

SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES

Monday, October 23, 2017 5:45 PM

Delano Public Schools

Independent School District #879, Delano Minnesota

1. Call to order

A. Record of members present or absent

Members Present: A. Johnson, A. Briesemeister, R. Depa, C. Milano, C. Black and M. Larson

Members Absent: L. Seguin (arrived at 5:55 p.m.)

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Upon motion by R. Depa, seconded by C. Milano, the Board of Education approved the meeting agenda. Motion passed 6-0.

3. Work Session

Chris Runke, Kim Finn and Diane Johnson were present to talk about proposed updates to the facility usage manual. C. Runke said minor language changes had been made throughout the document to reflect actual practices and procedures. There is a requirement that users complete an annual facility usage application before they can reserve facilities so the district has current information, such as liability insurance, for those users. It will categorize users into groups like non-profits. There are also some billing changes. Category 2 occasional users will be billed at their scheduled event, including all rental fees and staff costs. Category 2 sports associations will be billed monthly throughout the year. There is no change for Category 3 users – typically organizations not in the Delano community. They still need to pay up front. C. Runke also said the fee structure between the district and city has been clarified and simplified, and that the city has opted not to charge Category 2 groups the maintenance portion of their fees for facilities. C. Runke said the usage manual only pertained to user groups, and that guidelines for individuals are still being worked out. C. Milano asked if rules are clearly defined for TAC members. C. Runke said TAC membership includes indoor spaces, but doesn't include outdoor facilities, so if individuals want to reserve those spaces they need to contact K. Finn at the TAC and pay the same fees as anyone else. C. Milano said there should be further discussion relating to outdoor facility use, especially in terms of community members who may want to walk on the track, or student athletes who might want to use the turf field. She acknowledged that time was needed to research practices at similar facilities, but said policies should be in place and clearly communicated by the time usage picks up in the spring. Superintendent Matt Schoen said the new facilities and resulting security upgrades require a culture change, because in the past the track and stadium were open all the time. He added that security cameras have been mounted, but additional work was needed to run data lines and establish wireless connections. Once operational, the cameras will allow some level of remote supervision and procedures can be updated accordingly. C. Milano said it would be better to keep the facilities accessible and perhaps not charge a fee, at least initially. C. Black said that if the district does not charge a fee, it is essentially funding people's activities. He added that charging a fee creates a high level of accountability. C. Runke said consistency will be needed in policies governing inside and outside use. C. Milano said a good initial step might be to record usage and volume to help develop appropriate policies. A. Briesemeister suggested doing an inventory of past practices, but M. Schoen said it was difficult to compare the present to the past because the campus has changed significantly. M. Schoen said the community is using campus facilities all the time, and procedures need to be developed that would allow that to continue. There are good, far-reaching questions that can be examined over the winter, he said, adding that actual facility use procedures are not changing much in the proposed

document. C. Milano said she didn't mind approving the proposed changes in November, but said it felt like there was a chapter missing. She added that answers need to be developed and communicated clearly to the public.

L. Seguin provided a project oversight update, and said that in general construction was moving along nicely. M. Schoen said a tentative date to open the high school entrance is Nov. 20, with moving days and furniture installation for the high school office before that. He added that an open house could be held on the same evening the new entrance opens in order to show the space to the public. There will be no official ribbon cutting ceremony and the floor of the space will remain bare concrete until next summer, but individuals can be on hand to answer questions. In other issues, the district is working with DASA on a gas line to the locker rooms. Xcel will leave the existing meter for DASA and do a separate meter for the district, with one shutoff for both meters. The parties have agreed that if the gas line needs to be relocated later for a second sheet of ice or some other reason, the district will pay for it.

