

WILLOW RUN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
Ypsilanti, Michigan

REGULAR MEETING

August 20, 2009

The meeting opened at 6:40 PM at Willow Run High School, 235 Spencer Lane with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Those present were:

Sheri Washington, President
Harold Wimberly, Vice President
Dorothy Stewart, Treasurer
Mark Wilde, Secretary
Anglesia Brown, Trustee
Joi Jenson, Trustee
Clifford Smith, Trustee

Members of the Administrative Council Present Included:

Dr. Doris Hope-Jackson, Superintendent
Kelly Webb, Principal Secondary Complex
JoeAnn Allen, Principal Ford Elementary
Renee Smith, Principal Cheney Academy
Laura Lisiscki, Principal Kaiser Elementary
Delores Jenkins, Principal Holmes Elementary
Laconda Hicks, Director Student & Teacher Services
Laura Frey-Greathouse, Title I Coordinator
Torrence Greene, Athletic Director
Charles Raski, Assistant Principal

Citizens' Questions concerning the Agenda

None

Call to order by President Washington at 6:44 p.m.

Acknowledgements

There were none.

Approval of Agenda

#0910082001 Mr. Wilde moved that the Willow Run Board of Education accept the agenda as presented. Mr. Smith supported.

Ayes – 7

Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Minutes

#0910082002 Mr. Wilde moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the minutes as presented from the meeting of August 6, 2009. Ms. Jenson supported.

Ayes – 7

Nays – 0 – Motion carried

#0910082003 **Approval of Bills**

Ms. Stewart moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the following General Fund checks, check #51214 through and including check #51362 with the exception of voided checks as noted on page 7 of the General Fund Check Register totaling \$2,085,093.60; and no Building and Site checks. Mr. Wilde supported.

Ayes – 7

Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Discussion

Mr. Wilde asked for clarification regarding a check to *Illinois Student Assistance* in the payroll section; it was believed to be a child support issue.

Presentations

Mr. Mark McCulloch from the Washtenaw County Road Commission was present to bring the Board and audience up-to-date regarding phase III of the Holmes Road construction project.

Ms. Stacia Morrison was present to share the resource of Ele's Place for our students who may have suffered a loss and need assistance during the grieving process.

Ms. Hall, Mr. Beck and Mr. Jones, of Future Minds, Inc, explained that as a non-profit organization, their mission is to build computers, load them with software and donate them to students who would benefit. In addition to the equipment, the child also receives computer support for one year. The Willow Run staff is encouraged to recommend students who would benefit from the donations.

Dr. Doris Hope-Jackson presented the rationale for the K-6 configuration this year at each elementary school for this school year. Grade configurations – the best combination to meet students' needs - have been a discussion in the field of education for 80 years. Dr. Hope-Jackson explained that the shift is back to smaller learning communities with K-6 centers. This shift was underscored by anecdotal information Dr. Hope-Jackson received on her arrival in Willow Run concerning students exiting the district after the fifth grade; and again in the district-wide survey this past spring with results demonstrating 78% parental support of the K-6 configuration. Dr. Hope-Jackson reviewed the *potential* impact of having grade 6 in the elementary centers; among them: more time to work with students on foundation skills; social adjustment; parent comfort; more orderly middle school environment and a boost to enrollment. As always, Dr. Hope-Jackson and her Administrative Staff will look at data to ascertain if the move has been successful for our students by reviewing student attendance (less absences), student discipline (less referrals to the Board) and student achievement (assessment tools). It was questioned if the students would have the same benefits as when they were attending the middle school. Dr. Hope-Jackson emphasized that she and her team have worked hard to make certain the 6th grade students won't lose anything by moving to the elementary centers.

Mrs. Delores Jenkins presented information regarding the Gifted and Talented Program. The program was introduced to the Willow Run district last year by Dr.

