

Cassopolis Public Schools
725 Center Street
Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 445-0500

Board of Education
Minutes
Regular Meeting
February 24, 2014

Welcome: This regular meeting of the Cassopolis Board of Education was held on Monday, February 24, 2014 in the Board meeting room at Squires Educational Center and called to order at 7:00 P.M., as President Ward welcomed those attending.

Roll Call: Members Present: George Calvert, Sue Horstmann, Jeremy Carlisle, John Bright, Jason Pompey, Scott Ward
Members Absent: Lori Whitmyer
Also present: Tracy Hertsel, Bob Sieko, Dee Voss, Robyn Bright, Cindy Martynowicz, members of the community, staff and students

George Calvert led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda - Moved by Jeremy Carlisle, **supported by** Jason Pompey to approve the agenda, as presented. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Pompey, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Carlisle, yes; Bright, yes; Ward, yes.

Approval of Minutes: **Moved by** George Calvert, **supported by** John Bright to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 10, 2014, as written. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Carlisle, yes; Pompey, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Bright, yes; Ward, yes.

Communications or correspondence – Mr. Hertsel said that we received one correspondence, a request for a closed session later in the meeting.

Reports, Information Items from School Staff –

Ross Beatty Jr./Sr. High School / Sieko: Mr. Sieko said that currently he and the Guidance Counselor are looking at scheduling and student requests for next year. He said that the Curriculum Committee met earlier and was looking at various options, one being for the Ag Science building to better utilize the teachers and to add to courses offered. MEAP scores were released about a month ago. He said the bad news is that our 3-8th grade Math scores are low, showing a 71% average failing rate; on the positive we have 64% of our kids passing Reading. The 7-8th grade kids are taking a double block of both English and Math this year so their skills will definitely improve. They are also looking to have summer school offered as remediation for 7-12th grade students. He and the counselor will put a proposal together to bring to the Board to use at-risk funds. They are continuing to look at ways to address the MEAP results.

Mr. Ward asked what Math curriculum is being used. Mr. Sieko said he was told the district hasn't had a new Math curriculum in 12 years.

Mr. Ward asked if there has been an attempt to contact other districts to see what curriculum they are using. Mr. Sieko deferred to Mrs. Voss who has more background in the district.

Mrs. Voss said that 12-13 years ago we started working on a Math curriculum. We did not have the money for a new curriculum. With the state changing to the common core, some of this was covered in that material.

Mr. Bright said we brought the Superintendent in from New Buffalo in December and said that our Board is now looking at new goals. Mr. Westerburg has turned his district around. He asked if anyone asked him what was done there to turn their programs around. Mr. Ward said we are striving for that step up in achievement and at some point we have to do something to make that happen.

Mrs. Voss said that Math is and has been an issue in the district, which is why the elementary went the route they did with Math this year. In October they submitted a request to be a trial school for a pilot program for a new program, called Smarter Balance. They were chosen and will participate in this pilot.

Sam Adams Elementary / Voss: Mrs. Voss said that she was a scorekeeper at today's county-wide spelling bee. Mrs. Voss said that Cassopolis was very well represented. We had 4th through 8th grade students participate. The PTO provided matching t-shirts for the kids and coaches to wear for the competition. Overall results were: 4th grade took 2nd place; 5th grade took 4th place, 6th 7th and 8th took 2nd place. We had three 4th grade students who advanced to the 4th grade individual competition and Kendon Williams was the 2nd overall spelling champ from Cass County from the 4th grade. We had three of our kids in individual competition (5-8th grades) and Danny Young, one of our 8th grade team members, got 3rd place overall in the county's individual competition. She said that everyone from Cassopolis had good sportsmanship.

