

**SALINE AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

MINUTES

Liberty Media Center
Tuesday, March 9, 2010
6:30 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER** of the Regular Meeting of March 9, 2010, at 6:30 PM by Board President Friese.

Board Members Present

Trustee Cattell, Board President Friese, Trustee Hoefft, Student Representative Hogikyan, Trustee Hynek, Secretary Lesch, Vice President Medley, and Trustee Slawson

Central Administration Present

Superintendent Graden, Assistant Superintendent Laatsch, and Assistant Superintendent Wall

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ITEMS OF INTEREST AND INQUIRY**

A. Public

John Mason, Music Coordinator for Saline Area Schools spoke on behalf of the 5th grade music program. Regardless of what reconfiguration plan is chosen he would like the Board to consider keeping the quality music programs we currently have available to our students. Our school has become a model program throughout the state and country.

Robert Wolfe, Saline Music Parent stated that the program is held in a very high regard through out the entire state and he desperately wants to see it remain. We currently have a great program and he wants to see it stay at the high level it is.

B. Administration

Superintendent Graden reported that the Girls Basketball team plays in the opening round of the Regional tournament and the Boys Hockey team compete in their State-Quarter Final game tonight. Both have made strong runs at the end of their seasons.

Two Community Budget Forums have been scheduled for Tuesday, March 30th beginning at 6:30 PM in the Harvest Cafeteria and Monday, April 12th in the Middle School Media Center. These meetings will be held to provide feedback regarding possible reduction options. The plan is to share information and then split up into

small groups for discussion. At the end of the meeting the groups will report out on their collective thoughts.

Elections for officers of the Foundation for Saline Area Schools were held today. Superintendent Graden introduced Foundation President Cheryl Hoeft and Vice President Kim Van Hoek to the Board.

C. Board of Education Members

Trustee Slawson recently attended a quiz bowl event hosted by Middle School Principal Raft and Heritage Principal Rosen-Leacher. It was very well received and a fun experience.

Trustee Slawson also commented that Saline is beloved for its music program. These are difficult and trying times in this economy. She indicated that without shared sacrifice, some cuts will be necessary. It is not about one building versus another – it is about economic survival. It is about closing a building, which isn't fair to the kids. We need a shared sacrifice. She also indicated that she would welcome any comments on how to make it right.

Trustee Hynek indicated that Blue Cross made \$12 million profit last year solely based upon investment income. Significant increases in health care costs are expected this year. It is time to begin a dialogue on different types of insurance options, giving better insurance, choice, and reducing premium income.

Board President Friese indicated that no decision on the 5th grade music program has been made at this time.

Congratulations to Karl Winsor, a Saline High School Sophomore and a Bronze Award winner in the 53rd annual Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition. Karl wins \$250 for this outstanding achievement.

Board President Friese thanked the staff and community members who served on the Reconfiguration Committee and Activity Fee Committee. Their time and thoughtful feedback are greatly appreciated.

4. REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Add Item 7A Discussion – Personnel Grievance

MOTION made by Trustee Slawson, seconded by Trustee Cattell to approve the agenda as revised.

Ayes – All Present – **MOTION CARRIED**

5. SCHEDULED REPORTS/PUBLIC STATEMENTS

A. National Merit Finalists – High School Principal Williams

High School Principal Williams introduced the seven National Merit Finalists for 2009-2010. They are as follows:

Sarah Abdallah
Marissa Dawson
Michael Ho
Emily Hogikyan
Hema Karunakaram
Kevin Kingingham
Jonathan Moeller

Mr. Williams stated that students qualify with their PSAT scores and 16,500 Semifinalists were selected. This was narrowed down to 15,000 Finalists. The students should be receiving word by early June about one of three different levels of scholarships. Congratulations to these students and their families!

6. ACTION ITEMS

A. MOTION made by Vice President Medley, seconded by Trustee Slawson to **approve the recommendation of the Activity Fee Committee as presented by High School Principal Williams.**

The committee was comprised of High School Principal Williams (Chair), Middle School Assistant Principal Szczechowicz (Cochair) as well as 21 members including teachers, administrator, parents, students, and members of the community.

