

GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education

Work Session – February 12, 2018

MINUTES

President Jon Shiflett called the meeting to order at p.m. He led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

OATH OF OFFICE

Kim Manning conducted the Oath of Office to newly appointed board trustee, Ben Cwayna.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call by President Shiflett indicated the presence of ***Board Members***: Ben Cwayna, Denise DuFort, Beverly Winstanley, Patrick McKennon and Jon Shiflett. ***Central Office Administrators***: Steve Gabriel, Mike Johnson, Nancy Rasinske, Sara Sutherland and Mark Deschaine. ***Others in Attendance***: Shirley Ries, Carol Ayotte, Heather McCracken, Kelly Williams, Megan Weber, Sheila James, Patty Waterman, Nola Cockroft, Mike Schafer, Jennifer Schafer, Tammy Fletcher, Melissa Mazzola, Jennifer Soria, Cheryl Alassane, Laura Scott, Carmen Karkau, Traci Gentilozzi, Frank Gentilozzi, Hillary Kohn, Denise Wilkinson, Greg Almy, Erica Bedolla, Patty West, Elizabeth Bellet, Cary Waldrop, Jen McCloud, Kelly Shumway, Marisa Grans, Annette Kelly, Nicole Wieber, Amy Stoakes, Jen Bouck, Kellee Auge, Jenny Kish, Jamie McKennon, Ann Richardson, Jennifer Short, Mandy Leik, Amy Heriford, Marlene Promer, Diane Garnaat, Bri Dennis, Wendy Miller, Candace Karrer, John Ellsworth, Joe Thomas, Nicole thorne, Eric Thorn, Lynsee Phillips, Susan Sowle, Daniel Landry, Kristin Maker, LeAnne Hixson, Ken Hixson, Jamie Slear, Andrea Dionise, Kim Morrison, Garrett Brown, Jennifer Pakkala, Erin Ries, Katie Gregory, Tammy Rosales and Kim Manning.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF THE PAYMENT OF SINKING FUND INVOICES

Motion by Mr. McKennon, seconded by Mrs. Winstanley for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Payment of Sinking Fund Invoices in the amount of \$18,841.25, as presented.

Mr. Shiflett advised the invoices cover sidewalk work between the Grand Ledge High School and Beagle and drawings for Delta Mills and the High School entrance noting the invoices were reviewed and approved to be brought forward by the Board Bond Advisory Committee.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. APPROVAL OF TEACHER LEAVE OF ABSENCE – ANDREW HUARD

Motion by Mrs. DuFort, seconded by Mr. McKennon for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve the Teacher Leave of Absence for Andrew Huard, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION & PRESENTATION ITEMS

A. 2018-2018 PARTICIPATION IN SECTION 105 AND 105(C) SCHOOLS OF CHOICE

President Shiflett noted the board was provided information with regard to current enrollment to begin the discussion.

Mrs. DuFort expressed her concern with Schools of Choice particularly as it impacts Delta Center. She noted that she was advised 20% of their population is made up of School of Choice students and that Delta Center has 100 more students than any of our other elementary buildings. She noted she believes the schools of choice program is unfairly impacting Delta Center in a more negative fashion than other schools. She requested more information with regard to how many schools of choice students are at each of our buildings, what are our trends.

Mr. McKennon supported Mrs. DuFort's request for more information specific to the current state of Schools of Choice throughout the district.