Hope-Jackson and housed at Kettering. Prior to implementation, Mrs. Jenkins explained that other gifted sites in southeast Michigan were visited and experts in the field who work in Michigan were interviewed. The admission process includes standardized testing, teacher evaluation, review of past academic performance and a student interview. Mrs. Jenkins shared program highlights which include the Learn & Serve Grant project-based learning; the E3 award for educational excellence which the students won based on a project where business plans were created; St. Jude “math-a-thon” and virtual field trips. Each student has an individualized learning plan and works at his/her own pace. There were 33 students at the end of the 08/09 school year; seven were drawn from outside of the district. Mrs. Jenkins expressed her appreciation for the incredible involvement by the parents of the children in the program. This year, the program will be housed at Holmes and there will be a seventh grade component at the middle school to continue to meet the needs of the promoted sixth graders. The 7th grade component will include students being tested this summer. Concern was expressed that these students are receiving special attention. Dr. Hope-Jackson reminded the board that gifted students also deserve a free and appropriate education. It was noted that the *format* for approaching the learning environment for the gifted students is one that would be of benefit to all; that is, meeting students where they are and guiding them to the next level with innovative, individual, and creative teaching methods.

Finance Report

Ms. Stewart provided the Board with minutes of the Finance Subcommittee meeting. Following receipt of the Energy Conservation report, the Committee is investigating opportunities with Superior and Ypsilanti Townships to partner in ARRA grants to fund improvements with an eye toward saving dollars spent on utilities. Washtenaw Community College has visited our middle school campus and the visiting team was impressed with the facility as a possible extension site for classes. Interest had been expressed by the COPE program in renting Kettering, however it was felt that Willow Run could not subsidize the program and COPE has moved to Ypsilanti. The Bottles-n-Backpacks lease is current and will remain in effect until November, 2009 with the recommendation that a new pilot be conducted for one more year and data collected regarding the impact on the district. Facilities use in general was reviewed and information has been provided to members this evening in response to questions asked. It was suggested that the Athletic Boosters Club become established as a 501-3b organization. The financial auditors will finish their field work August 31st. Efforts are underway to look at bus routes to meet families’ needs while saving the \$90,000 as required by the deficit elimination plan. Enrollment materials are being distributed with visits being made to the Belleville and Canton areas. A Back-to-School picnic will be held on the campus on August 29, 2009. As the contract for security remains pending with the Washtenaw County Sheriff’s Department, Dr. Houle is making a needs-assessment and comparing the results with the bid responses. The mass communication system, AlertNow, is being implemented and uses the student data system, PowerSchool, for phone numbers. As a result, in order to update data and facilitate the accuracy, there has been one person assigned to enter student data. The goal is to standardize the information and minimize data entry errors which, it is hoped, will have a positive impact on the graduation rate.

Approval of Contracts – Pediatric Therapy Associates Contract

#0910082004 Ms. Jenson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the contract [with Pediatric Therapy Associates] for 2009/2010 school year, for an amount not to exceed \$40,320. Mr. Smith supported.

Ayes – 7

Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Acceptance of Resignation

#0910082005 Ms. Brown moved that the Willow Run Board of Education accept the resignation of Nan Richards, Teacher, effective September 1, 2009. Ms. Stewart supported.

Ayes – 7 – Ms. Brown, Mr. Wimberly, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilde,
Ms. Jenson, Ms. Washington

Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Leave

#0910082006 Ms. Brown moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the FMLA of Darlene Bentley, Custodian, which began July 8, 2009 with an expected return date of September 1, 2009. Mr. Wilde supported.

Ayes – 7 - Ms. Brown, Mr. Wimberly, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilde,
Ms. Jenson, Ms. Washington

Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Leave

#0910082007 Ms. Jenson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve to extend the medical leave of Carole Hibbens, Food Service Cook, with an unspecified return date. Mr. Wilde supported.

Ayes – 7 - Ms. Brown, Mr. Wimberly, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilde,
Ms. Jenson, Ms. Washington

Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Approval of Recall

#0910082008 Mr. Wilde moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the recall of Victoria Vock to High School Teacher, effective September 2, 2009. Mr. Smith supported.

Ayes – 7- Ms. Brown, Mr. Wimberly, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilde,
Ms. Jenson, Ms. Washington

Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Discussion

It was confirmed that Ms. Vock was next in seniority for recall.

Approval of Appointment

#0910082009 Mr. Wilde moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the appointment of Katie Beaudoin, as Secondary Complex Math Teacher, effective September 2, 2009, at a salary according to the WCEA Salary Schedule, Bachelors, level 2, \$38,696 for the 2009-2010 school year. Ms. Stewart supported.

Ayes – 6- Mr. Wimberly, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilde,
Ms. Jenson, Ms. Washington

Nays – 1 – Ms. Brown. Motion carried

Discussion

Ms. Beaudoin was in the audience and expressed her excitement to teach at Willow Run. She was welcomed by the Board.