Mrs. Voss said that over 200 kids and parents attend the Father/Daughter dance earlier this month and it was a huge success. Mrs. Voss said that she is organizing some inservices for her staff. Mrs. Stermer, Mrs. Burks and she will attend an inservice in Three Rivers to look at Renaissance Learning, which is about science and social studies. Another group (Mrs. Stermer, Mrs. Carlisle, Mrs. Gorham and herself) will be going to Lansing as part of our WMU data collection team. The Science Olympiad and Math-a-Rama will be held the first week of March. Also Mr. Burns and Mrs. Allen are participating in FUEL UP TO PLAY 60 to help our kids learn about nutrition.

Mrs. Voss introduced Mrs. Felomina Patton and her team, Cathy LaPointe and Kelli Thammavongsa.

Mrs. Patton said that the kids are getting ready to compete on a district level at the Kalamazoo Museum this Saturday. She said that the students have been working hard the past two months on their play about the Kentucky Raid. They will have a dress rehearsal tomorrow at the Cass District Library at 4 p.m.

Ms. LaPointe gave the history of two paintings she had on display, both painted by Paul Collins from Grand Rapids, Michigan. One painting entitled "We the Children" shows the diversity of students in Cassopolis. They met with Mrs. Voss and the elementary staff about what would be needed for the painting to be displayed at the elementary. They discussed having a fundraiser to help raise money to buy this painting for the elementary. She said that Mr. Collins would come to Cassopolis after the funds were raised to sign the painting, which would greatly increase the value of the art work. Ms. LaPointe asked if the district would be interested in this project.

Mrs. Voss said the goal was to try and raise enough money to purchase and display the picture in the library.

Mr. Hertsel said he is fully in favor of this but there is some concern about using students for a fundraiser. He will need to research this legally.

Mr. Ward said that the district would have to see if including students and staff in fundraising is legally permissible.

Food Service / Bright: Mrs. Bright said that today her department provided meals for spelling bee contestants and coaches. Last week the state auditor for Food Service was in district on both the nutritional aspect and financial records. There were no findings in the financial department and the reviewer that was on site for the nutritional data is still going through the information. Last Wednesday her department was certified by the state with 6 cent certification. She will be in Lansing on Thursday for a class. On July 1st another part of the nutritional regulations called “Smart Snacks” will start. This phase also includes the dos and don’ts of fundraisers being done at school. She will make sure to bring this information to parent committee meetings and student advocates so the community understands. Also Mrs. Bright said that the new freezer and cooler will arrive next week and be installed March 7-8th.

Public Comment –

Austyn Withers from the Robotics team said that at the last Board meeting he proposed starting a Lego League in district. Since then, he found that there is no registration deadline but it usually is full by mid-September. He asked if any Sam Adams Elementary teacher has been found to mentor this team. Mrs. Voss said she had a staff meeting tomorrow and will ask at that time.

Austyn asked about the request from the last Board meeting to allow active members of the Robotics team to earn a varsity letter. Mr. Hertsel said this was discussed at tonight’s Curriculum Committee meeting and they are interested in making this happen. He will look into moving this process forward as soon as possible.

Austyn said that Robotics is sponsoring a dinner this Saturday, March 1st. Tickets are \$5 each.

Financials - Moved by Jeremy Carlisle, **supported by** John Bright that the Board of Education approve payment of bills for the month of January, as follows: \$422,497.47 for the General Fund and \$19,772.04 for the Food Service Fund. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Bright, yes; Pompey, yes; Carlisle, yes; Ward, yes.

Old Business – Action Item

Board goal updates – Moved by Jason Pompey, **supported by** Jeremy Carlisle that it is hereby resolved that the 2013-14 Board goals are as follows: Raise test scores; Make kids feel better about being in our buildings; Hire great people; Don’t spent more than you take in; and, Increase student enrollment. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Horstmann, yes; Bright, yes; Calvert, yes; Carlisle, yes; Pompey, yes; Ward, yes.

