

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOMERSET

Regular Board of Education Meeting

November 19, 2007

The Somerset Board of Education moved into regular session at the High School Instructional Media Center. Members present were President Allison Klis, Sharon Germain, Brian Moulton, Marie Colbeth and Catherine Cranston. Michael Connor and Tim Witzmann were absent.

President Klis opened the meeting to groups or individuals wishing to be heard. Somerset speech teacher Meg Farrington said she and several families were present tonight in celebration of “Inclusive Schools Week,” and to thank the Board of Education for providing support for all the schools in recognizing the importance of inclusion. Two students presented the board members with a gift that was created by several of the special education students. The group was asked if anyone would like to say anything to the board. One student mentioned he would like to see more fiction books available in the school libraries. He also stated that he would like to see all students educated on the importance of hand washing and sanitation. A parent thanked elementary staff for doing a fabulous job working with her special needs Kindergarten student.

Doug Devan asked to speak, wondering when the next Facilities Committee Meeting would be held. President Klis said it is scheduled for Monday, November 26th. Devan would like to see the board committee agendas on the web site along with the meeting minutes to be able to review the information discussed at the November 5th Facilities Committee meeting. President Klis stated information from that committee meeting would be discussed in accordance with the agenda at tonight’s meeting and encouraged Devan to stay for that portion of the meeting.

Donna Eiring was introduced by Cherrie Wood at the Elementary Teacher of the year and Kohl Teacher Fellow Nominee. Wood said Donna provides a warm and caring environment for all her students, and is an integral part of their beginning education. Donna attended UW – Milwaukee where she received her Bachelor of Science Degree. She started her teaching career at Jefferson Elementary in Wauwatosa, then moved to Somerset where she began as a substitute teacher in 1983. She was hired in 1987 as a first grade teacher and in 1988 was hired on as the district’s first Jr. Kindergarten teacher with the start of Somerset’s first ever Jr. Kindergarten program. Donna lives with her husband John in Somerset. They have grown twin daughters, Katie who lives in Port Hadlock, Washington, and Beth who resides in Helena, Montana. Donna’s hobbies include travel, spending time boating and kayaking, and gardening.

Damon Barta was introduced by Rick Lange as the Middle School Teacher of the Year and Kohl Teacher Fellow Nominee. Damon teaches seventh grade science and eighth grade social studies, and is a UW Eau Claire graduate, currently working on the completion of his Masters program at the College of St Scholastica. Damon began his teaching career at Somerset Middle School teaching science, social studies and math to seventh and eighth graders since 1997. He has also served on a number of district committees such as Technology, Co-operative Learning, MAPs testing and the Middle School Platteville Team. Damon has coached varsity baseball, leading them to the State Tournament, and was nominated the “Middle Border Baseball Coach of the Year” in 2004. Damon lives with his wife, Kim, and step children Jake (15) and Claire (13) in New Richmond. He enjoys vacationing in Las Vegas, listening to 80’s music, travel and golf.

Tim White was introduced by Shawn Madden as the High School Teacher of the Year for 2007-2008 and Kohl Teacher Fellow Nominee. Tim began his teaching career 28 years ago, with the last 24 years at the Somerset School District. He is a Wisconsin native and attended UW – Eau Claire, earning a B.A. in

Broadfield Social Studies and later attending Hamline University for a M.A. in Liberal Studies. Prior to teaching at Somerset, Tim taught at West Milwaukee High School for two years and at Cedarburg High School for two years. He continued with social studies instruction here at Somerset High School, teaching numerous courses including Civics 9, American History 11, Psychology, Rise of Civilization, Understanding Society, World Geography, and The World in Conflict. Tim has advised co-curricular activities including S.A.V.E. (Students Against Violating the Earth), Academic Decathlon, and Adopt-a-Highway. Tim has shown a dedication to his fellow educators by being a lead negotiator for WCEA – Somerset for over 20 years. Tim resides in Osceola with his wife, Karen, and children, Nathan (college student at Augsburg), Caitlin (senior at Osceola High School), and Colter (2nd grade at Osceola Elementary School). Tim enjoys reading, and many activities with his family, including biking, skiing, canoeing, and camping.

Jennifer Nickowski was introduced by Darren Kern as the District Specialty Teacher of the year and Kohl Teacher Fellow Nominee. Jennifer came from the Forest Lake, MN school district to Somerset in 2001 and was hired as the Middle School Special Education Teacher for Cognitive Disabilities/Autism. She received her Masters of Education, Professional Development from the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse in 2004. Jennifer manages student cases, writes IEP's, pull-out instruction for academic areas, and assists students in regular education settings, while working collaboratively with other teachers and support staff. Jennifer's outside activities include coaching for the district's varsity softball, and church activities volunteering for youth sports and athletic events. She is also a volunteer parent for Girl Scouts, and enjoys Fantasy Football, reading, and spending time with her family. Jennifer resides in Baldwin with her husband, Krzysztof, daughter Elzbieta and son Jacek.. She has seven brothers and sisters and her husband's family lives in Poland.

