

WILLOW RUN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
Ypsilanti, Michigan

REGULAR MEETING

November 16, 2006

The regular meeting opened at 6:30 p.m. at Holmes Elementary School, 1255 Holmes Road, Ypsilanti, MI, 48198, with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Those present were:

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

Absent: Scott Wilson, Trustee

Members of the Administrative Council Present Included:

Ron Ciranna, J.D., Superintendent
Rosalind Coffey, Principal, Holmes Elementary School
David Houle, J.D., Controller
Laura Lisiski, Principal, Kaiser Elementary School
Katie Smith, Director, Technology
Lana Tatom, Director, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Holmes Elementary Report

Ms. Rosalind Coffey welcome President Braxton and each board member, the superintendent and everyone else to Holmes Elementary School. She said Holmes is a great place to be and said they have adopted the theme of “Holmes Rocks” for the 2006-2007 school year. Ms. Coffey said Holmes is the largest elementary in the District and one where failure is not an option. She then introduced the Class of 2019, the kindergarten students, who sang a demonstration of the Zoo-Phonics alphabet.

Holmes Student Council members James Edwards, Donte’ Elliot and Jacklynn Martinez shared the activities of the student council and their future plans including Pennies for Presents and a canned food drive for the SOS Crisis Center.

James Edwards, Holmes basketball player, credited Isaiah Daniel, team coach for requiring the players to take part in a study hall as part of each practice. He said Mr. Daniel has taught them “It’s not what you do on the court; it’s what you do off of the court.”

A Power Point presentation “A Look at our Year so Far”, was shown. The presentation depicted the many classroom activities at Holmes Elementary, including the study of plant life, goal setting, writing, creativity, reading, and so much more. A point of pride for Holmes Elementary is every first grade student being a member of the Five Point Club, which is part of the Accelerated Reader Program.

University of Michigan student and President of the U of M Student Chapter of the MASB, Katy Ellerbrock, presented Holmes with the SMEA Grant Award of \$1,000, which is for use by teachers to purchase needed supplies for their classrooms.

Ms. Coffey concluded the Holmes Excellence in Education presentation by introducing the Holmes staff, praising them as the greatest group of people she has ever worked with.

Citizens' Time

Linda Warnsley, Holmes parent, said Holmes is the best school she has ever been around since she left high school in the 1960's. She said this is the best staff, which let her know what is going on at all times. She also implored the board to find more money for athletics in Willow Run.

Rhonda McGill, Willow Run parent, read a statement from Willow Run parents, taxpayers and community members regarding the State of the District, the loss of students, staff and program cuts, as well as realigning going on. She said these are some, but there are other reasons why the District is losing kids, specifically citing the feeling of being devalued on the part of many parents. Ms. McGill said the teachers will not answer parents' concerns because they do not have a contract and the teachers will not enter their classrooms until the bell rings for the same reason. She said it seems teachers will not educate without a contract. Ms. McGill also said the attacks on the administration and school board must end. Ms. McGill urged all parties to put pettiness aside and work toward the common goal and reminded everyone there are many positives in the District. Ms. McGill also addressed many other concerns and urged the District to work with community officials and to explore options, including Charter Schools, to increase enrollment and said parents are watching what is going on in the District and want it to succeed. Ms. Braxton thanked Ms. McGill for her comments and said she agrees with everything that was said, adding the board accepts her challenge.

Emily Brumbaugh, Kettering parent, asked if parents can be informed of changes as soon as possible, in order to prepare their children for them. She said parents know considering the financial state of the District changes will have to be made, they just want time to prepare their students. Ms. Brumbaugh also asked what sources there are for parental input and consultation about changes.

Tiffany Burgess, Holmes parents, said she just found out her student's teacher is being dropped, resulting in two classes of 30 students each. She questioned if her child will be able to learn anything in this environment and said it makes her want to take her child elsewhere.

Ms. Braxton said both parents have legitimate concerns, but that we have no control over the financial situation, unless we find a way to keep kids in Willow Run. She said the moving of students and cutting of staff is something we do not want to do, but have to if we want to stay afloat.