Members also heard an overall budget update on the construction. M. Schoen said that revenue and funding has not changed since November of 2016, but there have been a few changes in costs due to change orders. He pointed out that the cost for the elementary and community ed. portion of the project has gone from \$2,512,063 to \$2,624,082 as a result of things like soil mitigation and other change orders. That project and the turf fields are complete, but there are ongoing change orders with the intermediate and secondary school projects. The total change is from \$52,714,563 to \$54,754,771. Money to cover the extra expense has come from the contingency fund. Last year that fund had \$3.1 million, and now \$1.3 million remains. L. Seguin said the last item that could draw significantly from the contingency fund is the diving well project, so the POC felt good about the contingency fund's status. About \$200,000 for flooring has already been earmarked from the fund and was not included in the \$1.3 million. C. Milano asked what the worst-case scenario might be as far as soil corrections for the diving well. C. Black said there have been some soil corrections needed on just about everything else that required excavation so far, so it was more a question of how much will be needed rather than if corrections would be needed. M. Schoen said that the closer excavation occurs to an existing building, as in the case of the diving well, the better the soil should be because of previous measures taken. Another significant draw on the contingency reserve was the process of opening up the secondary school, but L. Seguin said that while there would still be change orders going forward, most of the big surprises have likely been dealt with. C. Milano asked what becomes of funds remaining in the contingency budget after the project is complete. M. Schoen said there is a list of additional items that will be prioritized for that possibility. The funds could also be used to pay down a special assessment. L. Seguin said the intermediate construction remains ahead of schedule.

Business Manager Mary Reeder reported that new legislation says every district should have a policy on unpaid meal charges. Delano has taken the model Minnesota School Board Association policy and made changes to fit local needs. M. Reeder added that this is the first year that meal overdrafts have been sent to collections, as there was nearly \$1,000 in unpaid meal debt entering the summer. In past years that amount had typically been under \$50. There were five accounts turned over to collections, one of which was almost \$200. Members discussed low balance notifications, which include emails and phone calls and a letter. Eventually the principal will contact the family if necessary. M. Schoen said principals are in the best position to determine what might be going on with the family, and that some money is available to help students whose families might be undergoing the loss of a job or similar difficult circumstances. M. Reeder said that while policy states that students with negative balances do not get lunch, that never occurs in practice. A first lunch is never withheld from students so they do not go hungry. M. Schoen said the policy should be close to the MSBA model for fallback purposes, but students should never be shamed for having negative balances and meals will not be withheld. A draft policy has been put together. The board will have a first read in November and a second read in December in time to implement the policy at the turn of the year.

Members discussed forming a list of comparable school districts to speed up discussion and decision-making in the future, an item that had been suggested at a board retreat. M. Schoen said the list would need to be a moving target because there are many variables to consider aside from just size. He said Delano is somewhat unique because not many districts of Delano's size have a TAC, or the same relationship with the community and community education. For that reason, M. Schoen said that the board would need to be careful about mining the data depending on which issue is being discussed. He added that having such a list was a good idea, however, and that he could do some initial work in gathering information. R. Depa said a list would give the board a good starting point so all members are using the same data. A. Johnson said a list would be helpful, but the subset might be different for each research topic. S. Seguin agreed that it would be impossible to have the same list for each topic, but said the board could review the list for any given topic ahead of time and refine it to make sure everyone is on the same page before making decisions.

Upon motion by L. Seguin, seconded by C. Black, the Board of Education called the meeting to recess at 6:48 p.m. Motion passed 7-0.

Board Chair A. Johnson called the meeting out of recess and to order at 7 p.m.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

5. Program Review - Spirit of Community presentation by City of Delano

Nick Neaton from the city of Delano shared about the Spirit of Community initiative to bring together all the civic organizations in Delano to discuss common ground and what can be learned from one another. He said there are about 60 to 70 such groups in the community. He introduced the Spirit of Community Commission, and said he hoped the school board and district would be a participant. The purpose of the commission will be to “promote an atmosphere of mutual understanding and cooperation among all members of the Delano community by building the Spirit of Community and improving public engagement within the Delano community.” N. Neaton said the objective was to make sure the community has a welcoming environment for both new residents and longtime residents. He said the city has a planning commission and parks commission, and that the purpose of creating the new commission would be to engage a committed group of citizens to ensure Delano is a welcoming community. The commission will examine the community's culture among city, school, business and faith communities – with one representative from each of those areas. In addition, the commission would include five at-large members from the overall community, not just those who live in city limits. N. Neaton said he hoped for representation from people of color, new and longtime residents, and from anyone who feels passionate about the community and can provide different perspectives. Commissioners will receive a standard stipend similar to those on other city commissions.

