

MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
SLINGER SCHOOL DISTRICT
SLINGER, WISCONSIN
December 21, 2020
High School IMC

Routine Business:

The meeting was called to order by President Ken Strupp at 7:00 PM in High School IMC.

Members answering roll were: Ken Strupp, Joe Havey, Bruce Hassler, Gary Feltz, Jody Strupp, Roman Weninger, and Cherie Rhodes. Also present was administrator and directors: Daren Sievers, Jim Curler, Patrick Armstrong, Karen Hug, Ben Frazer and 6 in person guests and 30 guests on the phone.

Sievers affirmed the public notice.

Motion by Weninger, seconded by Rhodes, to approve the 4 sets of minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Feltz and Sievers reviewed the highlights of the financial report and asked if there were any questions on the financial report. After discussion, there was a motion by Feltz, seconded by Havey, to dispense with the reading of the financial statement and approve as presented. Motion carried.

After discussion and clarifications of the voucher report, there was a motion by Feltz, seconded by Weninger, to approve payroll check numbers 58668-58671 and payroll direct deposit numbers 901050598-901051651 totaling \$1,171,037.61 and A/P check numbers 135012-135187, A/P ACH numbers 202100442-202100566, and wire transfers totaling \$1,962,468.70. Motion carried.

New Business:

Public Comments and Questions:

In Person:

Candi Martin – Her son shared with her on Friday there was no sub to cover the phy ed teacher vacancy 1st hour. How often does this happen and do they get an A for participation because there was no class? Sievers assured that this was the first time this happened this year and that the students would not be docked on participation.

On Phone: None

Correspondence: Sievers presented plaques from the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) to two of the Board members for milestone years of service.

A 20-year plaque went to Ken Strupp and a 30-year plaque went to Bruce Hassler. Congratulations to both and thank you for your guidance and commitment to the Slinger School District.

Sievers presented a report on the current state of Honours, Inc. This was an opportune time to publicly thank Heidi Lofy for her generous donation of \$250,000 last Friday. This was the single biggest donation in the history of Honours, Inc. The donation was something she and her husband Jerry agreed was a priority for their family prior to his passing this fall. The family wishes were to assign \$20,000 to Tim Wiedmeyer's named scholarship; \$20,000 to Hank Karius's named scholarship, \$20,000 to a new scholarship in the name of Dave and Janette Schwarz, and the remaining funds to add to the balance of an existing scholarship in the Lofy name. This combined with the \$40,000 from the Bill and Marilyn Rasmussen pushes this Slinger scholarship fund over \$5,000,000. Forty to fifty seniors will get a total of

\$200,000-\$230,000 at the end of their tenure here in Slinger this spring.

Sievers presented a letter of resignation from school psychologist, Susanne Ulschmid. With regret, Susanne needs to resign from her teaching career due to health issues. Motion by Hassler, to approve the resignation to take effect immediately; seconded by Feltz. Motion carried.

Sievers presented a letter of retirement from Middle School Principal, Dean Goneau. Thank you, Dean, for your past 22 years of service to the Slinger School District. Motion by Weninger, to approve the retirement as of June 18, 2021; seconded by J. Strupp. Motion carried.

Sievers and Curler presented a report regarding a survey conducted on in-person instruction, quarantine instruction, and recent critical matters related to COVID-19 impacting the 2020-21 school year.

1. Slinger School District Dashboard: <https://www.slinger.k12.wi.us/district/covid19.cfm>

- Post-holiday surge concerns – Armstrong pulled up the District dashboard and Sievers reviewed the numbers with the Board.

We did not experience a post-holiday/Thanksgiving spike so recommendations are to come back after winter break and continue the education plan for the district. Eight virtual students from Addison Elementary will switching from “virtual” to “in person” on the 4th of January.

2. Recent mitigation enhancement improvements: Presented by Ben Frazer, Manager of Building and Grounds. All rooms and athletic spaces are being used as normal (clubs, outside groups, etc..). Because we are using the rooms 12 of the 13 Photohydroionization units are now installed and are mimicking outdoor air inside. They use a combination of germicidal UV lights and an ionization feature to reduce/virtually eliminate things like viruses, bacteria, molds, vapors, odors, gases, etc... in the air. It changes inside air to outside air quality through filtering. The units require routine annual maintenance. By having these units, the District is exceeding best practices.