The committee met three times. First to define the task, and then to determine which peer districts to survey, analyze data, define the philosophy of the representative group, and formulate a recommendation to present to the Board of Education.

It was the recommendation of the committee to establish a High School Club/Activity Fee of \$40 one-time annual fee, which allows access to any and all clubs and activities and a Middle School Club/Activity Fee of \$20 one-time annual fee, which allows access to multiple clubs and activities.

Groups Impacted – Fees can legally be charged to students for their participation in any club or activity that is extra-curricular. Co-curricular groups cannot be charged a fee, because membership and participation in these groups is directly connected to an academic grade assigned in a middle or high school class. Examples of co-curricular groups that will be exempt from activity fees at the Middle or High School are DECA, FFA, and VICA.

At the present time, the proposed activity fee will impact the following groups, and other groups that are established after the adoption of the official activity fee will be added to the list.

Close-Up Washington Trip, Debate, Drama Club, FCCLA, Future Problem Solving Club, German Club, Honor Society, Math Counts – Middle School, Musical/Play, Newspaper, Marching Band, Pep Band, Quiz Bowl – High School, SADD, Science Clubs (Science Olympiad at High School and Middle School Science Club), Science Fair, STAND, Student Council, Yearbook – Middle School, Writer's Ink, and Spectrum.

Estimated Revenue for 2010-2011 – Based on the current percentages of Middle School and High School students continuing to participate in their existing clubs and activities, our committee estimates that these fees should generate between \$40,000 and \$50,000. If these estimates are accurate, the revenue raised will defray approximately 55% of the Schedule B stipend amounts current paid to staff members for their services.

Student Representative Hogikyan expressed concern over National Honor Society being charged because entry is based upon school records. There was also some concern with being able to buy a leadership position in these clubs such as Student Council. She indicated that one of the committee members is a teacher in Hartland and many of their sponsors chose not to take a stipend in order to not charge the students.

Secretary Lesch served as the Board Liaison for the Activity Fee committee and felt that it was a very well thought out decision. There was good leadership by High School Principal Williams and Assistant Principal Szczechowicz during the process and the committee struggled with many issues that Student Representative Hogikyan talked about. This was the most equitable and fair decision at this time.

Trustee Slawson asked if the stipends could be cut? She had no idea that the charge of this committee was to defer the cost of stipends. She questioned whether the committee had asked any of the teachers to waive their stipends. Superintendent Graden stated that stipends were negotiated in the contract, however you could reduce the number of clubs.

Trustee Slawson indicated that she couldn't support this because there has been no shared sacrifice by the SEA and we shouldn't be solving the budget issues on the backs of the parents and students. She indicated that some parents simply couldn't afford this.

Board President Friese indicated that there would be scholarships available for those who can't afford to pay.

Trustee Hynek asked if the fees were consistent with other area schools and High School Principal Williams stated that they would be slightly lower than other districts that already have a fee. He also stated that those schools that don't have fees are looking to institute them next year as well.

Ayes – 6 (Cartell, Friese, Hoeft, Hynek, Lesch, Medley)
Nays – 1 (Slawson)

MOTION CARRIED

B. MOTION made by Secretary Lesch, seconded by Vice President Medley to **approve the recommendation of the Building Reconfiguration Committee as presented by Assistant Superintendent Laatsch.**

Assistant Superintendent Laatsch stated that this was a difficult process. The committee spent six weeks going through data to make the best decision for the District moving forward. In the end, the committee felt that Plan 1 is the best plan moving forward.

The charge of the reconfiguration committee was to review all possible configuration options and make recommendations to Superintendent Graden around March 1, 2010. The options were to take into consideration the following areas:

- Instructionally sound configuration
- Short and Long-term financial savings
- Long-term flexibility, i.e., enrollment trends, further funding cuts, programs, etc.
- Feasible to be implemented in 2010-2011.

The Building Reconfiguration Committee recommends that the following plan be adopted for the reconfiguration of Saline Area Schools effective with the 2010-2011 school year:

Woodland Meadows Elementary Schools (K-3)
Harvest Elementary School (K-3)
Pleasant Ridge Elementary School (K-3)
Heritage School (4-5)
Middle Scholl (6-8)
High School (9-12)
Liberty School (Central Administration, Community Education, Alternative Education)

ESP (Young 5's) could be housed at any of the three elementary schools.
EDO (Extended Day Option) will initially be offered at all three elementary schools. However, this option may consolidate into one or two of the elementary schools in order to provide maximum efficiency.
Woodland Meadows Elementary may still house a "Heritage Annex"

Other Notes: Pooh Corner will be housed with other preschool programs if space allows OR will be housed at Liberty School.

