

REVISED PER THE FEBRUARY 12, 2008 BOARD MEETING

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT NO. 56

Frankfort • Searsport • Stockton Springs

Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting

January 22, 2008 – 6:30 P.M.

SDHS/MS Cafetorium - Searsport

Present: Joseph Altilio Nedra Bellows Tom Calderwood
James Cunningham Denise Dakin Robert Danks
Harold Grove Michael Hamilton Christopher Krause
Veronica Magnan Twyler Webster Lisa Hudson (7:00)

Absent: Julia Martin

Visitors: 94

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairperson Bob Danks called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.
2. **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA.** The NCLB Site Visit Slide Presentation will be moved to the February meeting.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** A motion was made by Harold Grove and seconded by Mike Hamilton to approve the January 8, 2008 Board minutes as presented. Board members wanted the following to be noted: 1) that the Board chair directed the Superintendent to reflect those people who spoke during Public Participation; 2) moving the Central Office to another location; and 3) to include information, including percentages, provided by Alan Hammond. The Superintendent noted that Mr. Hammond did not provide her with a copy of his prepared speech, so it could not be recorded in the minutes. He did, however, give her a CD which contained his research.

VOTE: 9-2-0 (Dakin, Webster)

4. **CONSENT AGENDA. Any Board member may request that any item be removed from this consent agenda and moved to the regular agenda.” – Policy File BEDBA, Consent Agenda, approved July 10, 2007.**

- A. Heather Hersom, employed as an Educational Technician III.
- B. Zack Ellis, employed as an Educational Technician III and ESL Tutor.
- C. Resignation of Valerie Small, cook, effective January 17, 2008.
- D. MSMA Legislative News

A question was asked concerning the funding for the two additional Educational Technicians listed above. They are both being funded with Title I money.

Hearing no objections, the Chairperson declared the Consent Agenda accepted as is.

5. **PRESENTATIONS.** The Superintendent gave an overview on Restructuring, which discussed the educational component as well as the financial component. This PowerPoint will be placed on the district’s website.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.** Chairperson Bob Danks explained the process for public participation: two minutes per person to give their input, to hold applause, be brief, and that there would be no responses from the Board of Directors.
- ❑ Alan Hammond stated that he has attended every budget meeting in the last five years. The Board has done a diligent job in this, and worked in the best interests of our students. Alan's research on transitions and low economic status was given to the Superintendent. He cited the Crandel District School in Texas which went to a K-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-9 configurations. They have just undone what we are planning to do. The most convincing was to provide more time – to get to know the students and parents. Alan said he would support a budget that supports his children, not one that does not support the best interests of children.
 - ❑ Deb Middleswart had questions about the cost of the Superintendent and her raise. She said that as an educator and a member of SOS, this is not in the best interest of children and only concerns money. She is mostly concerned with Grade 6 being moved out of the Middle School building. This proposal will take us back in time. Our focus should be on what is best for students and families.
 - ❑ Glenn Baker asked if the Board had received his letter. He stated that he had served on the Ad Hoc Restructuring Committee to brainstorm and come up with options for this restructuring proposal. When you undertake such a large project, you should include a large number of people in the process. We are down in the process – people say “include me.” We will vote down the budget. Learn to build community support from the bottom up so they understand the process.
 - ❑ Amber Snow said she was annoyed with the concern that we are performing below standards. Her rates will not increase with the increases in oil costs and other expenses. The Superintendent makes more than the Town Manager and the Belfast Superintendent. She asked that we consider the students in this district.
 - ❑ Denise Harriman asked what about the technology costs and administrative costs? In Castine they have the same number of elderly people. They have no problem passing a budget. What is scaring our people from passing the school budget? Her child's MEA scores are low – why haven't they changed? She asked her daughter who is concerned about being in the high school. She likes her child going to the same school in one place; her fifth grade teacher knew she needed special education help, so she got it for her.
 - ❑ Joy Baker said it is difficult to sit on both sides. She is a taxpayer, a grandmother, and an educator in this district. She has seen a dedicated group of people. The critical interactions between teachers and students and the expectations they have for students are what increases achievement. She is not satisfied with low test scores and will not use low socio-economic status as an excuse. 1) Trusting by knowing the students. 2) Minimizes the number of transitions with students. 3) Listen to our community as to what our students need.
 - ❑ Stephen Merrill asked that the information given tonight be posted on the district's website. He is concerned with the cost savings, especially with transportation. What are these costs? Is that increased cost worse than restructuring? The school sizes will be 171 in K-2, 118 in 3-4, 110 in 5-6, and 309 in 7-12. He is thinking of the culture shock of going from a school of 110 to one that has 309 students. The Middle School, grades 6-8, is crucial to our young people and does not off set any cost savings. Why not address this with the RPC and what will be available in the future? He thinks we need to consider not only a decrease in costs but possibly raising taxes.

