

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOMERSET
Regular Board of Education Meeting
September 15, 2008

The Regular Session of the Somerset Board of Education was called to order in the Somerset High School IMC by President Tim Witzmann at 7:00 p.m. Members present: Tim Witzmann, Marie Colbeth, Catherine Cranston, Sharon Germain, Mike Connor, and Robert Gunther. Member Brian Moulton was absent.

Cranston moved, with second by Colbeth, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Witzmann opened the meeting to groups or individuals wishing to be heard. No one came forward.

Witzmann recognized new school staff including, Robert Avery, District Business Manager; Matthew Rivard, District IT Technician; Jennifer Evenson, HS Guidance Counselor; Jeremy Kerg, HS Guidance Counselor; Erin Leisz, HS Spec Ed/Alt Ed Aide; Charlene Schwartz, ES Media Specialist; Lane Johnson, ES Maintenance; Lisa Hohler, ES Office Aide; Ruth Harleen, ES Computer Instructional Aide; Kari Madden, ES Special Ed. Teacher; Stacy Toenjes, 6th Gr. Reading/Language Arts; Diane Slimak, 7th & 8th Gr. Reading/Language Arts; Linda Law, 7th & 8th Gr. Reading & Reading Specialist; Kristina Ballard, ES Kindergarten Aide; Lesley Pankonien, ES Kindergarten Aide; Kathleen Yager, ES Jr. Kindergarten Aide; and Denise Siggens, ES Jr. Kindergarten Aide. Principals Cherrie Wood, Rick Lange and Shawn Madden each introduced the staff from their building. Witzmann thanked the staff, stating he appreciated the positive things they are doing for students.

Board members recognized the 2008-2009 Compass Award Recipients including Kathryn Murphy, HS English Teacher; Jane Karl, 8th Gr. Language Arts & Health Teacher; and Nancy Dressel, HS Media Specialist. Rosburg gave a brief history of the origins of the Compass Award which focuses on vision, direction, and leadership, stating the recipient is recognized and selected by their peers. Murphy has the distinction of being selected a second time within the past four years. Witzmann presented each with a certificate and thanked them for their leadership. Dressel, Karl and Murphy thanked the board and staff for the recognition.

The meeting was recessed at 7:15 p.m. Meeting re-convened at 7:30 p.m.

Motion by Connor, with second by Germain, to approve the Consent Agenda:

- Approval of Minutes of the Regular Session of August 18, 2008 of the School Board
- Approval of Minutes of the September 8, 2008 Somerset School District Annual Meeting
- Approve payment of August/September Board Bills
- Approve hiring of Kari Madden as Elementary School Special Education Teacher for 2008-09 school year
- Approve increase of Speech Pathologist Laurie Lasure's position from .65 FTE to .75 FTE for 2008-09 School Year
- Approve increase of Speech Pathologist Michelle Paulisich's position from .5 FTE to .6 FTE for 2008-09 School Year
- Approve Liz Vasquez for Middle School Lunch Room Supervisor for the 2008-09 School Year
- Approve 1.5 hours per day increase for special education aide time at the high school for the 2008-09 School Year
- Approve 2008-2009 Coaching and Advising Assignment

Motion carried unanimously.

Rosburg reported for Business Manager Robert Avery regarding items from the Business Services Committee, noting that the 2008-2009 Preliminary Budget provided in the packet was the same information that was provided at the recent committee meeting and annual meeting. Witzmann said he'd like Avery to know the thoroughness and clarity of the information provided has been very helpful.

Rosburg followed up on the Facilities Committee request for the Superintendent Input Group's feedback regarding the school community survey. Rosburg reminded board members there was still time to edit the survey and to contact him if they wished to do so. Rosburg stated the Input Group felt community members would not be as responsive to an on-line survey as a paper survey, and suggested the district provide both. They also suggested that

the district ask the community what their perception of the school district is including finances, facilities, taxes, etc. Members discussed the various questions on the draft survey. Rosburg stated it was important to get comments from community members which is why many of the survey questions have a placeholder for comments. Board members would like drop off points available in the community for convenience of citizens to drop off their surveys. They also discussed incentives to turn in completed surveys, agreeing that bringing a completed survey to a home athletic event would give respondents one free admission to that event. Deadline for survey submission is October 30, 2008.