B. BALANCED CALENDAR & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT – PRESENTED BY EATON RESA

Eaton RESA Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Sean Williams presented the Eaton County Calendar to the Board. This presentation shared information regarding the progress of the US Public Education system and what is now demanded from that system, student populations for the county as well as that specific to Grand Ledge Public Schools, including the percentage of students with disability and those economically disadvantaged, students proficient in English Language Arts, student proficient in Math and students proficient in Social Studies. Mr. Williams further presented information on the rationale for a balanced calendar noting that a balanced calendar alone may not lead to significant improvement in student achievement, however a more balanced calendar will provide Eaton County Districts structures and opportunities for new innovations to flourish. In closing, Mr. Williams shared the Eaton RESA 5-Year Common Calendar, which complies with PA 101 of 2007 that mandates an intermediate school district, in cooperation with constituent districts, shall adopt a common school calendar which applies to all its constituent districts and the intermediate school district programs. The common calendar must identify winter and spring holiday breaks and the first day of school for the next five years. The Eaton RESA common calendar presented was approved at the January 18, 2018 Superintendent's Round Table meeting by a 5-1 majority vote.

A discussion among the members touched on a balanced calendar benefits all students from low socioeconomic to high achievers, offering intersessions during breaks based on staff availability, resources needed to implement, a potential increase in the per pupil funding, elementary schools under Holt Public Schools operating on a balanced calendar, efforts needed to ensure students are attending intersessions and noting with the early start date implemented across Eaton County this year we are moving closer to having what we call a balanced calendar.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Board Secretary McKennon read the rules for presenting public comment to the board.

President Shiflett reminded everyone the calendar is a negotiated item with the Grand Ledge Education Association (GLEA) and as such, the board cannot comment on it.

District employee and GLEA President Greg Almy addressed the board on behalf of GLEA expressing their concerns with the proposed calendar presented to the negotiation team noting it is not a balanced calendar with the inconsistency of the proposed breaks. He expressed their concerns not only as it impacts the professional staff, but also the hourly staff, noting several staff use the summer to offset their income. He encouraged the board to listen to the research and their professional staff noting that an extended, unbalanced calendar that has no research to demonstrate positive outcomes could have backlash.

District employee Melissa Mazzola presented the board with findings of her research regarding the impact of a balanced calendar over a traditional calendar. She provided statistics garnered through MiSchool Data noting Grand Ledge Public Schools is already a high achieving school district with a 94% graduation rate. In closing she expressed the data does not support change to the calendar and encouraged the board to seek computer input.

District employee Denise Wilkinson presented information from the Progressional Search Service brief from 2014 noting she does not support moving to a balanced or extended calendar.

District employee Lindsey Grostefon addressed a balanced calendar noting the district should use research to guide our decision when developing a calendar but we should also consider what research says about Grand Ledge. She presented scenarios for student F and M representing students she has taught and the gains they made over the summer under a traditional calendar.

District employee Katie Grass spoke against a balanced calendar noting she is hopeful our administration, board and teachers will work together to resolve the issue.

Community member Jenny Jarrard spoke about the administration's proposed calendar noting it is not a balanced calendar but an extended calendar. She expressed there is a lot to consider and discuss. She expressed her concern as she doesn't see feedback being gathered from parents and community. In closing she remarked she feels it is not worth all the time and energy and money and disruption and possible opposition to change a system that has worked well for many years.

District employee Jennifer Soria spoke about the proposed calendar reading from a prepared statement overviewing information from the Summer Matters website, specifically as it relates to intersessions and success rates.

District employee Jen Bouck continued Ms. Soria's statement due to time constraints noting encouraging the board to trust our students, parents and teachers to make these decisions, as

they are the experts. Professional Development should be driven by the needs of our students and staff. Grand Ledge students, staff and parents need to be effectively polled.

Community member Marisa Evans noted her oldest child attended Horizon Elementary in Holt under the balanced calendar and she was very excited when she moved into the district to have longer summers. She expressed a 13-week summer (2015) was too long, but the 10-week summer last year was "great". She encouraged the board to consider what AP courses will look like, band camp, sports camp. She questioned the benefit of a 2-week break in October, December, February and spring. She question why you can't provide just a one-week break at those times and give the community three-weeks back in the summer.

