

**REGULAR MEETING of the BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOMERSET**  
**April 21, 2008**

President Allison Klis called the meeting called to order at 6:32 p.m. Roll call was taken. Members present: Allison Klis, Sharon Germain, Mike Connor, Tim Witzmann, Brian Moulton, Marie Colbeth and Catherine Cranston.

High School Principal Shawn Madden introduced graduating Seniors Makayla Berg, Troy Jacobson, Greta Leemkuil, Kayla Solum, Calvin Wilson, and Logan Wolf. The students shared the following responses to questions with regard to their experiences while attending Somerset schools.

*#1. Do you feel your education at Somerset has taught you how to be motivated, educated, responsible, socially, and emotionally mature citizens ready for tomorrow?*

I feel it has helped and I'm now ready for the next step; home life has helped me more; a few special teachers; Character Education has helped educationally and morally; a lot of social opportunities, especially through extra curriculums; helped prepare for college; co-curricular and extra-curriculars helps to give us something else to be responsible for, and to step up and take charge.

*#2. Did the elementary, middle and high school facilities and equipment meet your diverse educational needs? Please explain your answer:*

I don't remember elementary years much—the middle school was good; technology was good—feel we're missing out as seniors because better technology has come in with smart boards; equipment and technology-wise, feel we've always been offered current technology; some equipment is old, however, no complaints; unfortunate some of the newer technology is arriving when we're leaving; always have been given the latest technology; I remember keyboarding class at the middle school; the elementary and middle school are well equipped; however, the high school has too many students and not enough computers, which makes it difficult to work. Witzmann asked the students if they have noticed a difference in class size? The students responded yes, hallways are crowded; some classes had over 30 kids; the Language and Technology class has about 43 students; lab time is cut short some times because of the large number of students.

*#3. Discuss your elementary and middle school experiences, as they pertain to your preparation for your high school experience.*

Elementary was fun and I learned as much as I needed to; the only problem in middle school is the transition from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup>; math didn't prepare us enough for 9<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra with Mr. Thompson; agreed—math was a tough transition from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to Algebra 1; middle school and elementary didn't prep us because atmosphere is so different at the high school; students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra class had to drop back to Intro to Algebra; my sister in 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be in for a big change going to 9<sup>th</sup> grade—big time homework in high school compared to middle school; high school sports are very different than middle school sports; middle school did not challenge me enough, and seemed far too easy; Science was great with Mr. Stanke. Students felt that socially there is a lot being done at the high school to help with 8<sup>th</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition including mentoring, which the students felt helped to keep younger students from being intimidated. Colbeth asked the seniors if—once they made it through Freshman math—was it OK? One student replied, “Yes, once Mr. Thompson broke us in.”

*#4. Discuss your co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences regarding the number of programs, depth of programs, and opportunities you experienced.*

There was fun stuff we got to do in high school like go to France; soccer was awesome and getting soccer to be a high school sport was exciting; Science dept is good, I like the depth of courses and I feel it really prepared me; programs here are phenomenal...nice with a small school to be able to be involved in all of these areas; I liked doing sports in a small school as you get more opportunities; basketball has helped me, along with NHA, which looks good on the college resume; opportunities are good, I like the atmosphere with

sports, but it would be nice to have a few more sports options like Lacrosse; would have been nice to have a better DI program...something like Quiz Bowl...for students who are not involved in sports; would be nice to have Rocket Club back.

*#5. What are the most valuable technological skills or concepts you experienced while attending school?*  
Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel programs; if you don't work hard you don't get anywhere...like to take more challenging classes; keyboarding class has helped...Mr. Powers and Mr. Walker have helped us learn to write papers; time management from Mrs. Murphy and Mr. Walker – agendas ahead of time was nice. By far Math has helped me out the most; Mr. Thompson is doing a good job of teaching. Typing class was good; Mr. Walker has taught us a lot to help prepare for college; basic doc class is good. Volunteering at elementary school has seen 4<sup>th</sup> graders doing a great job with technology and even doing PowerPoints. Rosburg asked the students what they thought about the new smart board technology; the students commented that the smart boards were nice and will be very beneficial once installed in all of the classes.