Approval of Appointment

#0910082010 Ms. Jenson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the appointment of Kevin Lawrence, as Secondary Complex Math Teacher, effective September 2, 2009, at a salary according to the WCEA Salary Schedule, Bachelors, level 5, \$44,407 for the 2009-2010 school year. Mr. Smith supported. Ayes – 6- Mr. Wimberly, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilde, Ms. Jenson, Ms. Washington
Nays – 1 – Ms. Brown. Motion carried

Discussion

Mr. Lawrence was in the audience and expressed his excitement to teach at Willow Run. He was welcomed by the Board. It was noted that while appointments are sometimes brought before the Board for approval while criminal background checks results are pending, the Board was assured that until the results are finalized, the employee does not begin; substitutes are used.

Approval of Appointment

#0910082011 Ms. Stewart moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the appointment of Jacqueline Clegg, as Secondary Complex Math Teacher, effective September 2, 2009, at a salary according to the WCEA Salary Schedule, Bachelors, level 0, \$34,756 for the 2009-2010 school year. Mr. Wilde supported. Ayes – 6- Mr. Wimberly, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilde, Ms. Jenson, Ms. Washington
Nays – 1 – Ms. Brown. Motion carried

Discussion

Ms. Clegg was in the audience and thanked the Board for the opportunity. She was welcomed.

Approval of Academic Calendar

#0910082012 Mr. Smith moved that the Willow Run Board of Education approve the Academic Calendar for the 2009-2010 school year, as presented. Mr. Wilde supported. Ayes – 7- Ms. Brown, Mr. Wimberly, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilde, Ms. Jenson, Ms. Washington
Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Approval to Authorize the Board President to Attend Administrative Operational Meetings

#0910082013 Ms. Jenson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education authorize the Board President to attend administrative operational meetings for the 2009-2010 school year. Mr. Wilde supported.

Discussion

Much discussion took place regarding whether or not an uninvited attendance to administrative meetings by a Board member was within the scope of the role as a Board member. Concern was expressed that staff would not feel comfortable to share problems and frustrations, thereby negating one of the goals of staff

meetings. It was suggested that the board president attending meetings would provide concrete information for the evaluation of the superintendent; no different than the superintendent reviewing a teacher. Dr. Hope-Jackson clarified that she did not routinely evaluate teachers. It was then noted that the requested action was no different that a principal evaluating a teacher in his/her environment. The question was raised if evaluating the superintendent cannot be done in a meeting, how is it to be done? It was also noted that the superintendent may invite anyone to a meeting but that no single board member can act individually – only as a unit. Ms. Washington explained that she had not read the motion prior to the meeting and the issue should be studied more and brought back to the table; but, she was encouraged by the respectful dialogue. It was further noted that Mr. Wilde would be reviewing the agenda prior to each board meeting for approval.

Table - Approval to Authorize the Board President to Attend Administrative Operational Meetings

#0910082014 Ms. Jenson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education table the motion that the Board President to attend administrative operational meetings for the 2009-2010 school year until the September 3 meeting. Mr. Wilde supported.
Ayes – 7-
Nays – 0 – Motion carried

2009-2010 Bottles-n-Backpacks

Ms. Washington explained that following the meeting she attended with Ms. McLemore and Ms. Allen, and as the lease specified one year and did not identify school year vs. calendar year the latchkey program would continue until November, 2009. At that time, the lease would come before the Board for consideration. Ms. Washington further recommended that the program continue as a pilot for one more year at Ford Elementary. Dr. Hope-Jackson requested from Ms. McLemore a copy of the list of students new to the district during the 08-09 school year thought to have enrolled as a result of the latchkey program.

Certification of Board Delegates

#0910082015 Ms. Jenson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education certify Ms. Smith and Mr. Wilde as the voting delegates and Ms. Jenson and Ms. Stewart as the alternates for the 2009 Michigan Association of School Board Delegate Assembly on Thursday, Oct. 22, 2009 Mr. Wilde supported.
Ayes – 7
Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Election of MASB Board of Directors

#0910082016 Ms. Jenson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education select Gregory Peoples as the candidate of choice for the MASB Board of Directors. Ms. Brown supported.
Ayes – 7
Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Discussion

Mr. Peoples was selected because of his eight (8) years of experience and his knowledge regarding board business. It was noted that Mr. Peoples was a past trustee on the Willow Run Board of Education.