Community member Shirley Ries address the calendar issues noting it is easy to find research to support what you want but it is a high stakes educational environment. She suggested more frequent, shorter breaks. She noted from what they have heard, the majority of our teachers don't support this calendar and as Mr. Williams comments, it only works when the staff are involved. She encouraged the board to act on their knowledge.

Community member Dr. Michael Schafer spoke about maintaining the high caliber of education including a policy of transparency and due process. He expressed he believes Schools of Choice and a balanced calendar need to be look at from every angle. He supports maintaining a philosophy that reasonable people will make reasonable decisions if given the appropriate information. He encouraged the board to accept guidance from students, teachers and community at large. In closing he remarked if a decision is a sound one it will stand up to transparency.

District employee Erin Snyder noted her son attended Horizon Elementary in Holt and it was very hard for him. The stop and go of the schedule was difficult. She noted she believes implementing a balanced calendar will require reteaching of all the routines. As it is, routines already have to retaught after breaks and even snow days. She express Schools of Choice is also a concern. She noted classrooms are packed and while she is thankful for teacher assistants, 27 kids, year-round on a stop and go schedule will be very difficult.

Community member Jennifer Pakkala noted she is a huge proponent of a balanced calendar but believes its implementation must be presented through some type of community education forums. The proposed calendar is not a calendar that would enable what a true balanced calendar would offer. She believes the district has the data to implement the concept and believes it can be amazing. While it may not translate into a huge jump in academic achievement, the personal stress levels can be impacted. She noted change is hard but you can manage it through education and dialogue. You got have the buy-in from teachers and the community.

Community business owner Cheryl Allison expressed her concerns regarding a balanced calendar noting it does not work for everyone and that can include small businesses. While she understands having to hold spots for children of teachers over the summer, what is she supposed to do with the two weeks here, two weeks there. Then, what about air conditioning on busses, or in classrooms. Is that in place?

COMMENTS FROM STAFF AND BOARD

Mrs. DuFort thanked everyone for coming and for the research presented.

Mr. Cwayna also thanked everyone for coming expressing his appreciation for the input as a new board member and noting he looks forward to working with everyone.

Mr. McKennon thanked everyone for attending and expressed to everyone their commends haven't fallen on deaf ears. He noted in conversations with Assistant Superintendent Williams and the Eaton RESA Superintendent, it is clear something like this doesn't work without community input. He referenced the board's job as outlined in the 5-year strategic plan and noting the board, including himself, can do a better job, especially on something as large as a balanced calendar. In closing, he noted there is no silver bullet. But, there are a lot of ways to achieve this.

President Shiflett also thanked everyone for coming. As he mentioned earlier, the calendar is a negotiated item, but he assured everyone they have been heard and noting he is interested in hearing more suggestions of data driven models to address the 30% of the kids we are failing as a district but he is definitely want to hear more of how we can increase their educational outcomes.

CLOSED SESSION – Negotiations

Motion by Mrs. DuFort, seconded by Mrs. Winstanley for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to move into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing Negotiations Strategies, as per Section 8(c) of the Open Meetings Act, PA 267 of 1976.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Mr. McKennon	Yes
Mrs. Winstanley	Yes
Mr. Cwayna	Yes
Mrs. Dufort	Yes
President Shiflett	Yes

The motion carried unanimously at 7:29 pm

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

The meeting reconvened in Open Session at 8:26 pm.

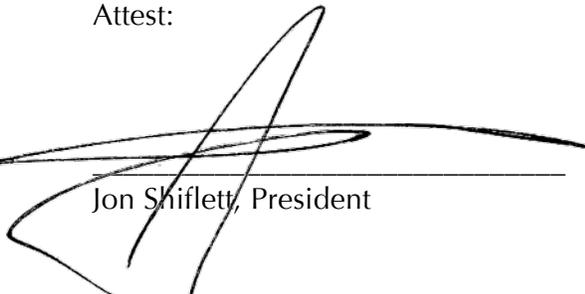
ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Attest:


Patrick McKennon, Secretary


Jon Shiflett, President