VERMILION LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 23, 2026 at 6:00 PM
VHS COMMONS

The Special meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Benson, aye; Mrs. Stepp, aye; Mrs. Russell, aye; Mrs. Innes, absent; Mrs. Treece, aye

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Participation - None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS

27.26 Mrs. Stepp motioned to the Board to approve the Reduction in Force for the 2026-2027 school year for the following Certified and Classified staff.

- Rachel Kidd, VHS Visual Arts
- Grace Robinson, VHS Instrumental Music
- Gehrig Gabrie, VHS Health and Physical Education
- Lauren O'Hare, VES Reading Specialist
- Laura Heil, SMS Reading Specialist
- David Funk, VHS Career Tech
- Hope Shuster-Calhoun, VHS Custodian

Mrs. Treece seconded. ROLL CALL: Mr. Benson, aye; Mrs. Stepp, aye; Mrs. Russell, aye; Mrs. Innes, absent; Mrs. Treece, aye

Mrs. Treece made a comment after a community member spoke about finding creative solutions to close the financial gap, although it will not necessarily solve everything,
but ways to help reduce some of these gaps such as volunteer tutoring, bringing parents that have additional skill sets to help fill reading gaps in classrooms is absolutely beneficial.

Mrs. Stepp commented that we did have the More program at the middle school that has been dismantled due to reasons unknown to her, but she was a big supporter of it.

Mr. Weaver said was originally a grant program that paired up adults from the community with 4th graders who would come in an read with them, answer comprehension questions
about what they read. Mr. Weaver was a tutor in the program and said the program was great. It connected people in the community with students in the district. It was about relationship building as much as anything else. The program went away because we hired reading specialists at the middle school and we did not have the time to dedicate to both programs.
Our reading specialists spent 45 minutes per day dedicated to reading remediation. Although program was a great program, reading remediation itself is very difficult and wanted to tackle the reading deficit caused by COVID.

Mrs. Russell commented to thank a speaker for being an advocate for the schools. There is not a teacher or administrator here that is not invested with our kids, and out schools

and our community and this decision has not been an easy one for a single one of them. These are very tough decisions and very much the heart of our community and our kids and our schools and not decisions we want to have to make.

Mr. Benson wanted to highlight that people become informed. While it would benefit financially the district if higher paid personnel retired, that is not always a possibility.

Mrs. Treece wanted to highlight the failure of the bond and that yes, everyone was disappointed in that outcome, but this is not punitive because of that failure.
When the Bond issue failed, the money the district has in its General fund will now be spent on putting a new roof on the high school which depletes our cash reserves.
Now we are trying to figure out who to make ends meet since our savings is running out.

Mrs. Russell asked if the bond failure has expedited the reduction of our savings account because we had to pull $7 million out of our General Fund and into a Capital Projects fund which speeds up the process rather than having a longer time to make smaller adjustments.

Mr. Klingshirn stated what makes things difficult on the school finance side is cash flow. Our lowest amount of cash is right now up until we get that first payment of property taxes.
What I am looking at is if we need to pay for a roof what does our cash flow look like this time next year, or two years from now. We sold off our long-term investments to have enough cash flow now to pay for a roof and have enough to make payroll this time next year.

Mr. Benson commented that these types of decisions are tough and they affect people's lives.

Mrs. Stepp stated that she has owned a business in Vermilion for 20 years and that if her accountant came to her today and said we need to go back and run your business on the revenue you collected 20 years ago she would be out of business. The school district is the largest business in the city. More people are employed though this district than any other business in the city.
We are running on money that we have been running since 2008. I have been on the Board for 10 years now and three superintendents and two treasurers have said the same thing, that eventually, we will run out of money. The financial burden the State unconstitutional has put on the local residents makes it very difficult for any school district to run like it should. None of us want to have to do this.

Mrs. Russell stated we all have kids in the district, and we all have personal investments with the district. Mrs. Russell asked what would happen if she or all voted no and asked what else would be the alternative? What is the other solution to keep the school going and we have looked at every area, and this is the only option.
Mrs. Russell reminded everyone that there is a renewal levy on the ballot this November.

Mrs. Treece stated there are fixed costs and if our enrollment declines, there is not much difference in the fixed costs to run the district and to keep asking questions and continue to get involved.
ROLL CALL: Mr. Benson, aye; Mrs. Stepp, aye; Mrs. Russell, aye; Mrs. Innes, absent; Mrs. Treece, aye.

Dates and location of upcoming Board meetings. Meetings will be held in the Vermilion High School Commons, 1250 Sanford St., Vermilion at 6:00 PM, unless otherwise noted.

- Regular Meeting - Monday, March 9, 2026

- Regular Meeting - Monday, April 13, 2026
- Regular Meeting - Monday, May 11, 2026

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

28.26 Mrs. Russell motioned to the Board for the meeting to be adjourned. Mrs. Treece seconded. ROLL CALL: Mr. Benson, aye; Mrs. Stepp, aye; Mrs. Russell, aye; Mrs. Innes, absent; Mrs. Treece, aye. Time adjourned 7:12 PM.

ATTEST:

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Board President

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Treasurer