

**SALINE AREA SCHOOLS  
SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
MINUTES**

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the Saline Area School District was held on Saturday, October 6, 2007, in the Gymnasium at Historic Union School.

Board Members present: Lisa Slawson, Trudy Driscoll, Paul Hynek, Bari Livsey, David Medley, David Friese and Kim Van Hoek

Central Administrators present: Scot Graden

**I. CALL TO ORDER** of the Special Meeting of October 6, 2007, by President Slawson at 8:31 a.m.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jack Goeman – talked about the hard work – camps, etc. preparing for football. It's a game – let them play – asked for reinstatement of coaches.

Steve Bebbler – former coach, works with health and wellness, there are other signs of dehydration. Coaches respect must not be undermined. We should not be bullied by one family.

John Aulisa – has issues with Superintendent Geltner. Should have a thorough investigation – doesn't believe student cursed because of dehydration. Decisions based on being afraid of being sued aren't teaching kids principles. Would resign no matter what sport without support.

Ted Webster on behalf of Jarod Falkowski – supports Coach Falkowski – the Board should relieve Superintendent Geltner of her duties.

Kim Mitchell – concerns about the message this sends. The family of student x is using money, anger and lawyers which is bullying.

Susan Heren – Behavior and professionalism of Superintendent Geltner. As a leader is polarizing all of the staff. Her comment about sending "trash" to the high school. Student x violated athletic contract. Caved to pressure. Coaches disrespected and thrown under the bus. No responsibility taken – not being accountable. Parents wanted information – Superintendent evasive and disrespectful. Mocking parent. Has some wonderful qualities – but lacking leadership. One year of Superintendent Geltner and the cancer continues to grow.

Frank Edelman – son was removed from football for foul language – parents supported – "never happen again". Learned a valuable lesson. Sorry for student x. Unconsciencous actions by parents. Superintendent Geltner's e-mails were condescending. A leader would take the heat and support. Proud of coaches and players – full support of freshman team. Need to work with student x. Board needs to look at Superintendent Geltner when she was hired – friendly and supportive work environment – not antagonize. Lowest staff morale in 20 years.

Jeannie Armstrong – Proud of all the kids, parents and coaches. Conversation with

Superintendent Geltner – no support from staff – “not sure worth it” – send her packing. Can’t say enough about the coaches. Son was hurt – made him sit down. Coaches son have a trust – don’t trust Superintendent Geltner. She never talked to all students. Bullying to coaches. Forced to resign. Supports coaches and removal of student x.

Mike Davis - coached 12 to 15 years. Turned over his kids to Coach Falkowski. Impressed with program – witnessed many water breaks. Doesn’t believe the kids are in jeopardy. Shouldn’t bring up a dead football player over this. Lack of leadership by Dr. Geltner – looking to cover her butt – kids, coaches and community worked long and hard – don’t deserve this.

Kim Capobianco – Supports all the coaches. She is a RN. On the Washington DC trip the bus was stopped – no air – Mr. Falkowski made sure everyone was hydrated. No one has had health issues at all levels. E-mails were condescending.

John Overcasheer – kids played lacrosse not football. Poor decisions by superintendent. Varsity jackets at school, facebook, failed millage, schools of choice- now coaches are liars. Small and disastrous decisions.

Mike Petrasko – First time in athletics that an appeal has been over-turned. This is a good thing. Not dissing the coaches, but the punishment didn’t fit actions. Student x was talking to coaches – water off. Punishment appropriate – last resort should be expulsion – why was it first?

Jennifer Washington – agrees with all that has been said except the prior speaker. Some parents let kids curse – Crabtree would not let anyone curse. Support for the rules – grades have to be followed. Coaches had no choice – were cursed at. Would accept the parents to accept the decision.

Dave Holden – Mosaic of Dr. Geltner’s work – deal or no deal with SEA, web, school of choice, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes, bus routes, athletic issue. Schools used to be second to none. Lacks leadership and professional manner to deal with community stakeholders. A good superintendent is neither seen nor heard from – listen to what people say.

Karen Baxter – Her children are all involved in sports and she is a volunteer coach. Expressed support for Athletic Director Rob White – great to work with. Freshman coaches very proactive on Monday morning.

Mike Burchyett – did not intend to speak – no comment on incident process – Superintendent Geltner’s decision in the Ann Arbor News this morning – the medical information – it was not accurate. Not forced to resign – choose to resign. The medical information was received October 3rd, day after the reinstatement. Superintendent Geltner is bullying for fear of retaliation. Has been a very emotional week. Agrees with Mr. Petrasko – focus on the 40 kids – difficult to do the right thing.

Kirsten Chapman – frustrated – emotions – hope – to do job well. Need a leader that supports, engages, leads – does not belittle. Will be here long after Superintendent Geltner – loves the community. Happy and hopeful that we can come together as a community. Superintendent Geltner has 2 federal lawsuits pending against her. Continual issue of leadership, questionable commitment to kids and community. Need to find a new leader.

Don Walker – moved to Saline twelve years ago – quality of superintendent, principals, teachers and coaches. Many issues with Superintendent Geltner. Mis-managed negotiations, 3rd grade and now freshman football. This is greater than

football. Always about her – never about students and staff. A leader would stand behind students and staff, not run for cover. Decisions rash and ill-advised. Shoot first – ask later. Governance model needs to be fixed. What would Ellen do – was a role model.

Martha Sanipelli – Board choose Superintendent Geltner. Need to take action. Regret what happened. Millage. Lost team from Ellen and Sam. Take a look back. Feels sorry for kids.