Jason Hamari, District Computer Technician, was introduced by Ryan Sicard as the Support Staff Person of the Year. Jason is a Michigan Tech graduate in Electrical Engineering and began his career in the computer support field at the Marquette County Road Commission as a Network Specialist. He has been with Somerset Schools since 2002, starting as a part-time employee contracted with CESA 11, and moving into a full-time technology position with the district in July, 2003. Jason's role is critical in the school district; he is responsible daily for troubleshooting hardware and software for district computers, documenting work and solutions to problems, installing and configuring educational software programs, and writing instructions for common software problems. Jason and his wife Liss live in New Richmond. Some of Jason's favorite hobbies include reading, primarily science-fiction.

Board member Cranston presented engraved "Golden Apples" to each of those recognized and thanked them for their contributions to the school district.

President Klis recessed the meeting at 7:30 p.m. for refreshments and social time. President Klis reconvened the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Damon Barta was invited by Rick Lange to report on middle school thematic units. Barta stated his science class students worked on ecosystems during the first quarter of this school year. He said the students and staff chose ecosystems from around the world as their thematic unit; those units were then integrated into math, reading, social studies, art, and music. The unit also involves a community partnership with Interstate Park and WI DNR. Barta reported some of the students have individual partnerships with area folks and organizations as well. The students made presentations at the end of the unit; some of the presentations included murals, models, and diorama's. Superintendent Rosburg stated that he'd had an opportunity to look at the thematic presentations at the middle school and felt that all had been done very nicely.

Germain moved, with second by Colbeth, to approve Items A through D of the consent agenda:

- A. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Session of October 29, 2007 of the School Board
- B. Approve payment of October/November Board Bills
- C. Approve early graduation requests
- D. Winter Coaching Assignments

Motion carried unanimously.

Teaching & Learning Committee Chairperson, Allison Klis presented the high school course offering booklet for 2008-09 for its first reading. Klis stated she was appreciative of the summary page which outlined edits to the booklet. She also stated if anyone had questions, they were to contact members of the committee or Mr. Madden.

Sharon Germain filled in for board member Mike Connor with a report from the Governance Committee. She stated the committee reviewed three policies at their November meeting. The first was the Title 1 Parental Involvement Policy IGBC-R where she stated one paragraph was added to be in compliance with State Law.

A proposed policy for Title 1 Student Selection Policy for Somerset School District Proposed Policy #IGBC-R was brought forward for a first reading. Germain stated the purpose of this policy is to have a written policy of what is currently being used at the district for Title 1 student selection.

Germain then asked members to review the proposed Virtual School Students Proposed Policy #IIBH for the board's first reading. She stated the committee had looked at an original policy for K- 12 virtual school, but felt it would be better to start with 9-12, expanding in the future. She stated the Governance Committee wondered whether or not a requirement should be added to the proposed policy with regard to students having some interaction at school, or if they should be allowed to graduate totally through virtual school, without ever having walked into a school building. Members asked Mr. Madden for his reaction; Madden stated that he and Curriculum Director Berg had some discussion regarding this issue, but did not come up with a solution. Members asked Student Representative Hanna Newman what her thoughts were on this issue. She stated that she felt virtual school students should have some interaction in the school building setting. Germain said another issue that was discussed at the committee level was what if a student was not located in the district's geographical area, would it be required for them to attend here? Mr. Devan asked to speak from the audience, stating that the fiscal impact should be considered when looking at virtual schools, including provision of computers and state revenue. He agreed that social interaction can be good, but he said people socialize other places as well and do not necessarily need a school building to do so. Mr. Madden stated that the proposed policy is modeled off of Amery School District, and that Amery virtual students are not required to physically come to the buildings to graduate. Question of whether or not students can take classes across district lines? Superintendent Rosburg said the district is looking at going with WI virtual school. Germain asked board members to look over Item G of the policy and if the members thought there should be something different there, she would like to hear from them. Cranston stated that fiscal responsibility was talked about at the committee level. Mr. Devan asked if committee minutes could be posted on the web site. Superintendent Rosburg stated that committee meetings are not formal meetings, but are working meetings. Information from the committee meetings are then sent to the full board for first readings where changes can be made. Moulton felt committee meeting minutes should be posted to the web site for communication purposes.

President Klis reported for Tim Witzmann on the November 5th Facilities Committee meeting. She stated that the meeting was an overview of the process the Facilities Committee would work through and information they wanted to see to make a decision for a referendum question. She stated that the committee has asked to have the applied population study updated for review at a future committee meeting. Committee decided to go 10 years on planning while looking at core facilities and options 15 years out. She stated the committee looked at various building and expansion options and grade shifting

options, while looking at enrollment projections. Members felt enrollment updates could be included on the district's web site to provide community communication. Members discussed looking at short term options for the elementary building for next year. Short Term and communication with community will be discussed at the November 26 Facilities Committee meeting.

Superintendent Rosburg reported on current enrollment numbers as of November 19, 2007 which showed 1,585 students. He stated the next Facilities Committee meeting will be held on Monday, November 26, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. Tentative committee meetings for Monday, December 3, 2007 will be Human Resources, Facilities, and Teaching and Learning.

