MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MACOMB C.U.S.D. #185
FEBRUARY 22, 2021
7:00 P.M.

Board President Jill Myers called the meeting to order in the C.T. Vivian Library at Macomb Jr./Sr. High School. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, roll was taken with the following members present: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson (via Microsoft Teams) and La Prad.

Ms. Emily Roberts, parent of a senior student, addressed the Board regarding returning to in-person 5-day instruction by March 1. She presented information on surrounding districts and schools that have returned to in-person learning. At least 10 districts in Illinois with worse COVID statistics than our district but similar student densities have returned to in-person learning. Ms. Roberts noted there is information available from the Illinois State Board of Education about how districts are delivering instruction during COVID, and the IDPH site provides county and school metrics. Most schools have created safe spaces and adjusted hours that the Macomb administration could consider. She stressed the importance of considering feedback from students and families, noting 250 students had signed a petition in January objecting to the current instructional delivery model. Ms. Roberts also shared information on the negative impact on students’ physical and mental well-being of extended online instruction. She strongly encouraged the Board to return the schools to 5-day in-person instruction.

The Board recognized Meghan Benson, Senior of the Month for the month of February.

Ms. Myers advised the next regular meeting of the Board would take place Monday, March 22 at 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Twomey reported as follows:
- Construction Report – groundbreaking shovels have been ordered and the ceremony will take place in the next few weeks. Ameren will place a pole near the baseball field for a camera mount to take time lapse video of the new middle school construction process. Graphics for the outside of the building have been selected by a committee composed of a parent, a student, the middle school art teacher, a resident of the neighborhood, and the school principal.
- Return to school – Dr. Twomey reviewed the decision-making process used to determine whether students would be able to return to school five days a week face-to-face. He explained the District has been following Illinois Department of Public Health recommendations throughout the pandemic and would continue to do so. Although the CDC announced that due to low positivity rates and teachers being vaccinated students should return to school, they are not mandating schools open. Peoria 150 announced they would return to five days a week face-to-face instruction, but they have their own online school with 1400-1500 attending and another 400-500 students on Edgenuity. They could not solve the lunch problem and are running shortened class periods. Our administrative team discussed 25-minute class periods, but that does not offer as much instructional time as we are currently providing with the hybrid system. The US Dept. of Education and IDPH say the same thing regarding opening with consistent mitigations. Some districts have more space available allowing for required social distancing, but districts of our size, population and facilities who are face-to-face cannot be following the current guidelines. Our attorneys and insurance experts strongly recommend we follow the rules and recommendations of IDPH so we do not expose the District to risk.
A petition with 500 signatures in support of all students returning to school five days a week with face-to-face instruction was submitted. Dr. Twomey agrees with the issue presented and with those who signed. We all want our students back in school, but we must be in a position where IDPH supports what we are doing.

Member Myers inquired about the status of the students who had been in Edgenuity and Dr. Twomey advised many of those students are now passing. Bringing them back with the new A/B schedule has been successful. Member La Prad thanked Dr. Twomey for the thorough report and commended the administration and the teacher leaders for their work. Dr. Twomey also shared he had met with student leaders, initially because the group objected to the revised A/B schedule. However, at the second meeting, the students stated the new schedule was not as bad as what they thought it would be. They advised the bigger issue is the lack of connection between students and schools. They suggested activities for Wednesday afternoons would help to revive and reinforce those connections and provide an opportunity for laughter and to lighten the mood. The group also conducted a simple survey asking students to rate on a scale of 1-10 the impact of the 2nd semester on their mental health. School psychologists will be provided the survey results.

- The IDPH asked for confirmation that 71% of our staff are taking the vaccine. The statistic is accurate and the IDPH wants to use it on their social media page.
- Teacher shortage – WIU is starting a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program with a pilot project for special education. Students with a BA can work in a district for 2 years with a provisional license and a veteran teacher as coach. They must also take courses and pass both state exams for special education. We are offering three candidates employment for next year. Member La Prad advised there is also a version of the program for math and science at the secondary level. The stipend for the coaching teacher will have to be negotiated.
- Athletics – girls volleyball and basketball, boys basketball, cheerleading and dance have all been practicing and will begin competition. The cheerleaders and dance team have been practicing at the old Farm King building. Many thanks to the Severs family and this great community for their support. The volleyball team had one member test positive, so the entire team had to quarantine. Justice Keene has been livestreaming our athletic events and has 1500-2000 people following him.
- FOIA: from Product Analyst Team requesting directory information for current staff.
- 2021-2022 Calendar Update – the version approved at the February 22, 2021 Board meeting is the one the District will use for next year.