Kim Kaster – Thank-you to the Athletic Director and the coaches. Respects standing up for what is right. Devastating week. Hardwork for the kids to prepare for each week. Congratulations to kids and the coaches. Son wants to stand up for team – son re-told incident. Sometimes doesn't like what coaches say or do – but never disrespect. Saline Area Schools has wonderful athletics and schools. They have helped her son and always felt safe. Trusts them. Believes in questioning. Her son would have been off team for the same offense.

David Armstrong – (freshman football player) – was there five and half weeks ago. Heard about the water – student not going fast enough. “pick up the pace” with a F’You response. Problem with student. F’You again. My parents will sue you. Surprised student back on the team, but didn't try to worry about it. Practice cancelled after film on Tuesday. Wednesday meeting after school and the coaches resigned. Players heart broken. Superintendent Geltner behind everything. Friday wore supportive shirts to school. Team did go after student – might have said something. No blame to coaches. Would like them back. Not quit on them.

Board President Slawson commented on what a fine young man David was, as are all of the freshman players.

Launie Aben – Lots of emotion coming to the table. Monday morning highlights celebrate all that is good in Saline Area Schools – but Dr. Geltner doesn't support her own words. Everyone has pride in Saline Area Schools – Dr. Geltner is showing lack of excellence – not learning all of the facts – not holding herself to a higher standard. Doesn't possess qualities to bind us all together. Doesn't respect anyone at all.

Matt Helmuth – Thanked football coaches and AD Rob White. Children are all very involved – couldn't think of a single coach that would harm an athlete. Coaches have been cast as doing something wrong.

Jim Stewart – “problem right here in River City”. Staff as “cabinet” – illusions of grandeur. Mistake with Dr. Geltner.

Tom Poole – first year in Saline. Son on freshman team. Simple problem here – problem is at the top. Dr. Geltner's e-mails were wrong. Came from a community where this is the norm. Asked son if they made a mistake coming here. Answered, No Way! Taken in by team and classmates. Travesty if we can't reverse this. Make it right.

Dina Ostrander – Son is football player. Worked since June. What can be done after announcement? Came to Dr. Geltner's office and stood with 6 or 7 other parents. Rolled her eyes and mocked another parent. Child pointed it out. Not a role model. She showed it is okay to be disrespectful – poor example to the community.

John Mullins – opening up his house at 1:00 to share all the documents with anyone who wishes to come over. Medical records and testimony. Everyone is welcome.

Bill G'Sell – 10 years in the district. Need to look at broader community vision – different views and different personalities. Dr. Geltner has many redeeming qualities.

He has taken an interest in academics over the last four years. Met many times with Dr. Geltner – she has listened – there are some good changes and issues have been recognized. Many emotions and parents have the right to be upset. Not many facts have come to light. Doesn't rubber stamp – opened up her own investigation – more than meets the eye – credit to Dr. Geltner. Take a balanced approach with the family due to past issues.

Kim Williams – resigned last week from coaching – can't tolerate kids speaking that way. Not seen Ben in the last three days. Parents are all on the same page. Comments support mission – standards – they were all let down.

Bruce Bennyhoff – played football – has football player on varsity. Dr. Geltner's management style is from another era – it doesn't work anymore. She has never taken any responsibility. "isn't her fault". Lead by example – ideas – proposals – involve staff and community. Board – look at management style. Fully supports football – son never felt unsafe – never put into a bad situation. Coaches have instilled good values in players.

Scott Wynne – Football program without a doubt is excellent. Get facts. Requested water – never denied water was present – student maybe made a mistake. Coaches only know maximum punishment. Zero tolerance at whatever level. Reasonable punishment. Student out for 11 days for an "accident" in the bathroom. Dr. Geltner on whole teaches support, discusses problems – process.

Laurie Wynne – not about Dr. Geltner – whole administration. Not looking at big spectrum. Taking away from her son. IEP – she listens – principals don't care – needs to be fixed. Lives being destroyed.

Darlene F. – not a football parent – lacrosse. Worried about this spreading to other sports. Need to have some "skin" in the game at all levels. All decisions not made by one person. Lot of issues that need to be addressed. Obligated as elected officials to take action.

Kim Kaster – receives special education services. Moved from another district. Never felt disrespected. Ben and Neal handled issues – called at home.

Michele Redies - Son heat exhausted – at soccer – headache, sick to stomach – behavior of student x not related to dehydration. Son hurt at game – no cursing – right thing to do – show respect.  
Dr. - accuses board – school issues – seems Dr. Geltner not listening to all the facts.

Tanny Mullins – tiny incident – asked for water – student x got kicked off. Made mistake – Coach Buchanan can work together to make it right. Only Dr. Geltner has all the facts. Held accountable – made informed decision. Coaches quit – not fired. Coaches made a mistake – Danny punished. Can be fixed. Nothing tragic happened – unaware that was not acceptable. Blown way out of proportion. Move on and move forward. Manipulative situation. Student x needs security at school. Ruined freshman experience. Move on.

Saline High School Principal Ben Williams and Executive Director Scot Graden presented in timeline fashion all activities related to the expulsion and reinstatement of student x to the freshman football team.

#### **IV. CLOSED SESSION**

**MOTION** by David Friese, seconded by Trudy Driscoll, to enter Closed Session of the Board of Education at 11:09 a.m., with the with intent to re-enter Open Session at 12:30 p.m. for the purpose related to complaints against the Superintendent. No decisions will be made following Closed Session.

**MOTION** by Paul Hynek, seconded by Trudy Driscoll, to re-enter Open Session of the Board of Education at 2:13 p.m. Ayes – all present.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Trudy Driscoll seconded by David Medley, to adjourn the Special Board of Education Meeting of October 6, 2007, at 2:14 p.m.

**MOTION CARRIED.** Ayes – all present.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Hynek, Secretary