N. Neaton also outlined four main areas of work for the commission. First, it will examine and encourage a welcoming environment related to fairness and equality. It will study what new residents felt like when they moved to town. He said the chamber welcomes new businesses, but perhaps something similar could be done for new households. He added that some neighborhoods have associations of social media groups, while others have nothing. So part of the effort would be to connect neighborhoods within and among themselves. Second, the commission will encourage community involvement in groups and organizations, which improves overall quality of life and deepens individual commitment to the city and school. Third, the commission will encourage institutional integrity. It will examine policies in the city, school, chamber and business community and look at perceived barriers to a welcoming environment. While the boards of those institutions would have ultimate authority, the commission could provide an avenue to discuss policies and make recommendations. Fourth, the commission will serve to engage and educate the community, acting as a clearing house for promoting and marketing events held by groups like Delano United, and developing new ideas to foster diversity and inclusion. N. Neaton said if the community is not engaging the people that live here, they will be engaged in other places. Their talents, gifts, passions can be used to build a strong culture here.

A. Briesemeister asked who came up with the commission's duties and responsibilities. N. Neaton said many cities have a human rights commission or a community relations commission, and the Delano group would be a blend of the two with some adaptations to fit the community. He added that there are currently no members. Board members asked how the commissioners would be chosen. N. Neaton said that, as with other city commissions, the city staff and council members would make the selection if there is limited space. However, typically the city needs to recruit individuals for the commissions. In response to a question about why the commission was necessary since Delano United is already doing similar work, N. Neaton said the commission would be an umbrella organization, and that Delano United is not a formal city institution. He said that ideally the new commission would not duplicate Delano United's work, but rather amplify it.

6. Consent Agenda

Upon motion by C. Milano, seconded by A. Briesemeister, the Board of Education approved the Consent Agenda. Motion passed 7-0.

Motion: Second: Vote:

A. School Board Minutes

1. Sept. 25, 2017
2. Sept. 27, 2017
3. Oct. 2, 2017

B. Financial Affairs

1. Current Budget Status with Year-to-Date Adjustments
2. Investment Transactions
3. Construction Bond Investment Transactions
4. Wire Transfers
5. Minnesota Liquid Asset Fund
6. Cash Report
7. Revenue Report by Fund
8. Expense Report by Fund
9. Expense Report by Program
10. Expense Report by Object
11. List of Bills Presented for Payment

7. Resolution for Acceptance of Gifts

Upon motion by C. Milano, seconded by R. Depa, the Board of Education approved the Resolution for Acceptance of Gifts. Motion passed 7-0.

8. Personnel Matters:

Upon motion by C. Black, seconded by A. Briesemeister, the Board of Education approved the consent portion of the Personnel Matters after A. Johnson recognized and congratulated Sara Potter for earning her master's degree. Motion passed 7-0.

9. Public Comment: School patrons are given the opportunity to address the school board regarding items that are not on the agenda. All patrons will be asked to state their name and address for the record.

Todd Bolzer of Loretto, the robotics head coach, said the FIRST Regional Competition will be in Cedar Falls, Iowa, next spring, so he was attending to ask permission to take participants out of state. If the team qualifies, a subsequent competition would be in Detroit. A. Johnson directed T. Bolzer to speak to Activities Director Mike Lindquist. M. Schoen said he would check to see if official board action is needed, but the current policy may allow for out-of-state travel for competition. T. Bolzer said there are also offseason events that are much cheaper, and that one in St. Cloud could relocate to Delano. Since the competition would take the entire TAC floor, he wanted to see if that was possible. The competition would be next fall. M. Schoen directed him to discuss logistics with Community Education, but said the TAC should work well for such an event. A. Johnson said the board has enjoyed hosting the robotics team for program reviews to show machines, and welcomed the team to return for that purpose.

10. Administrative Reports

A. Superintendent

M. Schoen reported that the next step in the building process is opening the new entrance to the high school-middle school building. He said there is not a definite date yet, but it would occur in about a month. He said the board would facilitate an open house, and that he wanted to coordinate it with the first day the doors are open. Members will be present that have knowledge of what has gone on in that area, and can show other parts of the area that have been constructed. The evening will be a good opportunity for the public to come in and see the progress, and when a date is known it will be publicized through school reach emails and a press release. M. Schoen said that at the time of the open house some items won't be complete. The floor will stay concrete, which is by design, until a decision is made on flooring. The flooring is scheduled to go in next summer because an extended period of non-use is required for installation. M. Schoen also reported on the Oct. 4 Kindness in Chalk event. He said it was a great day that showcased creative artistry and messages, and a large percentage of the district staff supported doing the event again, perhaps with some logistical adjustments.