This plan was chosen because it provides the greatest degree of flexibility, the greatest potential savings beyond the \$600,000 originally estimated, and provides an educationally sound way of delivering our instructional programs.

Trustee Slawson asked how many schools use the 6-8 model and Assistant Superintendent Laatsch said approximately 75% of schools in the United States use this model.

Trustee Hynek asked whether Saline ever had the 6-8 model and Superintendent Graden indicated that before Heritage was built that was the model for 13 years.

Trustee Hynek raised a question about lunches and Mr. Raft indicated that the sixth grade lunch would be separate and that the cafeteria was equipped to handle it.

Ayes (Cattell, Friese, Hoeft, Lesch, Medley, Slawson
Nays (Hynek)

MOTION CARRIED

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Staffing Grievance Issue – Board President Friese

Board President Friese asked Trustee Cattell, Trustee Hoeft, and Vice President Medley to serve on this committee.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION made by Trustee Slawson, seconded Trustee Hoeft to authorize the following items as part of the Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval** of the Regular Board of Education Minutes of February 23, 2010.
- B. Approval** of the Board Policy Meeting Minutes of February 16, 2010.
- C. Approval of Payment** of the General Fund Accounts Payable of March 9, 2010, in the amount of \$380,443.07.
- D. Receive and File** memorandum from Superintendent Graden approving the Boys Golf Team Tournament Field Trip on April 22-24, 2010 and the Varsity Softball Spring Break Trip on April 5-9, 2010.
- E. Receive and File** letter accepting the retirement of Ann Callan from the position of Executive Director of Human Resources effective June 30, 2010.

Ayes – All Present – **MOTION CARRIED**

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Trustee Slawson thanked Executive Director Callan for her service to the District. She stated that she is one of the kindest, most wonderful people to work with and will be sorely missed.

David Zimmer, York Township, has been attending Board meetings since 2000. During discussions about the construction of new schools, one objective was clear that small class sizes were very important.

He stated that in 2001 the District had a 13% fund balance and community members cautioned about the rising health and pension costs and nothing was done. In 2004 the District had a 9% fund balance. The Long Range Planning Committee was formed and among the issues was addressing health care cost containment and pension costs and again nothing was done. In 2007 the same questions were raised and still nothing was done. Now in 2010 we have a 5% fund balance, which is the minimum, the Board will allow.

Community members and parents have been asked and supported CARES, Sinking Fund, Millages, Pay to Participate, and Activity Fees. Our starting teacher salary is 15% higher than that of Ann Arbor. Out of the 15 surrounding Districts, our teachers receive two times the amount of stipends compared to other Districts.

He asked that the School Board, School Administration, and the SEA finally address these issues so our kids can receive the quality of education they were promised 10 years ago when we built these schools.

Dawn Ducca, Houghton PTO, is sorry to see that Houghton will be closed down next year. She asked the Board to make sure the Principal Stevenson be relocated within the District. He would be greatly missed if this were not possible.

10. CLOSED SESSION

MOTION made by Vice President Medley, seconded by Trustee Hynek to enter Closed Session of the Board of Education at 7:35 PM, with the intent to re-enter Open Session at 9:00 PM., for the purpose of collective bargaining.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Trustee Cattell – Aye
Board President Friese – Aye
Trustee Hoeft – Aye
Trustee Hynek – Aye
Secretary Lesch – Aye
Vice President Medley – Aye
Trustee Slawson - Aye

RE-ENTER OPEN SESSION at 8:30 PM.

11. ITEMS SCHEDULED ON NEXT AGENDA

- A. FFA Night
- B. Pay to Participate Recommendation
- C. Policy Committee Report

12. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn the Regular Board of Education Meeting of March 9, 2010, at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chuck Lesch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chuck Lesch, Secretary

By: Patti Waltz, Recording Secretary