3. Update from Health Department presented by Sievers.

- Daily monitoring of the County Dashboard and trends – we currently are as low as the 3rd of November by zip code, data is trending in a good direction
- County stance on schools remaining open - Kirsten Johnson, County Health Dept Director, reiterated that we are doing the right things, cases are coming from weekend or night activities not in school contact, fully supportive of what we are doing both in-person learning and quarantining
- Update on new quarantine procedures (7 days/10 days)- federal government came out with new guidelines and the county supported this new guidance, so the district will adopt this as well.
- Update on vaccine dispersal plans – teachers/educators are second in line for the Moderna vaccine in our region. Late February to early March is when we are scheduled to receive the vaccine. Health Dept will need a count of how many vaccines are needed in the District right after the holiday break. At this point it is a personal choice and not required. District employees who are directly impacted with students will be first (employee families are not included).
- Expanded test sites – wait times and test result turnaround times are shorter.
- View of travel abroad - may need to bump back a trip in the near future, Euro trip late March/early April. Waiting to hear an update from the Health Dept. on travel guidelines for student trips.
- FFCRA – 10 days of COVID time was granted by the Federal Govt to every employee in our District. This time was set to expire 12/31/2020 but they have included in their new package to extend the expiration date to 3/31/2021. The District will follow these guidelines.

4. Discussion regarding the state of the pandemic and need for unity presented by Sievers.

- National view – the pandemic is everywhere and there is no agreement on any level of Government
- State view – The Governor is continuing to enforce masks, the state’s health dept/Kirsten Johnson also stands behind this decision along with the CDC’s decision to move the quarantine time to 10 days or 7 days with a negative test. There is widespread unrest about virtual learning as virtual learning is hard to deliver effectively. There are significant statewide resignations due to health concerns and workloads for teachers that are beyond a reasonable capacity. We are being encouraged to be accommodating to teachers to retain them and not drive them away.
- County view – County Health Dept/Kirsten Johnson is doing everything they can to keep us open. This is part of the solution not part of the problem. They are also fighting for teachers to be categorized as essential workers in order to be eligible for the vaccines sooner. Quarantining guidelines have been proven to work so we need to compromise and work with the county to stay united in our views.
- Local Slinger view - Extreme ends of the spectrum for learning options are continuing to be an issue; December is not any easier than last June when hard decisions had to be made. We have been open all year with 5 days of in-person instruction and now there is a statewide movement to open the majority of public schools statewide. We have served the masses the best we can and we will maintain our efforts of masking, cleaning, and social distancing. Second wave of contact tracing is now occurring, but it is not coming/been proven it is coming from school. Some families do not want to follow the masking or quarantining expectations laid out by the Health Department and supported by District rules. The Board supported the direction that Sievers and administration is taking with masking and quarantining so as to continue to support the goal of staying open/in-person 5 days per week.

5. The District stance on survey results and the statistics they provide us - We have a wide range of satisfaction with the virtual survey; some students are thriving, and some are struggling. We need to stay united as a District. We have been accused of manipulating data on the District dashboard, but we need to take a point in time as to positive cases or we would be updating several times a day.

6. Virtual Student/Parent Survey results revisited (handouts and posted on website)- have been told we are discriminating students and not listening to what the wants are. We are listening but cannot always satisfy every request. We are doing the best we can, and it is impossible to please everyone. 10% response rate is enough to trend the data; we had 30% so there is no swaying of data and decisions can be made based on the majority of the responses. Daren walked through the themes of the survey. There is a lack of connection to school and social interaction with others for our fulltime virtual learners.

7. Staff Survey results (handouts and posted on website)- Sievers reviewed the handout and pointed out that the staff feels the workload is high and that continued technology support is important. The majority of the staff did not feel having synchronous learning would be sustainable and be within their capacity.