Superintendent Rosburg reported that the Somerset Youth Athletic Association recently donated \$5,000 to Somerset School District. The SYAA has asked the district to earmark the donation towards new and upgraded weightlifting equipment at the middle school. Board members accepted the donation, asking Rosburg to send a thank you to the association on the district's behalf.

Rosburg provided current enrollment numbers, reminding board members of the upcoming Third Friday Count this week. Witzmann said he would like to see this year's Third Friday Count numbers compared to last year's numbers.

Rosburg reviewed upcoming committee meetings tentatively scheduled for October 6, 2008 including Business Services Committee to review the 2008-09 preliminary budget, and the Facilities Committee. He also reminded board members that the October meeting was moved back to October 27th to accommodate budget certification. Rosburg then reported that the WASB/WASBO/WASDA Annual Convention is in January, and will need to know which members plan to attend. In addition, members will need to choose a WASB Delegate for the convention. He said this will be a special year as 21 Somerset choral students have been invited to sing at the convention.

Cranston reported attending a recent CESA 11 meeting where the Star Academy program was discussed. CESA plans to bring in more Star Academy trainers for next summer. Rosburg stated Somerset schools may be interested in holding some of those trainings. Cranston also stated CESA holds a "Work-to-School" initiative termed an "externship" where teachers go to work at an organization during the summer to bring back real world education to their classrooms. Cranston felt the district may want to promote externship opportunities now that curriculum has intertwined thematic units and real world relevancy. Rosburg said several of the high school teachers have done externships with organizations, but there was not enough funding to continue. Witzmann would like to bring this issue back to the Teaching & Learning Committee for further review. Rosburg said the teacher contract was recently changed so that teachers may receive pay for summer work with other organizations and that the district needs to help teachers see the opportunity in this initiative. Rosburg said Curriculum Director Berg is working with high school teacher Eric Olson on Project Lead the Way (PLTW) which infuses relevant engineering for math and sciences to a higher level in the classroom.

Witzmann reported on board community involvement, stating the Somerset Basketball Association's recently held golf tournament was a good opportunity for board members to get involved with the community. He stated the recent PIE newsletter, drama presentations, and other upcoming events provide good opportunities to consider attending when planning out ahead.

Director of Curriculum & Instruction Ron Berg reported that the Math Assessment Committee is in the midst of reviewing overall mathematics belief system and philosophy. In addition, science curriculum will be looked at soon. Year two of the new MAPs testing starts tomorrow; testing results will be sent to parents in the spring. ACT results were provided at this year's annual meeting; 67 students took the ACT last year—the second largest the district has ever had. Berg stated many students in non-core classes are taking ACT tests. Statistics show, however, students who take core classes generally score two full points higher in the ACT's than those who have not taken core classes, thus, the district continues to encourage students to take core classes. Berg then discussed future 2008-2009 Staff Development Plans, drawing attention to the staff development schedule provided in the board packet.

High School Principal Shawn Madden introduced Somerset High School Junior Johanna Smith as the new student board representative, stating Smith has been involved in a wide variety of school events and had recently attended the National Youth Contest in Washington DC. Johanna read from the student council report which included upcoming fundraisers, homecoming activities, Jostens meetings with students for class rings and graduation robes, and student activities with Grace Place to help raise funds for various charitable causes. Witzmann thanked Johanna for willing to report on behalf of the student body, stating the board looks forward to future reports. Madden added that the high school is off to great start to the new school year with lots of activities and events planned. He said congratulations were due to Ms. Rachel Erickson for 21 choir students being chosen to participate in the upcoming WASB convention in January.