B. Principals:

1. Mr. Voight

B. Voight reviewed the site improvement plan from last year, and introduced the plan for 2017-18. He said the plan was implemented to continue the pursuit of educational excellence, and to align with the strategic plan and World's Best Workforce legislation. Voight said there were four goals for the 2016-17 school year. The first goal, to increase from 79.8 percent proficiency on the Reading MCA to 80.3 percent, was met. The second goal was to close achievement gap in the special education population and improve from 69.57 percent proficiency on the Reading MCA to 79.57. That goal was not met, as students were 72.2 proficient, but B. Voight said improvement of 10 percent, or about 10 students, was a lofty goal. The third goal was to improve the growth level of students earning average or high grades on the Math MCA from 80.7 percent to 85.7. This goal was not met, but proficiency did improve to 83.5 percent. The fourth goal had been to establish a protocol for assessing the school's climate and doing an initial assessment. That goal was met, and analyzing the data will help in the development of specific and intentional strategies.

B. Voight also introduced site improvement goals for 2017-18. The first goal is to increase the level of those meeting or exceeding standards on the Reading MCA from 80.4 percent in the spring of 2017 to 80.9 in spring of 2018. This aligns with the Q-Comp goal as well, and B. Voight said there is a focus on reading proficiency because it is a gateway skill that will lead to proficiency in other areas. In addition, reading has historically underperformed relative to math at the middle school. The second goal relates to achievement gap reduction. The goal states that the percentage of SPED students earning a growth level of average or high on the Reading MCA will improve from 70.10 in 2017 to 75.10 in 2018. The third goal is that the percentage of students earning a growth level of average or high on 2017 MCA will improve from 87.46 percent to 88 percent. B. Voight said that math is also foundational, and the site base team wanted the plan to reference both math and reading.

Before introducing the fourth goal, B. Voight said that strategies to accomplish the first three goals include: continuing the efforts of the high-functioning student success team, properly allocating resources, doing monthly referrals; continuing reading interventions at every grade level and math interventions in grades 5-7, and providing help for academic and behavior issues. Professional development opportunities will also be pursued.

The fourth goal is to see improvement in the school climate as perceived by students, staff and parents from 2017 to 2018 as measured by the School Climate Survey. B. Voight said that while systems were in place for reading and math, this goal might be the most important because social-emotional well-being is needed for good reading and math skills. He acknowledged that the School Climate Survey is not a scientific measurement and was developed in-house, and that the goal is vague. Still, he said the team would do its best to analyze the data from the survey to learn where progress has been made and where there is still work to do.

In regard to survey results, B. Voight said that 75-80 percent of students said they agree or strongly agree that they like coming to school at DMS, that students generally feel connected to adults and that students noticed that staff were recognizing them and giving positive reinforcement. Students and staff also reported that when potentially inappropriate incidents occur, staff too often failed to intervene. B. Voight said that regardless of whether that was a result of staff simply not noticing, that would be addressed. He said that while students largely enjoy coming to DMS, bullying and other forms of disrespect are still present to a degree and must be dealt with. B. Voight said the most surprising finding from the survey was the number of staff members who reported that they did not feel like they belonged as part of the staff. Of 41 staff members who took the survey, B. Voight said roughly half reported that they felt they didn't belong. B. Voight also said that discipline of students was generally perceived as unfair by the staff, while students were overwhelmingly in agreement that discipline was fair, which is the opposite of what might normally be expected.

Developing proper strategies to address those issues is important, B. Voight said. As part of the initiative toward a welcoming school climate, B. Voight said that Speak Up at School strategies are being emphasized. A staff training was held the first week of school, and monthly staff meetings provide reinforcement. The Speak Up at School strategies provide ways for staff to intervene. Efforts are also underway to make sure every student feels connected to adults and feels entirely safe and welcome at school. Efforts to address staff cohesion will also take place.