

**WILLOW RUN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**  
**Ypsilanti, Michigan**

**WORK-STUDY SESSION**

**November 2, 2006**

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  
Clifford Smith, Trustee  
Dorothy Stewart, Treasurer  
Sheri Washington, Trustee  
Scott Wilson, Trustee  
Travis Greer, Student Representative to the Board of Education

Absent: Brenda Clay, Secretary

Members of the Administrative Council Present Included:

Ron Ciranna, J.D., Superintendent  
Joe Ann Allen, Principal, Ford Elementary School  
Mr. Chester Carter, Principal, WR Alternative Education  
Dr. David Houle, Controller  
Todd LaPrairie, Supervisor, Buildings and Grounds  
Dr. Walter Jenkins, Principal, Willow Run High School  
Katie Smith, Director, Technology and Community Services  
Shannon Smith, Interim Assistant Principal, Willow Run High School  
Lana Tatom, Director, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment  
Regina Williams, Curriculum Facilitator

Citizens' Time

Mr. Stewart, Cheney attendance area, said he hopes the board proceeds quickly to purchase needed textbooks. He said this is a real crisis and he hopes the board will give the superintendent, or his designee, the approval to order these books now, rather than waiting two-weeks.

Mr. Stewart also questioned the audited At-Risk funds, which will be presented at this meeting, saying the audit shows \$1 for every \$4 of monies received were not spent.

Mr. Stewart concluded his remarks by expressing his belief that the board's approval of the three-month calendar at the last meeting was wrong. He said he thinks this board and the union need to show more respect for one another. He also encouraged the board to appoint two-members to sit in on negotiations to help settle the contract.

Michelle Johnson, parent of four Willow Run students, said she is concerned about their education, especially for her three children who attend the high school. She said they have no books and oversized classes, with some students not even having a desk. In light of the oversized classes, teachers are unable to give the students the individual attention they need.

Ms. Johnson said the money being spent to renovate the administrative offices and in giving the superintendent pay raises in 2006 and at the end of the summer should be spent on students.

Ms. Johnson said the fact the teachers' union has not gone out on strike, shows they really care about the students. She also questioned whether or not, the board members attend student events to show their support for them.

#### High Schools That Work

Ms. Sass, from High Schools That Work (HSTW) shared the progress made over the past few years at the high school and distributed the attached grid of challenges and recommended actions marked as completed, in progress or not yet. She said a building/district-wide effort and cooperation is needed to enact the recommendations/challenges HSTW gives in order to achieve results.

Ms. Stewart questioned if the recommendations have not been enacted due to limited funding, as well as asking for suggestions on how to kick-start the recommendations. Mr. Smith said the District should look at reallocation of funds in order to achieve the recommendations.

Ms. Sass said it will take the board realigning policies to support HSTW and offered the HSTW staff to help coach the District through this process.

The board, Ms. Sass and Ms. Williams discussed changes that need to occur in order to achieve results. Ms. Williams said a Ninth Grade Academy would be something to look at, because that is one of the places we are losing kids, because they are failing classes. Ms. Williams also suggested consistency in the elementary curriculum, a Summer Bridge Program, and possibly an after-school class for those students in academic need.

Mr. Smith said if we really look at this, some of the areas are supplemental and we can use At-Risk funds to support them. Ms. Tatom responded that high school dollars are targeted assistance and that 9<sup>th</sup> grade math is a targeted area. She explained if students are in two-math classes, then it is considered double-dosing. She said this would require a mandatory elective, which would need a board policy and cautioned the board that many parents may not be happy if their student was required to take two-math classes, which could possibly eliminate their opportunity to participate in band or other electives.

### Audit Review

David Fisher, of Rehman Robson, reviewed the attached Audit Report and said the District received a clean opinion relative to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices. He explained the District is in a deficit and that it is unlawful for school districts to operate in a deficit, which necessitates the District having to file a Debt Elimination Plan with the State. Mr. Fisher also noted that with the drop in enrollment, the 2006-2007 budget may need modification.

The Single Audit Report found no questionable costs, and no costs received for disallowance, with the exception of 2006-1 Certifications in payroll for 100% funded employees.

Mr. Fisher then shared the Management letter and its recommendations for internal controls for payroll, which he suggested improving by having somebody other than the payroll clerk review the check register and having somebody other than the one making journal entries to review and sign-off on them. Mr. Fisher also urged the District to do a complete inventory of capital assets and note the location of all of these.

Mr. Fisher opened up the floor to questions about the audit. Mr. Smith asked what kind of timeline the District is looking at to turn ourselves around. Mr. Fisher answered the Michigan Department of Treasury will answer that question and pointed out the fact that we alerted them before the end-of-the-year is favorable.

Mr. Smith asked if Title I and At-Risk monies can be documented, in order to allocate more of these funds to expenditures, like those on page 18 of the Audit Report. He said we should look at covering categories such as social workers from these funds and how these monies are being allocated. He urged the District to explore options such as this.