*#6. What positive enhancements or enrichments could be added to improve the educational programs and facilities for future students in the Somerset School District?*  
When a new program is introduced, the teacher should take classes on how to teach the course...not good for the teacher to be learning the class while giving it; scheduling system needs work; freshman experience too much stress with tough classes right away...don't have all hard classes at one time; preparation from the middle school to high school needs to be better; math is my favorite subject, but Mr. Thompson didn't have his own classroom so we didn't have good facilities; we should have permanent classrooms for tougher classes; need more classes related to human anatomy for people who want to go into health field; we have advanced college prep courses, but more focus should go to getting students to pass the AP exams; I felt I was behind when registering at Winona compared to other students; couldn't get into youth options classes that I wanted...all full...couldn't be slid into a different class; youth options is great for kids to get a jump on college; in the Science Dept, Chemistry needs to have some work done as it's not preparing students for college; my experience with AP and college classes was awesome...English class prepared me very well; scheduling system was frustrating, especially when you don't get schedules until the week before school; youth options...has given me a better feel for the college life; Youth Options made me mad because my classes were approved, but they were full so I didn't get to take my secondary choice; need to sign applicants up for a wider spread of classes, or warn the students ahead of time that they may not be able to take their classes, so need to be prepared. Big regret is not getting a class with Mr. Sheffel...a reason for this was I couldn't take some of the classes and some classes got bumped; should have teachers on staff to only do those upper-level classes; on Chemistry end of things—I don't think I got anything out of Chemistry...Chemistry for Health Science in college is way different than Chemistry offered here at the high school; I wanted to be better prepared.

Colbeth thanked the students for their comments and suggestions. Witzmann said it was nice to hear the involvement of the Character Education program, and asked the students if it was a positive program for them. Some of the students felt the early part of the program was a nuisance and it didn't sink in, but now it makes more sense and it is being announced over the P.A. system each morning. Rosburg thanked the students and wished them luck in their future.

Colbeth moved, with second by Germain, to approve the meeting agenda. Motion approved unanimously.

Rosburg introduced Ms. Pamela Macal of WRP&R. Ms. Macal presented information with regard to new IRS regulations and requirements, starting January 1, 2009, related to public schools' retirement savings arrangements, referred to as 403(b) plans or Tax-Sheltered Annuities (TSA). Under the new regulations, school staff transfers or exchanges relating to their 403(b) or TSA plans will only be allowed under certain circumstances, and only with vendors willing to sign documentation required by the new regulations. Ms. Macal stated the new regulations will put a lot of responsibility on the part of the school district, such as keeping track of annual contributions by staff and retirees, however, she will be working with the district to

assist in compliance with the new requirements. Rosburg thanked Ms. Macal for coming and sharing that information with the board.

President Klis opened the floor for groups or individuals wishing to be heard. Mr. Doug Devan stated the people of Somerset have elected board members to make wise choices on behalf of kids. He said there was a strong statement in the voting down of two recent referendums; however the land purchase, due to a previously passed referendum, showed that voters are not without heart. He said board members need to understand the power of the vote and is why Devan is considering a re-call position on board member Witzmann, as he felt Witzmann was ignoring what the majority of voters wanted.

Head Wrestling Coach Mike Kappers introduced graduating senior Anthony Martin for his participation in state wrestling this year. He said Tony had a rough childhood, but had overcome issues with the help and support of great people in his life. Kappers said Tony became very focused once he started wrestling and has a wonderful “can do” attitude. He said Tony is one of the smartest students he has coached in ten years. Tony plans to attend North Dakota State University after graduation and wants to coach football. Tony thanked Kappers, Coach Bruce Larson, and friend Todd Albert for their support. Board member Connor presented Tony with an Athletic Excellence Award certificate, stating that, though Tony may not be aware, there was a good chance he has inspired other students.

Football coach Bruce Larson introduced graduating seniors Bert Geurkink and Anthony Martin who recently returned from playing football in Japan. Larson stated it was the first time in 20 years that the district had an opportunity for students to play a sport overseas. He said both Bert and Tony were selected by BFS Clinic Advisor Jeff Stearn. Bert and Tony shared their experiences of living with Japanese host families, stating it was a wonderful learning experience for them. Larson said he received an e-mail from the head contact person at US Football, stating Bert and Tony conducted themselves so well overseas, the organization will be keeping Somerset in mind for future athletes to participate in the program. Larson said Bert’s plans are to attend UW Eau Claire after graduation. Witzmann presented both students with an award of Athletic Excellence, stating that both young men make the Somerset School District very proud.

High School Principal Shawn Madden introduced Scholar Athletes Greta Leemkuil and Elliot Bell. Elliot said he has participated in the district’s wrestling program for many years and had done well, thanking Coach Mike Kappers for his support. Elliot said he felt his academic success was due to support from teachers, as well as his parents. Elliot introduced his parents, Tom and Debbie Bell, and thanked them for their support. Greta said she has enjoyed being involved in the school’s sports program, and especially enjoyed being able to play soccer the past two years. She has excelled in academics and was named the 2008 Class Valedictorian. She said her parents, Dirk and Helen Leemkuil, were unable to attend this evening, but thanked them for their support. Cranston presented both students with the Scholar Athlete award. Kappers commented that, since Elliot and his brother Ethan are graduating this year, next year will be the first time in 14 years that a member of the Bell family will not be in the wrestling line up. He thanked Tom and Debi Bell for their support and contribution, stating that he hoped to still see them at future wrestling events.

