

BOE Meeting Highlights

Board of Education Meeting July 12, 2017

The Board of Education encourages the public to attend the meetings held on the second Wednesday of each month. There is an opportunity at the beginning of each meeting for input from the public. After that the Board conducts the School District's business, including the Superintendent's and Principals' Reports, position appointments, and issues to act upon.

Here are some highlights from the meeting held on July 12. The next meeting will be held Wednesday, August 9, 2017 at 6:30 P.M. in the Jeffers Media Center.

Public Participation

- Steve Sabatini, a Foundation member, asked the Board if they have an official position on the ISD millage for CTE classes. The Board responded that they have not taken a position.
- Lisa Pyykkonen, teacher at SRE, spoke about concern she has about the decision to move kindergarten teacher Sue Destrampe to 4-6 social studies and Title 1 teacher Priscilla Chynoweth to kindergarten teacher and hiring a Title 1 aide. This is due to Title 1 funding being cut by \$40,000. The Title program as it runs now impacts K-3 students. Mrs. Chynoweth runs reading interventions and is able to provide direct instruction in small groups that teachers aren't able to in a whole class setting. Mrs. Chynoweth has the training in several different interventions that an incoming aide would not have. She said the Title program is one of the most valuable tools the school has to help with the new 3rd grade reading retention bill. Students in the Title program not only learn to read better but gain confidence and become better students. Mrs. Pyykkonen was a teacher before there was a Title 1 teacher and there were aides and it wasn't as effective and that was why a teacher was put in place. She feels like this would be going backwards in that an aide would not do as good of a job. She understands that there has to be a cut but she would like to see it happen elsewhere.
- John Asiala, a 6th grade teacher at Calumet and parent of students in the district, also spoke against the change of the Title program. He has had 4 children go through Mrs. Chynoweth's program. One of them who struggled and went through the program is now in the high school and is an all A student. He asked if this program is cut, what else could it effect? Adams district has won awards for its reading program and high scores in testing. As a teacher he said that if you teach a kid to read, you can teach him anything in math and science. His opinion is that if you cut the Title program you would be doing the students a disservice and the district could lose families. He asked if the state has provided funding with the 3rd grade reading retention bill. Mr. Keteri answered that the ISD was provided funding for it and hired a reading

specialist that can provide support for teachers. There is no way for the district to opt out or to get funding from that.

- Sara Pennala, a parent, also spoke against the change of the Title program. Her family lives in Stanton township but she sends her kids to South Range solely for Mrs. Chynoweth's Title program. One of her children had not liked school but after being in the Title program started to thrive and couldn't stop talking about school and the confidence built spilt over into other areas of life. As a parent she couldn't have asked for more from Mrs. Chynoweth and her program. She applauds the forward thinking that the district has with their trades and cosmetology programs but Title 1 is just as important. It was noted that trades programs are funded by the Foundation which gets many endowments specifically for these programs. She asked if the Foundation is only for the high school. Mr. Keteri answered that the Foundation does support many programs at the elementary, they donated \$8,000 this summer for upcoming programs at the grade school this year.
- Lori Geshel, kindergarten teacher at SRE, also spoke against the change of the Title program. A paraprofessional simply wouldn't be as good as a highly trained teacher. Mrs. Chynoweth is trained in 6 different interventions and can identify which one would be best for students.
- Lisa Rajala, a parent, also spoke against the change of the Title program. In her opinion, Mrs. Chynoweth is absolutely phenomenal and cannot say how awesome the Title program is. She likened the high school to a house of cards that will fall without a good foundation in reading.
- Karri Larson, a parent, also spoke against the change of the Title program. She said that even the kids know how much of a good job Mrs. Chynoweth does. Her daughter took the time on her own to write Mrs. Chynoweth a note thanking her. Confidence that children get in reading with Mrs. Chynoweth spills over in other areas of life.
- Diane Kangas, a parent, also spoke against the change of the Title program. She asked how it would be saving money if her salary would still have to be paid. Mr. Keteri answered that with Mrs. Chynoweth moving to Kindergarten they wouldn't have to hire a new teacher for that position or the other option of making one large kindergarten section of 25 students instead of 2 separate classes. With a student coming up to the grade school, it isn't a question in her opinion. She suggested looking into grants.
- Priscilla Chynoweth, who is the Title 1 teacher at SRE, thanked everyone for their support. She is blessed to be working in this district for the last 31 years. She loves what she does and is not burnt out but just as passionate. She knows from her experience and training what direction to take students in. Her fear is if you put an aide in the position, students will inevitably fall through the cracks. Students who

are in her program feel like it is a privilege. She offered to meet with any Board member with questions about what her program is like. She asked the Board to please look at other avenues.

Superintendent's Report-Tim Keteri

- There was the decision made about the Title program. Mrs. Chynoweth has put together a wonderful program. As per the contract, teachers have to be informed of teaching assignments by July 15. The Finance Committee can always change the decision before the school year begins.
- Jen Castellano, art teacher, resigned to move back to Wisconsin to work in her art studio.
- Copper Country Christian School has shown interest in co-oping in sports with Jeffers.
- The after school program at SRE will be different for next year. It would cost about \$23,000 for the program. The Foundation has pledged \$6,000 towards it. There is a sustainability fund that should be able to provide \$6,000. The rest would have to be covered by a mix of parents paying and the district. His proposal had costs of \$4/day, \$2/day for reduced lunch students, and \$1/day for free lunch students. To be no cost to the district, the prices would have to be at least doubled. The Foundation is supporting the program to help at risk, low income students and his worry is increasing the price would drive away these students the Foundation is seeking to help.
- The truck the district uses for plowing is no longer viable. Sayen's gave the district a good deal on a 2009 truck.
- The Post Office has not been paying the increased rent since November when the deal for the building upgrades was made for rent to go from \$300 to \$800. The Board directed Mr. Keteri to send a letter of eviction.
- There were two janitorial bids for the High School, with D&L Janitorial being the lowest at \$9665.
- Laura Bigger, cook at the elementary, resigned to take a job at Elm River School. The opening will be posted internally to the substitute cooks before being posted in the paper.
- Jade Babcock, art teacher, resigned to take a full time position at Dollar Bay.
- A full time K-12 art teacher position was posted and there is an interview scheduled for Friday.

Principal's Report-Kim Harris, South Range Elementary

- A group including her and teachers Mande Lehto, Lori Geshel, and Laura Larson went to a conference about the UP Health Project. They came back with a lot of good ideas.
- Some changes to next year's assignments include Mrs. Chynoweth and Sue Destrampe to 4-6 social studies, Lisa Pyykkonen from 2nd to 3rd grade, and Kellie Kellett (formerly Pitrone) from 3rd to 1st.

- Open positions to fill this year include the kitchen, an aide, the art teacher, the after school program director, and a long term substitute for Mrs. Geborkoff who will be on maternity leave.

Principal's and Athletic Report-Steve Lishinski, Jeffers High School

- Jen Castellano and Jade Babcock, art teachers, left but there is a good candidate to interview this week.
- The cleaning crew is doing a good job.
- There was a great article about the work Mrs. Pera, science teacher, is doing with MIStar.
- He is looking into doing a co-op with Copper Country Christian School.
- There was talks of L'Anse and Baraga co-oping with us with hockey but L'Anse will be sponsoring their program this year.
- There are open positions for Girls JV Basketball Coach and volunteer Baseball Coach.

Action Items

- The Finance Committee will meet July 20th.
- The Board discussed several action items.

Submitted by Valerie Dobson, South Range Elementary