Middle School Principal Rick Lange reported on the middle school's HVAC project stating it was close to being completed. Lange provided a brief background of why there was an HVAC project, explaining the need to bring the middle school building up to code with a firewall between shop rooms and kitchen area along with a ventilation upgrade. He said the district's entire HVAC system will be operated by a computer program. Lange went on to report that the new school year has started well. MAPs testing will begin Wednesday, and student-led conference s will be held on October 6th and 9th. He said the middle school recently received a grant award from the Packers Professional Football Association in conjunction with the American Heart Association for an equipment/training room, which the middle school does not currently have; therefore, the school's weight-lifting room will be turned into an equipment/training room. Witzmann stated he would like to have a tour of the middle school's new HVAC system before the start of the October board meeting. Members interested in touring the new HVAC system should plan to be at the middle school at 6:15 p.m. on October 27th.

Elementary School Principal Cherrie Wood reported the student "Welcome Back" day was successful with all but three students represented that day. Wood said the elementary building has a full house of students, with all sections at or over 100 students and some sections close to 140 students per section. Wood said the new elementary aides are working out well in the classroom and is grateful to the board for allowing the elementary school to have additional aides. Wood said she was also happy to report that the new sand pit has been a big hit with the students. She stated the elementary school has recently seen an increase in the number of students who have seizures, therefore a representative from the Eau Claire Epilepsy Foundation was invited to the school to work with students. Wood said she would like to recognize Mr. Thomas Morrison for his recent donation of a telescope and tripod for elementary students to study astronomy in conjunction with the recent astro-compass painting on school grounds.

Rosburg provided an update for Finance and Budget, stating Business Manager Robert Avery will go into greater budget detail at the October 6th Business Services meeting. Witzmann said the notes and information provided in the board packet has been helpful and enlightening; members agreed they would like to continue seeing this type of information provided on a monthly basis.

Director of Pupil Services Darren Kern reported on the Special Education Autism Project, with an official start date slated for September 24th and 25th. The department will start with three students using the project's diagnostic tools. Kern reported that speech pathologist Laurie Lasure has developed a life-skills class working with high school students and will be working on a variety of projects this year. Kern reported on special education enrollment numbers, noting 37 more students are receiving special education services at the start of this year as compared to the start of last school year, with a total of 207 special education students in the district that have an IEP. The English Language Learner (ELL) staff has worked to develop ILP's (Individual Learning Plans) over the summer. They are also currently in the process of weaving WIDA assessment results with state standards. The area of Gifted & Talented is currently developing a pool of students; GT students will be identified once the MAPs testing is done.

Germain reported for the Governance Committee on the second reading of Locker Room Policy JFGA-A. Motion by Germain, with second by Colbeth, to approve Locker Room Policy JFGA-A as presented. Germain stated the purpose of the policy was to not allow the use of cell phones, cameras or any recording devices in locker rooms, and that it was a state-mandated policy. Motion carried unanimously.

Robert Gunther reported on behalf of the recent Facilities Committee meeting discussing the possibility of having a varsity soccer field between the high school and elementary school buildings, with two practice fields near the north side of the elementary building for community use. Rosburg said the community soccer association approached Athletic Director Brad Nemeč stating they had funds available to contribute to soccer fields if the district could provide the property. Board members agreed the district should ask for the community's support financially as well as for materials and labor. It is hoped the varsity soccer field would be available for use next year. Board members would like Athletic Director Brad Nemeč to look further into community and municipality support. Members agreed there is a need for community soccer fields, but prefer to have the district's athletic department manage them as a first priority for school students. Witzmann moved, with second by Colbeth, to direct the district to proceed with adding a varsity soccer field between the elementary school and high school buildings in addition to two practice fields, and to have the appropriate staff work with the municipalities and soccer association for additional funding and support. Roll call vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Colbeth, with second by Germain, to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m. Motion carried.

Tim Witzmann, President

Catherine Cranston, Clerk