

WILLOW RUN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
Ypsilanti, Michigan

REGULAR MEETING

January 18, 2007

The regular meeting opened at 6:30 p.m. at Thurston, E.C.D.C., 181 Oregon, Ypsilanti, MI, 48198, with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Those present were:

Claudette Braxton, President
Andreas Blakita, Vice President
Brenda Clay, Secretary
Dorothy Stewart, Treasurer
Sheri Washington, Trustee
Scott Wilson, Trustee
Travis Greer, Student Representative to the Board of Education

Absent: Clifford Smith, Trustee

Members of the Administrative Council Present Included:

Ron Ciranna, J.D., Superintendent
Chester Carter, Principal, Willow Run Alternative High School
Karyn Goven, Director, Thurston, E.C.D.C.
Dr. David Houle, Controller
Laura Lisiscki, Principal, Kaiser Elementary School
Lana Tatom, Director, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Regina Williams, Curriculum Coordinator

Thurston E.C.D.C. Report

Ms. Goven, Mr. Carter, Ms. DeMerchant, and Ms. McClee presented a true/false quiz about the eight (8) programs offered at Thurston. Some of these programs include Head Start, First Steps, the Alternative High School Program and Adult Education, among others. Thurston is also the home for the instructors who teach on-site classes at General Motors and Ford Motor Company.

Ms. Goven pointed out that the Head Start Program has run in Willow Run Community Schools for thirty years with 75% of Head Start students continuing at Willow Run Community Schools. Mr. Carter pointed out how much the Alternative Education students enjoy working with the preschool students and discussed the special needs of the Alternative Students.

Ms. McClee shared information about the upcoming Kindergarten Enrollment Extravaganza, to be held on March 24, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The extravaganza will feature enrollment opportunities, face-painting, activities, food, a moon walk and more.

Ms. DeMerchant explained the First Steps Program is designed to teach parents how to be their child's best first teacher. Parents find out about the First Steps Program through brochures given to them at the hospital upon the birth of their child.

Ms. Goven explained Thurston is a gateway to the Willow Run Community Schools. She said this is exemplified by the Thurston Clothes Closet, which gave away 27,948 items of clothing and household items to needy area residents over the past year. Community programs in the works for Thurston include W.I.C., Food Gatherers Back Pack Program, senior and low-income shopping assistance and full-day Head Start classes.

Citizens' Time

Jamie LaGoe, Willow Run High School teacher, read a letter to the board stating moving the sixth grade students to the elementary schools would be a short-sighted decision, based on fear of the unknown.

Ms. LaGoe also addressed some false assumptions about the middle school including:

- 1.) Declining enrollment in the fifth and sixth grades.
- 2.) Poor academic performance at the secondary level.
- 3.) An unsafe environment at the middle school.

Ms. LaGoe said the actual enrollment decline takes place in the third and fourth grades, and this is not a middle school problem, but rather, a District problem. She said the poor academic performance of the students at the middle school, is due to students arriving at the middle school at below grade level abilities. Regarding the perception of the middle school being unsafe, she said stories are spiced up as they spread throughout the community. Ms. LaGoe did say there is a need for improvement and they are doing it.

President Braxton called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda

Mr. Wilson added the following item to the agenda:

Item VII.B. – Suspension of Bylaw

Approval of the Agenda

#06070101 Ms. Clay moved that the Board of Education accept the agenda as amended. Mr. Wilson supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 –Motion carried

Discussion

Ms. Stewart asked for discussion of the suspension of bylaws. She questioned why no information about this was made available before the

Mr. Wilson said he had a discussion with Mr. Stewart, in regards to the August 25th, Organizational Chart. Mr. Wilson said Mr. Stewart told him he would let Ms. Stewart know about it. Mr. Wilson explained that on August 25th, the board neglected to pass a motion to suspend the bylaws, changing the curriculum director reporting to the Board of Education, rather than to the superintendent, until a new superintendent is hired.

Approval of Minutes

#06070102 Ms. Clay moved that the Board of Education approves the minutes as amended from the regular meeting of December 21, 2006, and from the work/study session of January 11, 2007, as presented. Ms. Stewart supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Payment of Bills

#06070103 Ms. Stewart moved that the Board of Education approve the following General Fund checks, check #43212 through and including check #43505 with the exception of voided checks as noted on page 14 of the General Fund Check Register for the amount of \$2,468,210.17; and Building & Site check #1470 for the amount of \$3,000.00. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Communications

Dr. Ciranna read a Resolution declaring January Board of Education Recognition Month, for the important work school boards perform. He thanked all of them for their hard-work and dedication.

Student Representative Comments

Mr. Greer said the Eagles Club has donated \$1,000.00 to the Robotics Team, resulting in a decline of \$55.00 per student for the cost of participating in the club.

Mr. Greer said there are many problems with dual-enrollment, in that the high school counselors will not return phone calls or see students regarding problems with their schedules for second semester, which begins on Monday.