Stanley Stewart, Cheney attendance area, spoke about the letters from the State regarding grant funds, which were included in the board packet, saying he does not believe the District asked the right questions or forwarded the newspaper articles he spoke about previously to the State. He said he called our State Representative and requested a meeting to discuss the use of At-Risk funds for Willow Run schools.

Mr. Stewart said we can make up some of the money we have lost by reallocating some of the At-Risk spending. He said last year Willow Run Community Schools under spent At-Risk monies by \$123,731 and that if we don't spend it, and don't ask for reimbursement we do not get this money. He added if you didn't spend it, you didn't use it, because if you carry it over, you do not get new dollars.

Mr. Stewart said the settlement with teachers continues to affect the budget and urged the District to negotiate with respect and dignity towards the teachers, suggesting two board members sit down with the superintendent and teachers, leave the lawyer in Lansing and settle this thing. He said it will be a tough negotiation and he is hoping there will be trust factors when the District tells you how much money it does not have.

Bonita Matthews, Willow Run resident, said there are different opinions, reasons, values and those who are pleased or not pleased with the way things are going. She said most of the community is very supportive of our dedicated teachers who are working without a contract and hopes we can come to an agreement without bringing somebody in.

President Braxton called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda

Dr. Ciranna added the following item to the agenda:

Item IV.E. - Acceptance of Recommendation for Suspension

Approval of the Agenda

#06071102 Ms. Clay moved that the Board of Education accept the agenda as amended. Mr. Smith supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Minutes

#06071103 Ms. Clay moved that the Board of Education approves the minutes as presented from the regular meeting of October 19, 2006, and as presented from the work-study session of November 2, 2006. Ms. Stewart supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Payment of Bills

#06071104 Ms. Stewart moved that the Board of Education approve the following General Fund checks, check #42664 through and including check #42825 with the exception of voided checks as noted on page 7 of the General Fund Check Register for the amount of \$1,904,562.12; and Building & Site check #1463, for the amount of \$1,129.00. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Consent Group

#06071105 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the Consent Group items as presented. Mr. Blakita supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Communications

Student Representative Comments

Travis Greer shared that his brother came through his surgery without complications and also thanked Scott Wilson for everything he has done for the Robotics Team. Mr. Greer said the team is actively raising funds and will appear on 102.9 F.M., W4 Country, the day after Thanksgiving during the morning show.

Mr. Greer said he attended the MASB Conference last week and enjoyed it and learned a lot. He shared the idea of a presentation given by Dr. White, which focused on teaching students the big things. He also attended a presentation about Proposal A, and spoke about rewriting the Student Representative Policy to increase the time served from one semester to two.

Mr. Greer said there was a great turn-out for the Student Concerns Meeting with the Superintendent and many topics were discussed. The next meeting will be held on December 20th, at 6:30 p.m., in the Forum Room of the high school.

Mr. Greer shared that Ms. Smith is working on getting high school students e-mail accounts by the turn of the semester. He also said many students are concerned with their sense of lack of safety and security at the high school. He said he will take this concern head-on himself.

Mr. Smith said he was at the same conference as Mr. Greer and that Travis made quite a good impression on everyone he met. Many attendees commented on how dynamic he is. Ms. Stewart asked if the minutes from the Student Concerns meeting can be made available to the board. Mr. Greer said he will e-mail the minutes to them. Ms. Braxton asked what kind of money the Robotics Team is looking to raise. Mr. Greer said the team needs to raise \$15,000 by December 31st and as of now they have a little over \$1,000, but that they have many fund raisers in the works, including a poinsettia and bake sale.

Dollars for Scholars

T.J. Revard, Ms. Martin and Ms. Sidney gave a presentation about what Dollars for Scholars/ABC³ is all about. They shared that this is a national network of over 800 cities and towns, working to help students with potential, but who face various obstacles, achieve a college education. This is done by providing help with career options, college admissions, financial aid and other issues facing new high school graduates.