8. District response to Virtual Survey

Curler addressed the teacher to student social needs:

- Added more teachers/aides
- Added enrichment courses/groups/clubs to get more interaction
- Counselors are holding one-on-one and team/group settings
- Virtual teachers are blocking off virtual office hours for student needs
- Offered alternative platforms for more opportunities; WI Virtual School is also having issues so there is no perfect solution but they do have more options than Apex; difference being that higher course levels are offered by WI Virtual School.
- Special Ed teachers are checking in with their students
- Lunch Bunch in Allenton; stay in for recess and have time with virtual students
- Co-curriculars are open to virtual students/open meetings

- Virtual students will be invited to join band and choir concerts

We are trying to do the best we can with what we have; we are not a virtual school.

- Board continues to support the direction that was set out in September. Continue with the 3 models that are currently being offered; in-person, virtual, hybrid. We are experiencing the same issues in Slinger as everyone else in the world. We all want it to be over and have to hang in there. Thank you for what everyone is doing. Be constructive with suggestions. We need to work together to find a solution for the greater of the District. Keep communication open through the whole process instead of waiting until frustration is at its peak. Leaders and teachers are doing the best they can.
- Open enrollment (OE) efforts will be supported by the Board if it is good for the student, i.e. OE-out exceptions. Because of taxing on the staff, we will not open up OE-in exceptions. We can not go over capacity despite funding gains. This something we need to do to protect our staff workload wherever we can.

9. District Response to Staff Survey

- Response to areas of concern on the survey - Armstrong addressed the technology themes. Equipment will be addressed by who needs it and what they need. More communication between staff to know what is needed. More teaching/training opportunities. Sievers addressed the other themes; synchronous learning would be over and above the ask. It is not sustainable for the remainder of the year; it is a bridge for quarantine but still not a means for skill mastery. Social needs will still not be met if synchronous learning is available. Some staff are not comfortable being in school and are frustrated with how some of the community is viewing the quarantine; want to be home during the day but still doing activities at night and weekends.
- Discussion regarding the impact on the addition of an unplanned professional development/training day in January. Time will be provided for technology training; grade level team meetings and catching up on grading for virtual/in-person lessons. Various dates were discussed. Motion by Havey, to make Friday, January 29th be an additional in-service day for teachers (non-student contact day), seconded by J.Strupp. Motion carried.

10. Northshore winter sports update

- Guest protocols- 2 quests per player which is 7% capacity in the gymnasium

11. Winter concert review

- Explanation for audience protocols - 0 guests per student. 2 guests per performer would be 30% capacity in the PAC. We do not support this high of a percentage for in-door activities. Masks are required for all students and for band they are required to mask until playing in which the instrument has its own specialized cover.

Curler presented an annual report on the District's open enrollment (OE) status. He reviewed the current OE caps and gave recommendations for the 2021-22 OE caps to stabilize total enrollment counts. The Board will vote on the caps next month per DPI guidelines.

Public Comments and Questions:

In-Person:

Julie Ayers- Social interactions are low in general right now, whether in school or at home. The Health Dept should consider the anti-bodies test as this would help with the length of quarantining (so far it is a no but it can change at any time). After the vaccine is administered, would staff be exempt from quarantining?
Sievers- at this time yes but more guidance will come.

Kristina Mueller – Concerns regarding the virtual platform. From the beginning there has not been good teacher training for the various platforms so why is the District adding another in-service date for staff? It is too late. Disappointing for the teachers to not feel confident in teaching. Communication is lacking for

virtual students/families. Families are hiring tutors to keep up with virtual learning. Synchronous learning will help with social interactions so why are you not considering this? Disappointing how Slinger is handling the needs of virtual learners. Disappointing that virtual learners have to use their own equipment. There are too many variables at this time to be good at any one thing.

On Phone: None

Future Dates to Remember:

January 20 th	WASB State Convention (Virtual)	8:00 AM
January 21 st	Building and Grounds Meeting	6:00 PM
January 25 th	Regular Board Meeting	7:00 PM
February 22 nd	Regular Board Meeting	7:00 PM
March 22 nd	Regular Board Meeting	7:00 PM

Motion by Hassler, seconded by Weninger, to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 PM. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Cherie Rhodes, Clerk