Mr. Greer said the counseling department at the high school does not respond to students in a timely manner. He also said the counselors are denying dual-enrollment to some students.

Approval of Contract – MS School Improvement Grant

#06070104 Mr. Blakita moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the contract with Leslie Wilson, Consultant in an amount not to exceed \$30,000; to work with the Willow Run Middle School to facilitate the continuation of the transformation process during the 2006-2007 school year. Mr. Wilson supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Contract – HS School Improvement Grant

#06070105 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the contract with Michigan Coalition of Essential Schools in an amount not to exceed \$20,000; for Nancy Fenton and Pam Thompson to work with the Willow Run High School to facilitate the continuation of the transformation process during the 2006-2007 school year. Mr. Wilson supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Purchase Order – Renaissance Learning, Inc.

#06070106 Ms. Stewart moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve Purchase Order #0887D in the amount of \$11,567.20 to Renaissance Learning, Inc. for Math Coach Services and Professional Development for the Willow Run High School during the 2006-2007 school year. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried.

Approval of Purchase Order – Pacific Educational Group

#06070107 Mr. Wilson moved that Willow Run Board of Education approve Purchase Order #0913D in the not to exceed amount of \$9,664.00 to Pacific Educational Group to provide Professional Development for the Willow Run Community School Administrators during the 2006-2007 school year. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Purchase Order – Dyntek Network Warranties

#06070108 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve a purchase order to Dyntek for renewal of network warranties, totaling \$14,273.92. Mr. Wilson supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Payment – Ann Arbor News

#06070109 Mr. Blakita moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve payment of the invoice from the *Ann Arbor News* for the invitation to bid advertisement for the Administrative Wing in the amount of \$477.32. Mr. Wilson supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Hire – R.O.T.C. Instructor

#06070110 Mr. Wilson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the hire of Lt. Col. Wilbert W. Richardson to serve as one of the Willow Run High School JROTC teachers, with a salary of \$55,548, to be prorated for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year (beginning on January 22, 2007), as part of the WCEA Teachers' Union. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 6 - Mr. Wilson, Ms. Washington, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Blakita,
Ms. Clay, Ms. Braxton
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Suspension of Bylaw

Mr. Wilson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education, pursuant to Willow Run Community Schools Bylaw 1580 Suspension of Bylaws and Policy and Willow Run Community Schools Policy Adoption with One Reading, the board suspends application of District bylaw 1032, policy 2450, 2750 and such other policies and procedures as necessary in the specific circumstances as they apply to central office administration and the board, until a permanent Superintendent is hired, to enable the attached organizational chart to ensure the smooth functioning of District and staff. Ms. Clay supported

Discussion

Mr. Wilson explained the August 25, 2005, Organizational Chart had Ms. Tatom answering to the board through the curriculum committee. He said the board had every intention of passing this motion and somehow overlooked doing so.

Ms. Stewart said she is not comfortable suspending policy with just one reading.

Ms. Clay said the board did not change policy, but did approve the organizational chart, showing Ms. Tatom reporting to the curriculum committee. Since then, committees have been suspended, so this is being done to ensure no favoritism or nepotism occurs.

Ms. Stewart said partially suspending bylaw 1032 is not stated as such. Mr. Wilson said only the part applying to central office and the board.

The board decided to table the motion until the February 1st, board

Citizens' Questions

Mr. Wilde, Cheney area parent, asked if the board would like parents and students who have had issues with the high school counseling office in the past to come forward. Ms. Braxton, said administration should look into the issue first.

A Kettering parent, speaking about the Deficit Elimination Plan (DEP), asked why no action was taken on it this month. Dr. Houle explained we are waiting for the State's response to find out if the plan has been accepted, or not. When the State approves the plan, the monthly adjustments will begin. Dr. Houle said all of the information about the DEP is available on the District's web-site.

Ms. Thomas, Ford area parent, encouraged everyone to come out on Saturday, January 20th at 8:30 a.m., to watch our ROTC students take part in a drill competition at Robichaud High School.

Superintendent's Comments

Dr. Ciranna informed everyone of the upcoming Town Hall Meeting, Wednesday, January 24th, from 6 – 8 p.m., at Holmes Elementary School.

Board Members' Comments

Ms. Clay informed everyone the Willow Run/Ypsilanti basketball game has been postponed to February 6th, as a result of a snow day. The Athletic Boosters Raffle will be held at that game.

Ms. Washington informed every one of the Public Relations meeting being held on January 30th, from 6-8 p.m., in the Willow Run Middle School Media Center. She invited all interested parties to attend.

Mr. Wilson said the policy committee has a number of things to work on and announced a meeting to be held next week. Ms. Clay inquired as to who is on the policy committee. Mr. Wilson said he is looking for people to work on the committee.

President's Comments

Ms. Braxton invited everyone to the January 23rd Community Partners meeting. The topic of the meeting will be the District's discipline culture.

President Braxton declared the meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.