Mr. Smith then requested copies of the necessary forms to correctly track Title I and At-Risk funds, saying if you can properly document expenditures, you can probably use these funds in other ways. Mr. Smith also questioned why we have so much carry-over of these funds to the next year.

Mr. Smith concluded his comments by asking Mr. Fisher for any help and advice they can give us to help us with our financial difficulties.

Ms. Braxton said the next study-session will focus on the District's budget and finances.

### Board President Workshop

Ms. Braxton shared that she attended her second Board President Workshop on October 13<sup>th</sup>, but listened to it with different ears, now that she has been in this role for awhile. She said the workshop focused on seven areas of leadership and the role of the board.

Ms. Braxton said she assessed her leadership skills and learned about the areas she needs to strengthen. She also said she learned she needs to make sure things are going through the proper channels and that she is in control of the meeting which is a public meeting of the board, not a public meeting. She said all statements and conversation need to be directed through the Chair. She also learned Citizens' Time is being handled correctly and we are doing the same thing as most other districts.

Ms. Braxton offered to share some booklets about the Board/Superintendent Relationship she picked up at the workshop, with the rest of the board.

#### Public Relations

Ms. Washington presented the attached draft, which she described as marketing, public relations and communications for the board's consideration.

#### Committee as a Whole

Mr. Wilson said the board adopted the Committee as a Whole structure, as described in Bylaw 1180, in 1995. He said the board has traditionally set-up committees on a yearly basis and many of the existing policies assume committees and will need correction. Mr. Wilson said he will bring the policies affected by the Committee as a Whole structure, along with others in need of updating to the board.

#### Bond Project Update

Mr. LaPrairie shared the 12 items from the 2001 Bond Project that remain open. The list of these items is attached. The board and Mr. LaPrairie discussed the plans for a softball field and the new parking lot. Mr. Smith asked for these plans to be shared with the board prior to being sent out for bid. Dr. Ciranna assured him this will be done.

#### Textbooks – Review of Needs

Dr. Jenkins and Mr. Shannon Smith said they met with all Department Chairs at the high school and worked to take an inventory of books, as well as of books needed. Dr. Jenkins said the next round of books purchased should be for the science department.

Dr. Ciranna said there was a meeting held with the high school teachers and they all agree the prioritized needs for books are as follows: Algebra I, English, Biology, and Earth Science. Dr. Ciranna said the Algebra books have already been ordered.

Mr. Smith asked the board to move on approving the \$36,000 for books immediately.

#11050601

Approval of Purchase – Textbooks

Mr. Wilson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education vote on an emergency motion to extend funds to purchase books as stated on the attached worksheet in the amount of \$36,724.70. Ms. Stewart supported.

Ayes: 7  
Nays: 0 – Motion Carried

Alternative Greenhouse Project

Mr. Terry Carpenter, Alternative Education Teacher, shared posters his students created in support of obtaining a green house for their school. Mr. Carpenter explained Growing Hope, a local non-profit group, would like to donate a greenhouse to the Alternative Program and pointed out the many benefits of having a greenhouse. He said the greenhouse being built by Washtenaw Community College will be constructed of plywood and corrugated plexi-glass, which will equal low maintenance costs.

Approval of Contract – IBS Consulting, Inc.

The board discussed the upcoming request for approval of consulting services from Ilene Singer for 50 days of time with her working in the media center and assisting with professional development.

Approval of Hire Certified Staff

Dr. Ciranna said offers have been extended to an Art Teacher, a Biology Teacher and French Teacher, all at the high school. Their contracts will be brought to vote at the next board meeting.

Overnight Field Trip – WRHS Science Club

The annual field trip taken by the WRHS Science Club will be presented for approval at the November 16, 2006, board meeting. 20 students will be leaving on December 7<sup>th</sup> and returning on December 10<sup>th</sup>, for a trip which will encompass time spent in the Upper Peninsula, Tahquamenon Falls and Sleeping Bear Dunes.

Out-of-State Field Trip

The AFJROTC Drill Team and Color Guard Team will be competing at a drill competition on November 4, 2006, in Grafton, Ohio. Transportation will be provided by the Willow Run Transportation Department.

Reinstatement of Student

The student, which will be presented for Reinstatement, at the next regular board meeting, has met with the Expulsion Reinstatement Committee, and it is their recommendation that he be readmitted into the Alternative Education Program at the start of the second semester of the 2006-2007 school year.

Approval of Acceptance of Donation

A drafting table, with an estimated value of \$400, has been offered as a donation to the District. This will be up for acceptance at the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Citizens' Questions

Mr. Mark Wilde said the board needs to address how to get books returned from those students who drop out or leave the District.

Ms. Janice Moses, 21<sup>st</sup> Century After School Program, said she is thrilled with the progress the District is making by creating a public relations plan. She said the teachers in the District are a wonderful resource and encouraged the administration to listen to them saying they have some answers to some of our problems.

Superintendent's Comments

Dr. Ciranna informed the board of a student who was missing for one-hour, before being located after school today. She was located by a community person in the woods off of Michigan Avenue.

President Braxton declared the meeting adjourned at 9:38p.m.