This chapter of Dollars for Scholars is dedicated solely to Willow Run High School. Mr. Revard introduced Alaina Riles and Mashay Johnson, both Willow Run graduates and recipients of Dollars for Scholars scholarships, currently attending University of Detroit Mercy. Ms. Riles and Ms. Johnson shared the many caring ways Dollars for Scholars helped them succeed in their transition from high school to college.

Acceptance of Donation – Kaiser Elementary

#06071106 Mr. Smith moved that the Willow Run Board of Education accept a cash donation of \$1,000. to Kaiser Elementary School from an anonymous donor. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Acceptance of Recommendation - Suspension

#06071107 Mr. Blakita moved that the Willow Run Board of Education suspend the student presented to them for suspension on November 2, 2006 at 5:45 p.m., for 30 days. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Acceptance of Recommendation - Expulsion

#06071108 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education expel the student presented to them for expulsion on November 2, 2006 at 6:00 p.m., for 180 days. Mr. Blakita supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried.

Acceptance of Donation – Holmes Elementary

#06071109 Ms. Stewart moved that Willow Run Board of Education accept a \$1,000. donation to Holmes Elementary School from The University of Michigan Student Chapter of the Michigan Education Association. Ms. Clay supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried

Acceptance of Recommendation - Suspension

#06071110 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education suspend the student presented for suspension on November 16, 2006 at 6:00 p.m., for 30 days. Ms. Stewart supported.

Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 – Motion carried.

Contracted Services Agreement – IBS Consulting

Ms. Ilene Singer, of IBS Consulting shared the proposal for the elementary media center database, which includes preventive maintenance, 2006-2007 end-of-year inventory, Accelerated Reading preparation and in-service, database in-service, media curriculum development with elementary media Para-educators, and ordering of elementary media center materials.

Approval of Hire – Certified Personnel - Willow Run High School

#06071111 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the hiring of Ms. Kristen Brovold to serve as the Willow Run High School Biology Teacher, with a prorated salary of \$42,215 (MA, Step 2), for the duration of the 2006-2007 school year as a part of the WCEA Teachers Union. Mr. Smith supported.

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

Approval of Hire – Certified Personnel - Willow Run High School

#06071112 Ms. Clay moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the hiring of Ms. Melissa Eddinger to serve as the Willow Run High School French Teacher, with a prorated salary of \$36,482 (BA, Step 1), for the duration of the 2006-2007 school year as a part of the WCEA Teachers Union. Mr. Smith supported.

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

Approval of Hire – Certified Personnel - Willow Run High School

#06071113 Mr. Smith moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the hiring of Ms. Paige Bacon to serve as the Willow Run High School Art Teacher, with a prorated salary of \$40,143 (BA, Step 3), for the duration of the 2006-2007 school year as a part of the WCEA Teachers Union. Mr. Smith supported.

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

Citizens' Questions

Fawn Martin, Willow Run parent announced Ms. Paige Bacon is in need of yarn, fabric and magazines for her art class. Donations can be dropped off either in the Parent Resource Room or in room 102 of the high school.

Superintendent's Comments

Dr. Ciranna wished everyone a blessed and peaceful Thanksgiving.

Board Members' Comments

Ms. Smith said the MASB sessions were very good and he will be sharing the information he gained, including that having to do with virtual high schools, with administration. He said he attended a Learning for All Whatever it Takes session and gave a copy of the third grade curriculum and assessment to Ms. Tatom.

Ms. Stewart said she attended the financial session at the MASB Conference, including one about Proposal A. She said the State of Michigan is in very bad financial shape and we will have to use our At-Risk money to help ourselves out. Ms. Stewart also attended a session about high schools that are improving and picked up copies of what they are doing, which she will share with Dr. Jenkins and Ms. Tatom.

Ms. Clay said we have already tapped into virtual high school. Ms. Clay also praised Ms. Coffey for the excellent presentation and offered the Athletic Boosters' help to Mr. Daniel. She said the boosters are fund raising for the Ypsilanti/Willow Run game by holding a raffle. Ms. Clay said the teachers seem to think the board just doesn't care, which is not true. She said she met with her school, which is Kaiser and they are doing great and do so much for everybody.

President Braxton declared the meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.