

WILLOW RUN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
Ypsilanti, Michigan

WORK-STUDY SESSION

February 1, 2007

The work-study session opened at 6:30 p.m. at Willow Run High School, 235 Spencer Lane, Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Those present were:

Claudette Braxton, President
Andreas Blakita, Vice President
Brenda Clay, Secretary
Clifford Smith, Trustee
Dorothy Stewart, Treasurer
Sheri Washington, Trustee

Absent: Scott Wilson, Trustee

Members of the Administrative Council Present Included:

Ron Ciranna, J.D., Superintendent
Todd LaPrairie, Director, Buildings and Grounds
Laura Lisiski, Principal, Kaiser Elementary School
Katie Smith, Director, Technology and Community Services
Lana Tatom, Director, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Kelly Webb, Principal, Cheney Academy of Math and Science

President Braxton called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Citizens' Time

Mark Wilde, Willow Run parent, said his son was suspended one-day for skipping school. Mr. Wilde questioned why students who skip are "rewarded" with a day off of school and suggested the board look into an after-school or Saturday detention program.

Communications

Mr. LaPrairie presented the attached general overview of the maintenance and operations department, highlighting the savings accrued by streamlining the chemicals and soaps being used in the District.

Mr. LaPrairie also discussed the savings realized by reducing the number of custodial employees and said there is the potential for more savings through the elimination of three or four more daytime custodial positions. Mr. Smith suggested overtime be offered to the employees retained, which due to the elimination of fringe benefits for laid-off employees, would result in a savings to the District.

Concerning the savings of energy dollars, Mr. LaPrairie said this is hard to track, because we added thousands of square feet with the construction of the new middle school, and this combined with new roofs, windows and other energy savings measures done as part of the bond project were completed at the same time the cost of energy escalated making a comparison difficult. Mr. Smith requested a few companies be brought in to perform an energy analysis and make a formal presentation to the board.

Ms. Stewart asked if we can control energy usage for areas not being used. Mr. Smith said the high school, middle school and several elementaries are being underutilized. He said if you can zone off buildings you can cut costs. Mr. LaPrairie said this is being done at the middle school. Mr. Smith said the staff should cut-off the lights and computers at night.

Mr. Blakita asked if unused rooms can be sealed-off, not heated, cooled or lit. He said unused rooms need to be put in an unusable state, to save the District money. Instead of closing a school, do it piece-meal, room by room, in the end you do not have to close a building but have the same savings.

Mr. Smith said you can get a lower rate if you bring in the ISD and other schools and buy energy as a consortium. Ms. Stewart added that U of M went toward that, making people energy aware to turn off lights and computers.

Mr. LaPrairie agreed to bring in Johnson Controls and others to present energy analysis. Mr. Smith said the District may need to look at not running the air conditioning for a couple of years. Mr. Blakita said he has a problem with that, he is not sure the windows open and questioned if the air will circulate properly with the system turned off. Ms. Braxton added the technology equipment may need cooling too.

Ms. Washington questioned if the heat in the middle school media center comes from the top, the floor or the side. Mr. LaPrairie said the heat vents are about three-quarters of the way up the walls. Ms. Washington asked how you keep heat from rising. Mr. LaPrairie said it may be possible to install a couple of ceiling fans to push the heat back down. Ms. Washington asked for an analysis of the potential cost savings of using fans to move the heat.

Mr. Blakita asked what the cost of bringing in outside contractors for snow-plowing and lawn mowing would be. Mr. LaPrairie said the approximate cost for an outside firm would be \$6,300 per occurrence for snow removal and with roughly 15 occurrences per season the cost would average \$94,500 a year. The cost for our employees to do this is \$3,200 per occurrence, for an average of \$48,000 a year. Mr. LaPrairie has not investigated the cost of a mowing service, but will do so.

Dr. Ciranna told everyone about a wonderful letter he received from the Ypsilanti Township Fire Chief thanking Mr. LaPrairie and his staff for their help with providing shelter at Thurston E.C.D.C. for residents evacuated when the roller rink burned down.

Curriculum

Ms. Tatom explained the on-site review of State and Federal funding will take place from May 15-18. This review takes place every three-five years, with our last one done in 2002. This review will take place at Ford, Kaiser, and the middle and high schools. As part of this process, the auditor will meet with both staff and parents to ask them questions about our programs. A draft of the auditor's recommendations will be presented to the District on the last day of the audit.

MEAP

Ms. Tatom shared the District's MEAP results with the board, shared examples of the MEAP test and compared this year's MEAP scores with last year, as well as with the State average. Ms. Stewart congratulated the teachers for working so hard preparing for the MEAP test. Ms. Braxton shared her excitement about the upward trend of the test results.

Kindergarten Enrollment

Ms. Tatom said the kindergarten and preschool teachers have met to develop a better kindergarten process for our students and have come up with holding a Kindergarten Enrollment Extravaganza, Saturday, March 24, from 10-2 at the middle school. Ms. Tatom also said a kindergarten parent orientation was held on January 30th. There will also be kindergarten registration on February 13, from 6-7 p.m., kindergarten visitations at each building the week of April 2nd and each building will host its own kindergarten registration before the end of the year.

Review of Future Action Items

The board reviewed the upcoming motions for Declaration of Surplus Vehicle, Approval of Kingscott and Barton Malow invoices, and the request for a Sabbatical Leave by Mr. Clayton Hall. These items will appear on the regular board agenda of February 15.

Approval of Recommendation - Expulsion

#06070201

Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education expel the student presented for expulsion on December 21, 2006, at 6:00 p.m., for 180 days for threats to our Police Liaison Officer. Ms. Stewart supported.

Ayes: Ms. Washington, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith, Mr. Blakita, Ms. Clay,
Ms. Braxton
Nays: 0 – Motion Carried

Citizens' Questions

Ms. Emily Brumbaugh, of the Kettering attendance area said as a parent she can say parents feel comfortable with the kindergarten program the District runs. She said parents are very excited about the Zoophonics program.

Travis Greer, Willow Run High School student formally apologized for his display of frustration at last week's bond meeting. He explained his frustration comes from the lack of an ROTC storage room, which causes the cadets a lot of work moving uniforms around. He urged the board to move rapidly on approval of the construction of the storage room.

Mr. Greer said his term as Student Representative to the Board has come to an end and requested in the future the superintendent meet with student representatives at the end of their semester term, to inform them that it is the end, rather than having a teacher do so. Dr. Ciranna explained it is standard practice for Student Representatives to serve only one-semester. He said he certainly appreciates Travis and that in his many years in education he has seen only two stellar Student Representatives and Travis is one of them. Mr. Smith added Travis made himself a positive influence and he appreciated sitting with him.

Superintendent Comments

Dr. Ciranna shared there will be a meeting next Tuesday with Kingscott and Barton Malow to move for the awarding of bids.

Board Comments

Mr. Blakita shared his receipt of a letter from Ypsilanti Township about the new truancy ordinance in the township, he said this impacts us and all school districts by ensuring kids will be in school. He said this is a very positive thing. Ms. Stewart added hopefully this will help our high school attendance, because since we have gotten rid of our truant officer attendance is down. Mr. Smith suggested the board adopt a resolution showing our support for this ordinance.

Ms. Clay said the Athletic Boosters have now purchased the scorer's table and it will be at Friday's game against Wyandotte. She also reminded everyone of the Ypsi/Willow Run game next week.

President Braxton declared the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.