Superintendent Rosburg then introduced IT Manager Ryan Sicard to provide an update on current district technology projects: Sicard stated that the district Technology Council held their quarterly meeting last Monday, November 12th where Curriculum Director Berg and High School Principal Madden presented on virtual schools. He said the council also reviewed infrastructure projects which were completed during the summer. Council also reviewed the tablet pc and smart board pilot projects, where they were informed that the district goal of the projects was to see if that kind of technology improves teaching process. Smartboard/tablet training was provided in October to participating staff. The Technology Department has received positive feedback from the pilot project teachers regarding the new technology. Sicard stated that the MAPs testing process was also reviewed the by the council and that the process was successful from a technology standpoint although there were some scheduling conflicts which will be reviewed by staff. Council also focused on on staffing needs of building IMCs. Sicard stated that board members will be invited to attend a smart board/tablet pc presentation in January or February.

President Klis asked board members if there was information to be reported out on two-way communication goal. She stated that the board members had received invitations to attend the Somerset Early Childhood Holiday program. Cranston stated said she attended a conflict resolution class which had been offered at the middle school, and thanked Rick Lange and Nancy Klaas for providing the class. She said she will be working with Ms. Klaas in her classroom to help implement conflict resolution concepts.

Curriculum & Instruction Director Ron Berg reported that the district's Strategic Plan and District Goals are interwoven. He will be meeting with the high school graduation committee to discuss graduation issues including some of the virtual school issues mentioned tonight. MAPs test results will be looked at during the Wednesday teacher in-service; teachers will also work more on thematic units during the in-service. Berg stated the Strategic Plan has 16 pieces up and running this year. He will be attending a workshop next month with guidance counselors regarding the careers piece of the Strategic Plan.

Student Representative Hanna Newman reported that the junior class held their first prom meeting, and this year's prom will be held in the Somerset High School multi-purpose room—a departure from past years' proms at UW River Falls. The prom dance will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2008 with post prom being held at the Hudson YMCA. In addition to prom planning, juniors have completed their fundraising campaign. Money earned will go toward this year's prom expenses. Sophomores will start fundraising this wee; their class rings have been ordered and will be distributed November 27th. Student council is also sponsoring a food drive for Grace Place; posters have been placed in various locations throughout the high school. In addition to the food drive, student council is sponsoring its annual hall decorating contest, and hopes each class will decorate their class halls with holiday designs. The seniors have been busy looking at suggestions for their class motto, son, colors and flowers and hope to vote on those in early December. Newman added that that three area bands have agreed to perform at this year's Cystic Fibrosis Foundation benefit dance for Saturday, January 5, 2008.

High School Principal Shawn Madden recognized the October, 2007 “Students of the Month.” He said students were nominated based on demonstrating “Qualities of Life” in one or all three areas of decision making, empathy, and etiquette. He thanked high school staff for their support of this valuable student incentive program. Madden then gave an overview of the high school building’s thematic unit entitled “Empty Bowl,” which covers 13 content categories.

Middle School Principal, Rick Lange reported that a Veteran’s Program was held last Monday. He stated that holding a full ceremony is difficult during this time of the year due to student testing. Students were asked to think about how veterans have sacrificed their lives for our country. He went on to state the standardized testing had been completed at the middle school. Weekly updates continue in conjunction with building goals. Staff is looking at how to evaluate the Character Education program, which middle school students attend daily, to add AODA issues.

Elementary School Principal Cherrie Wood reported on some of the activities elementary students are doing with goals. Michael McGowan, President of McGowan and Associates, training and consultation firm specializing in AODA issues, talked with students about bullying issues, and how important it is that students not encourage any type of bullying. Elementary students service learning project includes working with the local food pantry. Fourth graders wrote letters to veterans as part of community involvement. Third graders are working on a wax museum in conjunction with their book reports where they are dressing as the characters while presenting their reports.

Business Manager Jan Carlson presented the cash flow report, stating that additional money was recently received from the state for the Somerset School’s breakfast program.

Pupil Services Director, Darren Kern, reported that the Gifted Talented program is busy this year, especially at the middle school and elementary school. Trying to expand in non academic programs, but still developing. ELL ACCESS Test window is 12/3 through 2/15 and explained this test is used to measure progress of ELL students; discussed state requirements of this test. Scheid is on last leg of getting bi-lingual certified by end of the year. Special education numbers have stayed steady, but 16 students are in the process of referral; this is a significant number. St. Anne’s school has sent three new students for referral—a higher number than normal. DPI progress monitoring is focusing on making sure that regular assessments are given throughout the year to find out how the students are progressing. Working on making sure we have resources and measures in the district needed for this. Kern stated he attended a Director’s conference, where a portion of the conference focused on violence in schools. Conference presenter broke this down. Over 20 years, average of 2 school shootings per year. All that have happened in the past ten years...majority was with kids who were bullied. In 100% of those school shootings, someone knew about them beforehand and didn’t act on them. We need to figure out a way to work with our group to educate them that it is OK to tell somebody. Board members thanked Kern for sharing those facts.

Motion to adjourn by Cranston. Marie second. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Allison Klis, President

Sharon Germain, Clerk