

**Stevensville Public Schools
School District #2
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Board Work Session

June 7, 2024

9:00 am to 11:23 am

District Conference Room

1. Opening of Meeting

Board Chair Ben Meyer lead the Pledge of Allegiance and then called the meeting to order in the District Conference Room. The trustees present were Dan Mullan, Stephanie Esch, Jennifer Gunterman (left at 10:50 am), Tony Hudson (left at 10:50 am), Fran Schmitz, and Nathan Bean. Billy Donaldson was not present. Superintendent Dave Thennis, Business Manager/Clerk Christy McLaren were present.

Public Comment – None

Board Comment –

- A trustee stated that we need to get the word out to the public about board agendas. Doesn't help to engage the public if public doesn't know when meetings are being held and what they are about until the last minute. This leads to the "secret society" idea that many have of the board.
- Another trustee stated that in the three years they have been on the board it has been difficult to get public involved, unless there is a "hot button" topic being discussed.
- A trustee stated that the board is looking for solutions to communication issues within the school and how to improve. That is why it would be good to have the Governance Committee to deal with issues of this nature.
- Another trustee verified that it was okay to share the board agenda on their own social media, without comments, so that it reaches more of the public.
- A trustee stated that we need ideas for communications.
- A trustee indicated that providing financial information for the public helps engage the public. More transparency allows for public to ask questions.

Board Chair Ben Meyer discussed what was considered a board quorum. A quorum of the Stevensville Board consists of five trustees. Committees are usually made up of three trustees, however if you feel that you have expertise in a topic being discussed it is fine for you to attend a committee meeting to provide input.

Board Chair Ben Meyer indicates that there will be a meeting with our attorney, Bea Kaleva, in the next few months to help train new trustees.

Board Chair Ben Meyer discussed the June 5th, 2024 meeting of the seven district Valley Superintendents, Board Chairs, and Business Managers to discuss HB 203 and out-of-district students and what the billing will look like moving forward. The districts agreed to try to do a “dry run” this summer so that districts can see the financial implications of this change. Discussion regarding out-of-district SPED students. District of residence is responsible for costs associated with the student. All districts are trying to work together to figure a uniform way to calculate the costs associated with a SPED student.

The question was posed that this is creating competition between districts for students. One trustee suggested that maybe this is a good thing if some schools go away.

Per Superintendent Thennis the first priority was to maintain the out-of-district students that Stevensville School District has. The district had 100 percent re-enrollment in each school of our current out-of-district students.

Superintendent Thennis explained what the June out-of-district student information will look like moving forward. In the future, the trustees will see the checklist that the leadership teams have used to determine if a child is eligible for approval as an out-of-district student.

2. District Goals and Objectives

Board Chair Ben Meyer distributed the five (5) district goals that have been in existence for the past 10 years and other documents with thoughts and ideas for how to move forward with these goals.

Board Chair Ben Meyer and Trustee Dan Mullan both think it would be good to have an Ad Hoc Governance Committee of the Board that would work with the Superintendent on the goals of the District.

Trustee Tony Hudson felt that Goal #4 – Safety and Wellness is the most important goal for the District to be working on. He is concerned that students must feel safe in the school and so must teachers. The buildings must be secure. Tony feels that the district needs to meet this goal, so that the other goals are able to be focused on. Tony feels that we need policies that keep students safe.

Discussion followed about what happens when students misbehave. The range of obstacles encountered between parents, students, and the building administrator when inappropriate student behavior is addressed. Very complex situations due to the society we live in today.

Board Chair Ben Meyer discussed that district needs to create a “culture” within the Stevensville School District that is known for “no nonsense”, instead of students being allowed to do whatever they want.

Teachers and Administrators must have expectations for student behavior.

Trustee Jennifer Gunterman felt that this is the day-to-day operations of the school. Jennifer feels this is an Administrator role, not a Board role.

Trustee Fran Schmitz thought that there was a big difference between policy vs procedure. The Board creates the policies. Procedures are what the Administrators and Superintendent use to address the situation. We need to create a culture of positive behaviors within our students.

Board Chair Ben Meyer wants the Board to proactively set objectives for District goals.

The Board discussed ways to create goals with objectives that would lead to increased behavioral expectations within each building by the building leadership. Ways to empower the staff and administration so that a more effective learning environment can be created for students. When teachers and administrators are able to make “connections” with students the students are less likely to want to “let them down”. This can be accomplished through mentorships created by older students leading younger students by setting a good example.

Trustee Tony Hudson felt that if the Board does nothing regarding student discipline immediately, the District will lose 20 to 30 students right off the bat. Tony felt that all he has

the ability to do is renew/non-renew the Superintendent's contract. He feels the Board needs to take a hard stand about poor student behavior in order for change to occur.

Board Chair Ben Meyer feels that higher behavior standards need to be set for a safer, healthier, learning environment. He feels that the Superintendent and Building Administration will need to develop protocol for teachers so that it can be followed by the students. After these standards are set, let the Board know, so they are aware of what these expectations are.

Discussion about door locks and how to move forward on controlling access to the doors of the (2) auxiliary buildings. Also discussed getting cameras operational by the start of the school year.

Board Chair Ben Meyer would like to sign-off on goals by October or sooner. Superintendent Thennis would like to focus in on one area.

The next Work Session is scheduled for June 21st at 9:00 am in the MPR/Choir Room. The agenda will be Budget Priorities for FY24-25 and the funds available.

3. Adjourn

Stephanie Esch motioned to adjourn the board work session. Dan Mullan seconded the motion. All trustees voted aye. The motion passed.

Board Chairman: _____

Date: _____

School Board Clerk: _____