School.

It was moved by Member DeWitt, supported by Member Wilson, that the Board of Education accept the above donation with thanks and appreciation.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried.

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

Upon inquiry from Member Curtis, Superintendent Hall reported English Language Arts Teacher Andre Fortin had been reassigned to the High School due to the resignation of Kane McKeown. He noted a long term substitute had been in the Career Center Automotive Technology program, and he just became aware of a teacher's intent to retire at the end of the school year. He stated the biggest turnover had been with the Paraprofessionals this year and the district is keeping abreast of the situation.

Upon inquiry from President Smith on the influx of students with mental health issues, Superintendent Hall reported the Department of Education is aware of the increase across the state and there has been a push for more help. He indicated the district had been doing its best to assist with this, but it's been a time and balancing act during the COVID pandemic.

Member Wilson indicated he would like to see the district work toward hiring more counselors or social workers to especially address students suffering from COVID fatigue. Superintendent Hall reported the district has 10 Counselors/Native American Advisors and administration continually looks for ways of hiring more.

President Smith indicated he had spoken with someone over the weekend who felt students were suffering more because of the extended COVID restrictions, and there needs to be more family support to help offset it.

Upon inquiry from Member Young, Superintendent Hall indicated the district did not have an algorithm for mental health support per say, but communication usually flows to the building administrators. He stated the school counselors/social workers meet with students, refer them out for extra help, or whatever they can to help.

Member DeWitt reported on the possibility of having students network with other students and a counselor to assist them in working through issues. Superintendent Hall reported counselors like Pam Pomeroy and Susan Kenn have held informal sessions with students over the years but the efficacy does not always work for everyone because people are unique.

Upon inquiry from President Smith, Dr. Hall indicated the district would investigate the possibility of having student groups present ways of coping and getting help with mental health issues to other students.

Upon inquiry from Member Wilson, Superintendent Hall reported he recently received a letter from Mrs. Arbic on support for a pool. He stated he would report back on after he has had an opportunity to further review the details.

Member Young reported on the possibility of having the Washington School open zone program implemented throughout the district as a means of helping students learn how to verbalize and cope with their feelings.

202. **V. *FUTURE PLANNING***

President Smith reviewed the following events and stated there would be additional year-end activities as well as those for the superintendent search.

- March 8 - Regular Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.
- April 12 - Regular Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.
- April 26 - Annual Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.
- May 10 - Regular Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.
- May 13 - EUPSBA Meeting - Sault High
- June 14 - Regular Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

Upon inquiry from Member Wilson, Superintendent Hall noted the Indian Education Program is scheduled to be presented at the April 26 annual meeting.

Superintendent Hall reported he volunteered the district to host the EUPSBA spring dinner meeting on May 13 in the high school cafeteria. He asked all members to plan to attend.

203. **VI. *CLOSED SESSION – M.O.M.A. §15.268, 8(c)***

President Smith confirmed there would only be a motion for adjournment after returning to open session.

**A. *MOTION TO GO IN CLOSED SESSION***

It was moved by Member Wilson, supported by Member Young, that the Board of Education move into closed session in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act §15.268, 8(c), for strategy and negotiations at 9:09 p.m.

Yeas: Wilson, Young, Smith, Curtis, Pingatore, Galer, DeWitt  
Nays: None

Absent: None  
Motion Carried.

The Board went into closed session at 9:11 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 9:27 p.m.

204. **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board at 9:27 p.m. it was moved by Member DeWitt, supported by Member Pingatore, that the Board of Education adjourn the meeting.

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried.

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Daniel L. Smith, President

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Lisa A Young, Board Secretary

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Judy L. Sirk, Recording Secretary