Superintendent Rosburg thanked exiting board president Allison Klis for her hard work and service to the district. Other board members shared their comments, stating Klis spent a lot of time as a volunteer on the successful referendum for the current elementary building before she became a board member. They also thanked Klis for her knowledge and use of the “Roberts Rule of Order” while conducting board meetings, bringing her leadership to the board, and for being very thoughtful and professional during board proceedings. Klis responded saying her decision to not run for board re-election was not an easy one; she said she loves working with the school district but likes to give one-hundred percent and didn’t feel she could do that while managing a new business. Klis offered some advice, stating the school board needs to remember they are responsible to a lot of groups for a lot of different things, but their main responsibility is to students. She said it was a tough balancing act to answer to voters for fiscal responsibility, while attaining a

quality education for Somerset students. Klis said she was happy her family moved into the Somerset district, stating her children had flourished with their education here. She said she also liked the level of commitment from community members, which was one of the reasons she ran for school board in the first place. Klis was presented with a plaque for her service and dedication.

Meeting recessed at 7:47 p.m. Meeting reconvened at 8:02 p.m.

Witzmann moved to approve consent agenda, with second by Germain.

- A. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Session of March 24, 2008 of the School Board
- B. Approve payment of March/April Board Bills
- C. Accept resignation of High School Guidance Counselor Theresa Erdrich
- D. Accept resignation of Reading Specialist Tiffany Moore
- E. Accept retirement of High School Media Specialist Jean Morse
- F. Accept resignation of 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher Stephani Owens
- G. Approve hiring of Andrea Forrest as 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher
- H. Approve hiring of Brad Nemec, Summer School Director
- I. Approve hiring of Sandy Nemec, Summer School Secretary
- J. Approve Summer School start date of June 9, 2008
- K. Approve hiring of Robert Avery, Business Manager

Motion carried unanimously.

President Klis addressed space and enrollment issues, stating that the board met two weeks ago and asked them to share their thoughts to help give some direction to administrators. Witzmann said solutions were discussed given current and anticipated enrollment, and has a concern about actual enrollment numbers for next year versus what is being projected to have a concrete plan in place for each building. Colbeth said several ideas were discussed at the Executive Session, including generating a survey to be sent out to the community about why the referendum failed, and to come up with some space ideas. Members would like to review what the survey will have on it before it is mailed out to the community. Germain stated space information provided at a recent Executive Session gave the impression that middle school space could be utilized for next year. Rosburg said portable classroom walls could be included in middle school commons areas. Board members agreed they would like more information on identifying space options, as well as options that will cause least amount of disruption. Middle School instructor Lori Baillargeon said that last September teachers wrote a letter to board members with regard to the large 7<sup>th</sup> grade class; she said there are so many students that teachers find it difficult to keep them separate for activities such as taking tests. She said there is a need for additional sections in the middle school, and would like to see two more sections added to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Rosburg stated this concern will be addressed at an upcoming administration meeting. Rosburg then asked members to send him information about what they want included in the survey. Members discussed other ideas for increasing space accommodations including the high school's Youth Options program. Rosburg and Madden stated applications for next year's Youth Options have been received and approved. Board members felt there may be a need to better publicize Youth Options with students so that they are aware they may do Youth Options as Juniors as well as Seniors. Madden said the middle school also allows high school classes to use special middle school classrooms for instruction. Members discussed the need to continue looking at things like virtual school and smart boards for a way to help with overcrowded schools. Witzmann said administration has already put many of these ideas in place, stating his daughter took an on-line virtual class through the school district four years ago. He felt administration has been very active in addressing space and education needs, and what has already been done has been substantial, however he felt that, in light of space constraints, the district needs to go even further to address space issues.

Superintendent Rosburg reviewed current enrollment figures stating that district enrollment has gone slightly above 1,600 students. He said the Facilities, Governance, and Teaching and Learning Committees and a special session are tentatively scheduled for Monday, May 5, 2008. He stated Lisa Vioisin from Baird will be in attendance at the Special Session to talk about budget forecasting. Rosburg said we could eliminate

Facilities discussion and add what members think is appropriate to a Special Session for more input about survey questions in order to come away with a plan. Development of survey is important because of its potential to give useful information. Members talked about placing the Special Session meeting combined with Facilities. Rosburg reiterated the Board Retreat will be held on Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.