Member Adams moved, and member Kapale seconded, to approve the items on the Consent Calendar, which included: Minutes from the January 25, 2021 regular Board meeting, Treasurer’s Report, Monthly Board Report, Bills and Payroll, Financial Update on Life Safety Projects (.05 levy), Monthly Activity Account Reports, Monthly Food Service Report, State Funding Update, and WCISEC Personnel and Financials. Members voting “yes”: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson, and La Prad. Members voting “no”: none. Motion carried.

Member Gray moved, and member La Prad seconded, to approve and hold indefinitely the minutes from the closed meeting held during the January 25, 2021 regular meeting. Members voting “yes”: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson, and La Prad. Members voting “no”: none. Motion carried.
Member La Prad moved, and member Kapale seconded, to approve the following recommendations regarding personnel:

**Certificated Staff:**

**Request for Leave:**
- Kendra Brough, PreSchool Teacher, MacArthur Early Childhood Center, leave to begin January 18, 2021.
- Susan Sellars, Grade 6 Teacher, Edison Elementary School, leave to begin January 26, 2021, and extend through February 11, 2021.

**Educational Support Staff:**

**Resignation:**
- Makayla Wesley, Program Assistant, Macomb Senior High School, effective February 12, 2021.

**Employment:**
- Jean Ann Marlow, Program Assistant, Lincoln Elementary School, up to 29 hours per week, effective February 22, 2021 (temporary-Lambert).
- MyKenzi Pemble, Program Assistant, Macomb Senior High School, up to 29 hours per week, effective February 9, 2021. (Douglas)

**Co-Curricular:**

**Employment:**
- Ronel Engnell, New Teacher Mentor, Lincoln Elementary School, effective 2nd semester, school year 2020-2021 (E. Williams).
- Matthew Lawver, Assistant Baseball Coach, Macomb Senior High School, Level 6, effective 2020-2021 season.
- Don Luper, Assistant Girls Basketball Coach (Fr), Macomb Senior High School, Level 3, effective 2020-2021 season.

Members voting “yes”: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson, and La Prad. Members voting “no”: none. Motion carried.

Member Torrance moved, and member Gray seconded, to approve the release of closed meeting minutes from meetings held: September 21 and November 16, 2020, and to continue to hold closed meeting minutes from: June 15, July 20, August 17, and October 19, 2020. Members voting “yes”: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson, and La Prad. Members voting “no”: none. Motion carried.

Member Torrance moved, and member Kapale seconded, to approve the continued hold on audio recordings of closed meetings held: January 28, February 25, March 18, April 15, May 20, June 17, and July 15, 2019. Members voting “yes”: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson, and La Prad. Members voting “no”: none. Motion carried.

Member Gray moved, and member La Prad seconded, to declare as surplus for sale by sealed bid one (1) Chevrolet Blazer with one (1) 6 ft. Meyer snowplow attached. Members voting “yes”: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson, and La Prad. Members voting “no”: none. Motion carried.
Member La Prad moved, and member Kapale seconded, to approve a resolution temporarily transferring the powers of the Board to the Superintendent. Members voting “yes”: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson, and La Prad. Members voting “no”: none. Motion carried.

Member Gray moved, and member Adams seconded, to approve a resolution providing for the issue of General Obligation School Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2021, of the District for the purpose of financing school facility improvements, providing for the pledge of certain revenues and the levy of a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the principal and interest on said bonds and authorizing the sale of said bonds to the purchaser thereof. Members voting “yes”: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson, and La Prad. Members voting “no”: none. Motion carried.

At 8:13 p.m., member Adams moved, and member Torrance seconded, to hold a closed meeting for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), collective negotiating matters, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2), the purchase or lease of real property, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5), student discipline, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9), and pending or imminent litigation, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11). Members voting “yes”: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson, and La Prad. Members voting “no”: none. Motion carried.

The Board returned to open session at 9:51 p.m.

Member Thompson moved, and member La Prad seconded, to issue a Notice to Remedy Resolution for a tenured teacher. Members voting “yes”: Kapale, Gray, Adams, Torrance, Myers, Thompson, and La Prad. Members voting “no”: none. Motion carried.

At 9:53 p.m., member Adams moved, and member Kapale seconded, to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote.