

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BELOIT**  
**August 23, 2011**

The Board of Education held its regular meeting on August 23, 2011 at the Kolak Education Center in the Board Room. President Scharmer called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

Members Present: John Acomb, Nora Gard, Missy Henderson, Tia Johnson, Michael Ramsdail, Shannon Scharmer and John Winkelmann. Also present: Steve McNeal.

Winkelmann moved approval of the agenda. Seconded by Ramsdail. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Acomb led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

Gard announced upcoming activities in the district.

Badger recognized those individuals who participated in the summer moving crew. Jeff Jacobson, Manager of Buildings and Grounds thanked everyone for their hard work this summer to ensure that every child will have a seat when school starts. Board members shared their thanks to the moving crew, manager, other custodial staff, educators and principals.

Scharmer opened up the podium for citizens to speak on items not on the agenda.

Mary Henry, addressed board members regarding the grade point average. Scharmer did indicate that it is on the agenda for discussion later this evening and asked Ms. Henry to address the board members at that time.

McNeal also thanked the moving crew and shared his praise. He also thanked the rest of the staff including teachers, principals, etc. He shared that the current enrollment trend looks as though it is increasing for the coming year. He shared that the district again has three schools that will be honored in September for the Wisconsin School of Promise.

McNeal introduced Tracy Donich, Director of Curriculum, who reported on longitudinal data and summer professional development. She shared data on student achievement over time as represented by MAP data. She reviewed the data indicating that student achievement has improved greatly since 2008-09 for both math and reading. Board members asked clarifying questions.

Donich explained that there were 45 different learning opportunities offered to educators this summer. The district had 501 educators in the district attend at least one session. Of those, 236 attended more than one training opportunity. She shared a list of the different opportunities that were available to staff members. She also shared that 92 educators taught summer school this summer. She stated that 70 new educators were trained this past week by 24 veteran staff members and 65 mentors have volunteered their time. There were also 55 educators who wrote curriculum over the summer.

Winkelmann reviewed the topics of the August Finance, Transportation and Property Committee meetings.

Acomb reviewed the topics of the August Curriculum and Instruction Committee meetings.

Johnson reviewed the topics of the July Special and August Regular Policy and Personnel Committee meetings.

Ramsdail moved approval of the consent list: 1) Bills, Payroll and Cash Position Statement; 2) Special Board Meetings of July 26, August 2, August 9, and August 15; and 3) Regular Business Meeting of July 26, 2011. Seconded by Johnson. Winkelmann moved to remove the Bills, Payroll, and Cash Position Statement. Ramsdail accepted. Acomb moved to remove the special board meeting minutes of July 26 from the consent list. Ramsdail accepted. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Acomb moved to correct the July 26 special board meeting minutes. He asked if the motion to table should probably say “failed” instead of “carried” since it had three votes in the negative. Ramsdail seconded. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Winkelmann moved approval of the Bills, Payroll and Cash Position Statement. Seconded by Ramsdail. Winkelmann explained the information to the public stating that the statement indicates what monies were received in the district, monies paid out to the local community, including payroll and that the business is done through local banks. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Ramsdail moved approval of the 66.0301 cooperative contract for visually impaired services. Seconded by Winkelmann. Acomb clarified the benefits portion of the contract. Scharmer clarified the health insurance contribution. Johnson asked about the 80/20 percentage of the contract. John Humphries indicated that it is based on case load and intensity of services needed. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Ramsdail moved approval of the CESA 2 service contract for 2011-12 as presented. Seconded by Acomb. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Winkelmann moved approval of public depositories and signatories as presented. Seconded by Ramsdail. Motion carried 6-0-1 with Acomb abstaining.

Acomb moved approval of the additional .4 FTE orchestra position. Seconded by Gard. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Ramsdail moved approval of the creation of a technology director position to be filled immediately. Seconded by Acomb. Scharmer requested that the qualification 5 under required, become a desired qualification. McNeal stated that it was posted with the change in the qualification. Ramsdail clarified that his motion is to fill immediately with however it was posted. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Winkelmann moved approval of the creation of an IT procurement position to be filled immediately. Seconded by Acomb. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Winkelmann moved approval of the IT job descriptions as presented. Seconded by Acomb. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Acomb moved approval and layover of Policy 131 Board Elections for first reading. Seconded by Henderson. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Winkelmann moved approval and layover of Policy 345.1 Grading System for first reading. Seconded by Gard. Acomb shared his thoughts on the policy and grading. Johnson asked questions about districts using letter grades versus standards based grading. She also shared concerns about staff training and parents/families receiving clarification and information so they clearly understand the standards based system. Scharmer shared her concerns with the policy revisions and stated that perhaps a larger discussion on grading is needed. McNeal stated that many things have changed academically for the better. It required a different way of thinking. He stated that four of the best academic presenters were here this summer and agreed that moving away from letter grades is the right way to go. He stated that there would be additional education for the board as well as the community and parents. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Winkelmann moved approval and layover of Policy 345.4 RULE 1 Promotion Criteria for first reading with clarification and criteria for grades 6, 7 and 8. Seconded by Johnson. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Ramsdail moved approval of the deletion and layover of Policy 345.41 Specific Middle School Promotion Requirements for first reading. Seconded by Acomb. Winkelmann stated that he is in the same position with what the promotion requirements would be for middle school. Johnson stated that the policy needs time to work and one year is not enough time. She asked what is coming next. Scharmer shared thoughts regarding promotion, grading and stated that a grading committee is being formed to review the grading policies. Winkelmann clarified that one policy states proficiency and the policy for deletion stated what students needed to be proficient at. Scharmer suggested possible friendly amendments. McNeal stated that it would be reviewed and rolled out next month. Motion carried 6-1 with Winkelmann voting in the negative.

Winkelmann moved to table Policy 520.1 Military Leave Policy for first reading. Seconded by Ramsdail. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Winkelmann moved approval and layover of Policy 377 Interscholastic Athletics, Policy 377 RULE 1 Interscholastic Athletic Program Rules and Guidelines and Policy 377 RULE 2 Secondary Schools Athletic Code for first reading. Seconded by Acomb for discussion.

Scharmer asked for a friendly amendment to waive first reading. Winkelmann was not interested in a friendly amendment to waive the first reading. Scharmer then asked if anyone else wanted to move the policies as presented to meet the beginning of the school year. Hearing none, Scharmer began discussion on these policies.

Mary Henry addressed board members on behalf of the minority excellence parent organization. The organization is requesting that the board members hold the standard of the 2.0 grade point average.

Tiffany Henry also addressed the board members to keep the current grade point average. She shared her experiences in the district as a student and in going to college.

Kevin Leavy, addressed board members as a parent and citizen, not as the Beloit Council President. He asked that the members keep the grade point average of 2.0 as a requirement. He asked that the district hold high expectations for students academically. He asked that the members discuss the policy thoroughly and to talk to parents and students on this issue.

Kevin Pullam, Pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, 1141 Dr. Rev. Floyd Prude Jr. Drive, also known as East Grand Avenue, stated that as a church community, they support the 2.0 grade point average standard. He shared his perspective on the policy based on his background having recently come to Beloit from Texas. He asked that the board members continue the 2.0 standard.

McNeal stated that he appreciated the comments given, however, the academic expectations for students has never been higher. He stated that there is a direct correlation between school participation and success. He stated that if students are engaged, they will be better academically. He also stated that there are a number of students who can never get to the 2.0 grade point average after a bad year or semester under the current policy. He clarified that if a student is not passing, in order to gain eligibility they have to attend study tables, they have to get signatures of attendance and they have to make academic progress from one term to the next.

Acomb stated that he is absolutely rock solid on the fence on this issue! He shared a story about a student. He did state that he understands setting expectations high and that he knows the importance of being part of a team. He stated that study table programming has improved over the last few years due to changes in the district.

Johnson asked if the district is consistent in all extracurricular areas. She asked if the sports arena is the only area where there is this standard. She also feels that morning tutoring sessions should be open to any student, not just athletes.

McNeal stated that there should be an activity code that encompasses any extracurricular activities. He did state that the tutoring sessions are not a new expense; they are already built into the budget. He did like the idea of opening up the tutoring sessions, however, if the policy moves forward, he would like the athletes to be required to attend the tutoring sessions whereas it would be voluntary for other students.

Chuck Seils, 1724 Burton Avenue, Athletic Director. He stated that he would welcome any student to attend the tutoring sessions. He stated that there was a very short lived code for activities other than athletics. He also stated that he holds high expectations for students and education.

Winkelmann stated that he has been getting phone calls consistently requesting that the 2.0 grade point average stay intact. He also said that he is willing to hear some creative ideas that might reach out to students who are struggling to get a 2.0. He did state that he appreciated the changes since the committee conversation. He asked about truancy and stated he needed some clarification. He would like to keep the 2.0 and build in a method to help those who are not quite meeting the 2.0.

Gard stated that she is also in favor of the 2.0 grade point average, but does see benefits of both sides. She would like to have some clear guidelines for students who are not meeting the 2.0 and how they can get there.

Acomb moved to extend the board meeting. Seconded by Henderson. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Henderson stated that she was in favor of the 2.0, but after hearing more from the high school principal, athletic director, and others, she feels that if students are not making the 2.0, but are in athletics, they would get the help they need to be better academically. She now supports lowering the grade point average.

Scharmer stated that six years ago, she was 100% behind the 2.0 grade point average, but now she is not sold on the 2.0. As a parent she believes in setting the bar high, but feels we need to reach students first. She wants all students to have opportunities. She truly believes in the mentorship provided by coaches, music leaders, etc and in academic achievement. She also stated that this time, the policy revision is about achievement.

Acomb asked for clarification on the motion. He suggested creating an IEPTS, an individual educational path to success.

Tiffany Henry addressed the board again. She said she is struggling with removing the 2.0 grade point average. She understands that the board members want to provide all resources available to students. She tried to have members understand a student mindset that it is okay to participate with less than a 2.0. She agrees that partnerships and mentors are important for all students. She truly does not want the board members to drop the 2.0 grade point average requirement.

Ramsdail moved to close debate and vote on the motion on the table. Seconded by Henderson. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

The original motion carried on a roll call vote 4-3 with Winkelmann, Johnson and Ramsdail voting in the negative.

Johnson moved approval of Policy 190 Recognition for Accomplishments for final reading. Seconded by Ramsdail. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Acomb moved approval of eliminating Policy 190 RULE 1 Guidelines for the Board's Recognition Program. Seconded by Johnson. Motion carried unanimously of the members present.

Ramsdail moved approval of the revised personnel recommendations, Exhibit A. Seconded by Acomb. Johnson stated that she still opposes the elimination of a dedicated experienced scholarship counselor. Winkelmann stated that he talked to admissions personnel. He suggested have a discussion with them about a counselor's role for scholarships. The motion carried 6-1, with Johnson voting in the negative.

Items for consideration at future meetings requested included a full board budget discussion, and updates and a progress report on the strategic plan.

Scharmer announced future meetings on Tuesday, September 13 and the Board Business meeting will be held on September 27, 2011.

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

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Michelle Shope, Board Secretary

Approved at the regular meeting of September 27, 2011

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Shannon Scharmer, President