- ❑ Michelle Fields-Perkins asked why we were told our questions will be answered tonight and they are not? Children are concerned. What is happening with our schools? She is concerned with these meetings with her six and nine year olds. Her children do not know who the Board of Directors and the Superintendent are. Think about what you want from them. Communities are passionate. Why haven't you considered us to help you?
- ❑ Sharon Fields said that a friend close by did a similar restructuring, but with no teacher changes and they did have MEA score increases. How valuable is it for a 5 – 7 year old to be on a bus for over an hour? Our children should be our #1 concern. In other countries, teachers are #1 in their culture, but not in the U.S. We need to give money and our taxes go up. Several of us have water property and cars and our most valuable commodities are our children. When asked how we are so successful, they will say "I lived in a community that cared."
- ❑ Melissa Brown asked who wrote the rationale – the Board? The Superintendent? The AD Hoc Committee? She is concerned with the rationale. Use the half-days you have to bring our teachers together. Class size on report: Dr. Silvernail states that the highest level is 10 and the lowest level is 49. SAD #22 had the same situation as us and they came up with another plan and our high priority. The minutes said it was a "leak to the public." "A bad plan is a good plan." She disagrees.
- ❑ Crystal Garcelon stated that at last month's meeting, it was stated that our questions were to be answered. She does not want to combine the schools in the way proposed. Where will the questions be posted from the last meeting? When will we get those answers? Maybe at the next meeting? Will they be online? Someone else should take the minutes.
- ❑ Nancy Staples said that she did not vote for the budget due to administrative raises that were so high. She assumes that is why others did not vote for the budget. School is a home away from home. It takes extra costs, etc. She doesn't want her child to go to a variety of schools (FES, SSES, SES, etc.) with a long bus ride. The minutes should be taken by someone impartial and posted on the website.
- ❑ William Grant said that the MEA scores were bad. With increasing the class sizes and teachers pay, how will scores go up with the same teachers? There are other ways to take away money for busing. He said to pick up and deliver all children at once. Cut sports. Other special trips (positive reward trips, etc.) take a day away from school. Why not do them on a Saturday? Any thoughts on how many parents will send their children to other schools or home school if this goes through?
- ❑ Joe DuBois said there are budget items you need to live with, more than the bussing. K-2 in one school, 3-4 in another (the Ames School). Everyone comes out at 3 pm and the bell rings out at 3:05 pm. Some children are at school until 3:45, then are dismissed to wait for busses. A 6-8 year old watches the clock. One minute for him is a week for us. Be careful if a student gets on the bus at 3 pm and off at 3:45. He will get home later.
- ❑ Diane Gilmore said she went to the PLC trainings. There are two PLCs: K-2 and 3-5. She can work with the 3-5, look at the data, and work on the goal to get our scores up. She can work with them and they know her students, and will continue where she left off. When she sees a student, that student will say "I am going to have you as my Grade 3 teacher." We can work with grades 3-5 and can drive too, however, we set them up. DuFours says it is up to the schools and how we

- set them up. FES and SSES have asked us if we are working hard. If we have to work in a different community, we will have to start over. The parents know her.
- Joel Ploszaj said that all his questions were answered except for one. He has four children with two at the high school. He is adding up all the running around he will be doing. As a child, he spent one hour/day as a child going back and forth to school and he still has effects from that. He will not be asking anyone. How many Board members have talked to the teachers? Consider us as you make up your mind.
 - Christian Koelbl said that the voters should decide the structuring of the schools. Daughters come out with bake sales, etc. He thinks that things as important as this need to be sent home.
 - Tyler Sheafe said that the Superintendent's proposal and the research provided by Alan Hammond have given him some insights. He has concerns with the low test scores and increasing bus trips. Low test scores have always been around. Our answer is in the classroom, not in restructuring.
 - Bill Wiley said it is a difficult thing for him to see all of the transitions discussed here. Inside our buildings our staffs are parents away from homes, and working very hard. He pleaded with the Board not to do this. If given time to work long enough, our test scores will go up. He admires and respects his colleagues, but as a parent, he is concerned about his son's bus ride, which would be a 1 ½ hour ride. He feels his son is doing better now. He wants to be a part of the process, but as a parent, he is not in favor of this plan. He said hats off to the way the teachers are working/dealing with the students. He pleaded with the Board to reconsider.

The Board Chairperson thanked everyone for attending the meeting tonight. No decisions have been made, and we wanted your input tonight. When we get to our deliberations, we will consider what you have said.

7. **REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT.**

8. **COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

- A. Harold Grove reported from Region Seven. They observed the students in the Welding Program. Two students pointed out the need to have good mathematical skills. One student finished the program as a certified welder. One of our Searsport students is participating in the state competition for auto repair. Twelve students have been accepted to college.
- B. RPC – no report. .

9. **OLD BUSINESS.**

- A. Restructuring Schools. A motion was made by Twyler Webster and seconded by Denise Dakin to table this for a public hearing with parents and other community members with the focus on finding ways to save money for the upcoming budget, and to have an impartial moderator. We will list the pros, cons, and possible solutions. How do we solve the problem? This should be done in 2-3 weeks, with a mass mailing. Denise commented that we have to do what is best for our children. We should be able to come up with a \$1.8 million deficit to balance the budget. Harold Grove asked if 2-3 weeks is enough time? Should it be expanded to 4-5 weeks? The Board concurred that more time was needed. Twyler Webster said that there are people with good ideas.

VOTE: 10-1-0 (Danks)

10. **NEW BUSINESS.**

11. **EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

A. A motion was made by Denise Dakin and seconded by Mike Hamilton to enter executive session for the evaluations of officials and an employee pursuant to 1 MRSA § 405 (6) (A).

VOTE: 10-0-1 (Danks)

The Board entered executive session at 8:15 pm and resumed public session at 8:40 pm.

12. **ADJOURNMENT.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,