Superintendent’s Report – Mr. Hertsel reported as follows:

- This Friday there will be an active shooter drill at Ross Beatty. They will first meet in the library at 1 with the drill to begin at 2. This is to better prepare ourselves in case there is ever an incident.
- Construction updates at Ross Beatty – on Friday the gym floor was stripped down to the concrete and they found a few areas that need to be chipped out and a thin coat applied before

proceeding. All materials have been delivered. The classrooms affected have been painted and they are working on putting bulletin boards and white boards in place. They received a quote today for ceiling sound tiles for the auditorium, which need to be installed first; the guidance office should be painted soon also.

- Update for Sam Adams – At the end of last week with the rain and warmer weather there was substantial flooding in the parking lot area. He met with the architect early today on these issues.
- At the high school they are working on timelines for stadium bleachers and the press box and hopes to have the timelines set by mid-week.
- Last Friday there was a meeting in Edwardsburg on Power School which will be our new Student Information System. We are ahead of most in the area because we will begin using the system yet this year for scheduling.
- Is waiting on notification from the state on our Act of God days, but no decision has been made.
- Thanked Ricky Evans our Varsity Boys Basketball Coach, and A.D. Matt Brawley for installing the new sound system in the gymnasium over the weekend.
- The clinic will not be opening yet this school year because the doctor that was to be on site resigned a few weeks ago. They are in the process of hiring a new doctor and hope to be able to open with the new school year.

Mr. Carlisle updated Board members on tonight's Curriculum Committee meeting. Mr. Carlisle said the committee met at 6 p.m. and heard a presentation from the Ag Science teacher. She is proposing adding core classes to her program, one being to offer freshman biology. The Board would have to discuss and vote on this and this will be brought to the next Board meeting.

Mr. Hertsel said that these changes would follow the state's Collaborative Teaching Model.

Mr. Carlisle said the committee next had a presentation about the potential viability for moving 7-8th grade to Squires. There will be another committee meeting in four weeks to review options of leaving the 7-8th grade students at Ross Beatty and ways to make it better serve the students.

Mr. Carlisle said that also discussed was the Robotics request to earn a varsity letter for their participation. We will look into making sure there are no bylaws prohibiting anything like this, but he noted committee members were in favor of this request.

Mr. Bright referred to notes from the December 2nd Finance Committee meeting, which the new Guidance Counselor also attended. There was discussion about the district pursuing a program to work with our home school families that also addresses retention and recruitment. There were discussions about Adult Education student numbers being half of previous years and the fact that they have the same amount of staff; and how possibly the Guidance Counselor and Adult Education staff could work together to get this program going to work with home school families and that it could be housed at Squires. Mr. Bright said the action plan was to be given to the committee the end of January and he questioned if the action plan was available to be given to Finance Committee members.

Mr. Hertsel said that the Guidance Counselor arrived for a Finance Committee meeting tonight just before 6 p.m. She was present and prepared to speak to the committee tonight. She has her proposed plan ready to present but there was a change in committees that met tonight. We will reschedule Finance so that she is able to make her presentation.

Mr. Ward said he appreciates all the hard work that administrators are doing and understands what budget cuts have done to the administration. He is not pointing fingers or passing judgment on anyone.

Reinstatement Hearing / Closed Session – **Moved by** George Calvert, **supported by** Jason Pompey to go into closed session at 8:15 p.m. to consider a request for reinstatement of a student. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Carlisle, yes; Pompey, yes; Horstmann, yes; Calvert, yes; Bright, yes; Ward, yes.

Open session resumed at 8:29 p.m.

Moved by George Calvert, **supported by** Sue Horstmann to reinstate Student “A” with full privileges upon completion of the 90 school day expulsion. **Motion carried** 6-0, as follows: Bright, yes; Carlisle, yes; Calvert, yes; Horstmann, yes; Pompey, yes; Ward, yes.

There being no further business to come before the Board of Education it was **moved by** George Calvert, **supported by** Jeremy Carlisle to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. All in favor.

Susan Horstmann, Secretary