Approval to Accept Donation

#0910082017 Ms. Brown moved that the Willow Run Board of Education accept the donation of a willow tree from the combined Willow Run graduate classes of 1978, 1979 and 1980. Mr. Smith and Mr. Wimberly supported.

Ayes – 7

Nays – 0 – Motion carried

Adjustment to Replacement Equipment Order

To keep the Board informed, it was noted that a number of adjustments to the original technology order to replace computer stations of the administrators, principals, and management support, as approved by the Board, were necessary. Two vendors vs. one were used –resulting in less money spent.

Citizens' Time

Members of the Drama Club asked the Board for continued support and provided each member with a DVD of past performances.

Ms. Claudette Braxton, former Willow Run board president, expressed her concern about the motion to enable the board president to attend administrative meetings. She reminded the board that 50% attended training which specifically reviewed roles and responsibilities of the board and the action being contemplated is contrary to that training. It is not the role of the board.

Ms. Brenda Clay, representing the Athletic Boosters, expressed her disappointment that the boosters could not give their presentation but will look forward to answering any questions or responding to any concerns at the next meeting. Ms. Clay noted that Ms. Jenson had recently attended a boosters' meeting and all are welcome. The booster volunteers have given countless hours to the district and all funds collected are spent on student needs.

Mr. Ed Calhoun, Cross Country Captain, asked if the 6th grade students would still have the opportunity to become involved with cross country track.

Mrs. Ann Garner, grandmother of a student in the gifted and talented program, explained that she has been in the district since 1976 and has been very impressed by the gifted program. She encouraged the board to support the program explaining that gifted children shouldn't be held back while other students' needs are met. Mrs. Garner also encouraged the district to put the bickering aside and support each other. Excited by what she has seen with her grand daughter, she promises to be more active in the future.

Mr. Stanley Stewart expressed his dismay at the motion to have the board president attend administrative meetings. Mr. Stewart shared that 'never in his 40 year career of leading 10,400 employees with a 5 billion dollar budget - which includes educating board members' - has he seen such a resolution enacted. He would be very interested in reviewing the results of any research that the Board may have done to support this action.

Mr. Andy Blakita, former Willow Run board member and Kettering area resident, asked about the status of the written response to his question at the last meeting concerning COPE; while he appreciated the report this evening by Ms. Stewart, he would like specific numbers. Mr. Blakita asked the members how many of them were working the "Enrollment Blitz" August 25 to 27 which entails walking the neighbors sharing the good news about Willow Run. Mr. Blakita assured the members that he would be walking. Mr. Blakita asked the members to please use

the PA system so that they can be heard. Regarding the motion involving the Board presence at administrative meetings, Mr. Blakita explained that the evaluation of the Superintendent is properly done as a whole, based on outcomes – not on the working process, which involves meetings.

Board Comments

Mr. Wilde read aloud the written responses to the citizen questions from the last meeting.

Superintendent

Dr. Hope-Jackson referred the Board members to the significant amount of information provided them in response to requests received Tuesday. The only delay is the board policy manual which historically seems to have been maintained in different places. Dr. Hope-Jackson renewed her request, made last year, to commission the Michigan Association of School Boards to review our policies and update them to meet current legal requirements. It was noted that MASB was involved with success the last time the manual was updated. The possible need for a policy subcommittee was expressed. Dr. Hope-Jackson referred questions regarding the Heritage Festival Parade to Ms. Renee Smith, who volunteered to coordinate participation for this year. Ms. Smith shared that district walkers, which this year includes teachers, administration, parents and board, have been given the location right behind the Willow Run Band – unit #53, and will meet at 9:15 a.m. at Ballard Street.

Move to Closed Session - Personnel

#0910082017 Ms. Jenson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education move to closed session to discuss a personnel issue. Mr. Wilde supported.
Ayes – 6- Mr. Wimberly, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilde,
Ms. Jenson, Ms. Washington
Nays – 1 – Ms. Brown. Motion carried

Move to Open Session

#0910082018 Ms. Jenson moved that the Willow Run Board of Education move to open session. Mr. Stewart supported.
Ayes – 7
Nays – 0 Motion carried

President Washington declared the meeting adjourned: **10:10 p.m.**