Pupil Services Director Darren Kern reported that the ELL program has completed the ACCESS for ELL tests and are awaiting test results which will be reported at a future board meeting. Kern stated the results of the recent GT competition are still coming in, however, they know that one of the teams placed in 9<sup>th</sup> position. Kern said the Special Education autism project is up and running, stating Somerset is one of 12 districts in the nation to be honored with this project. Middle school special education students will be going to Osceola on May 9<sup>th</sup> to participate in the Friendship Track and Field Games. Kern said he wanted board members to be aware that many state grants for special education are being cut resulting in many opportunities lost. Klis asked Kern about the statement earlier from one of the graduating seniors about DI not being available to the high school. Kern replied that DI has been available at the high school level as students have participated in past years, however, a volunteer coach has not been available recently.

Elementary School Principal Cherrie Wood said this week is severe weather awareness week. A district-wide severe weather drill will be held this Thursday as part of the state wide drill. Wood said the second round of Maps testing started last week and students have become more used to this type of testing. Results this spring will be used as a baseline for year-to-year testing. The elementary school has had a variety of happenings including last Friday's 4<sup>th</sup> grade program which was well attended by parents and grandparents. Wood invited board members to the Jr. Kindergarten program this Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:15 a.m., stating they expect many people as this is the biggest JK class ever at the elementary. She mentioned other events students will be attending in the near future. Wood stated she wanted to mention the importance of space accommodations and the lack of space issues at the elementary building, stating two new students started today as an example of continued enrollment growth. She said the buildings are very stressed with high enrollment numbers, and that staff continue to work hard and do their best to accommodate the growing number of students with shrinking space. She said the short-time fixes have continued for four years, and the district needs to continue to look for solutions.

Rosburg reported on the district's Cash Flow and Budget Reports, stating current cash flow was typical; tax dollars have come in and the district continues to make payments. The district has invested in funds and those monies continue to be managed well. Revenue is still positive; expenditures are detailed and other funds have been added, giving board members a much bigger picture of where expenditures are happening. Sufficient funds are available to carry out the needs of the district. Witzmann stated he appreciated hearing staff are receiving additional ALIO training.

Director of Curriculum & Instruction Ron Berg said end of year is when the district evaluates itself, including the Annual Data Retreat held last week, where district test scores were reviewed. Berg said student test scores are doing well, however, there is struggling in some areas. He said the gender gap has decreased considerably in three years, and found girls are doing better in math while boys are doing better in Arts. The Strategic Planning Committee will be meeting the next day to review data, which will be forwarded to the board at their next meeting. Staff Development Committee is meeting this week and will be assessing staff development plan overall.

Student Council Representative Hanna Newman reported two students were recently added to student council. She said the Mr. and Mrs. Somerset contest raised \$181 for the Cystic Fibrosis foundation. She said the Junior Class continues working on their prom set, and \$500 was transferred to the post prom committee for activities. Newman said the junior class would like to thank Safe-Way Bus Company for donating buses to the Post Prom party. She also mentioned the Senior Picnic is scheduled for May 28<sup>th</sup> and buses have been ordered for that event.

High School Principal Shawn Madden recognized March students of the month, thanking them for being positive role models; he also thanked the staff for their work on the Character Education program. He said the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual community involvement day is scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup>, and listed a variety of things that will be going on in and around the campus during that event. Madden congratulated high school health care aide Patty Schachtner on receiving word that the Somerset High School will be awarded the silver Governor's School Health Award. A ceremony will take place next month at the State Capitol where Somerset will receive the award. For the first time, the high school will be participating in the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Battle of the Buses on May 17<sup>th</sup> at Cedar Lake Speedway. Students have been working hard to design racing artwork for the bus.

Middle School Principal Rick Lange reported that rehearsals are underway for the new school play, "Who's Dying to Be a Millionaire?" due to open Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup> and promises to be an exciting adventure. Several field trips are coming up including the all school field trip to Midway Stadium in May. Also, the World Day Celebration, culminating activity of thematic unit projects, will be held on May 29<sup>th</sup>. Lange also stated the middle school staff and students continue working on wellness and will be holding a community walking challenge whereby participants will log the number of miles walked throughout the month of May.

Rosburg took a moment to introduce newly elected board member Robert Gunther from the audience, and thanked him for coming to the meeting, stating Gunther will be attending the Board Retreat on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

The Teaching and Learning Committee brought forward for approval extending the school year for staff only to make up for an inclement weather day taken on February 5, 2008. Klis moved to approve, with second by Colbeth, to follow past practice and extend the school year, for school staff only, to make up for the February 5, 2008 inclement weather day. Motion carried unanimously. Rosburg stated staff will have opportunity to make up the day on Monday June 9<sup>th</sup>

Colbeth moved, with second by Witzmann, to approve the 403(b) TSA plan. Motion carried unanimously. Witzmann mentioned Ms. Macal did a good job on the presentation.

Colbeth moved, with second by Cranston, to approve the technology lease agreement with Providence Capital Network, LLC as recommended by the Business Services Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

Colbeth moved, with second by Moulton, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Allison Klis, President

Sharon Germain, Clerk