

OCUSD #220
BOARD MINUTES
February 22, 2022
Regular Board Meeting

1. Meeting called to order by Wills at 6:00 p.m.
 2. Roll call. Present were Wills, Griffin, Baker, Buck, Guzman, Duke, and Nesemeier.
 3. Motion by Buck, second by Griffin to go into closed session.
Voice vote. 6-0. Motion carried.
 4. Closed session began at 6:01 p.m.
 5. Closed session adjourned at 6:20 p.m.
 6. Motion by Guzman, Second by Griffin to recess into Public Hearing.
Voice vote. 6-0. Motion carried.
 7. Public Hearing began at 6:32 p.m.
 8. Public Hearing adjourned at 7:51 p.m.
 9. Public Comment:
 - a. Dawson Berg, DLR Student, shared his personal experience around bullying, the negative impact it has had on him, and wanting the district to change the way it handles situations surrounding bullying as well as how students and staff treat people with different disabilities.
 - b. Dave Berg stated he is again speaking at a meeting regarding his son experiencing bullying.
 - c. Carrie Berg shared her frustration regarding the lack of progress in the District with regards to bullying.
 - d. Rob Urish shared his experience as Kable CEO and its demise and a Board Member on the Mt. Morris School district and its closure. He encouraged the Board to engage with the community to improve academic achievement.
 - e. Aaron Mudge shared his displeasure with how public comment is recorded in the Board minutes.
 10. Baker requested recessing to discuss some of the information that had been shared during the Public Hearing regarding the interpretation of the law. Dr. Mahoney explained that a discussion could not take place outside of open session.
 - a. Baker stated that she did not interrupt the law to mean that voting on the recommendation could not happen on the same night as the third meeting. She feels that the board has followed the law. She is grateful to the community members and that they have been fabulous at doing their research and bringing information forward.
 11. Motion by Nesemeier, second by Baker to delay the vote and consult a lawyer before voting.
 - a. Wills states that the district's legal team has reviewed the process that the board has used has verified that all legal procedures have been followed. Nesemeier shares that she would like to see that evidence in writing versus hearing it second hand.
 - b. Baker asked Bob Hansen for his opinion of the law stating that a vote could not happen on the same night as a meeting. Mr. Hansen stated that he was not stating that the Board had not been following the law or that a vote could not happen during the open meeting but he feels as though another meeting to discuss the evidence presented and allow sufficient time to consider the information is needed.
- Roll Call Vote. 1-5. Motion lost.
12. Motion by Nesemeier, Second by Guzman to rescind the Aug. 16, 2021 DLR closure vote.
Roll call vote. 6-0. Motion carried.

Motion by Guzman, second by Duke to approve the closure of DLR Jr High School at the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

- a. Baker shared that there has been a lot of collaboration from June 2021 to the present between the school board members. She is relieved that the board decided to delay the vote, then that the law changed. Both allowed for more research, more meetings with the community, more data being presented, and more consideration. She commends the Mt. Morris Citizen Advisory Committee for their research, input, and questions. She outlined the steps the board has taken and the data that they have reviewed over the past several months and emphasized that emotions, time, and effort were put in by all board members.
- b. Guzman shared a letter that he sent to the board regarding his thoughts and ideas regarding the closure. He also thanks Molly for outlining the process for the public viewers. He states that he does understand the benefits of both waiting as well as moving on the recommendation now. He also stated that while he is concerned about his children's experience, it is the parents' responsibility to teach their children to have a positive impact on those around them.
- c. Buck expressed to everyone that he has heard every word that has been said through the course of the closure process. He has read every email, text, and listened to every phone call. That in addition to the communications sent by community members who do not want DLR closed, there have been many community members who have contacted him in favor of the closure of DLR. This has been an impossible situation, but he reiterates that he has listened.
- d. Nesemeier stated that no matter what happens, the most important things to remember are that a building does matter, the environment does matter. We learned the importance of that during COVID shutdowns and Education matters.
- e. Mary Jo stated that she too heard every statement and considered every option being given.
- f. Wills commended the board on their synopsis to the public. He shared that he has also received many texts, emails, and calls both from community members for and against the closure of DLR. He acknowledges that a decision, either way, could be a wrong one, but that in the past, not making difficult decisions has led to catastrophic consequences for the district. He emphasized his decision is based on ensuring his children are afforded the same educational experience he had as an Oregon student.

Roll Call Vote. 4-2. Motion carried.

13. Motion by Guzman, second by Buck to approve the following employment motions:

Resignations:

- a. Mackenzie Skoumal as 8th Grade volleyball Coach
- b. Allison Albrecht as Assistant Volleyball Coach
- c. Nate Green as Head Boys' Basketball Coach
- d. Charlie Perrine as Custodian
- e. Tara Rogers as OES Instructional Aide

Employments:

- f. Gabe Poser as JH Track Coach
- g. Charlie Perrine as Building and Grounds
- h. Travis Ebens as a Part-time Custodian
- i. Courtney Barcai as OES Recess Aide
- j. Sharon Lauer as Transportation Secretary
- k. Sarah Messenger as 2022-2023 OES Special Education Teacher

Leave of Absence:

- a. Jill Nordman medical leave of absence approximately 6-8 weeks beginning February 17, 2022

Retirement:

- a. Suzanne Rypkema at the end of the 21-22 school year

Roll call vote. 6-0. Motion carried.

14. Motion by Buck, second by Guzman to expel student A through the end of the 2024 school year, but hold the expulsion in abeyance with the successful completion of an alternative program:

Roll Call Vote. 6-0. Motion carried.

15. The School Board Members read aloud the affirmation followed by Dr. Wills who read aloud the district mission statement "Educate students to be to be lifelong learners who are productive, responsible citizens."

16. Administrator Reports:

- a. Kelli Virgil reports on the February 18, 2022 Teacher Institute. The district combined all grades PreK-12 in specific subject areas to have educational dialogue regarding curriculums throughout each grade.
 - i. Baker asked what fundraiser monies raised are being used for at the building. Mrs. Virgil explained that because the students raise the money, they use them for resources, activities, and rewards for the students.
 - ii. Baker asked if SEL classes are still happening within the school. Mrs. Virgil stated that the School Counselor does SEL classes for Kindergarten through 3rd grade and the School Social Worker does SEL for 4th through 6th grade. Dr. Mahoney spoke regarding our SEL program and focusing on how to measure the effectiveness of the program. He and Shannon Cremeens are meeting to be proactive with changing this.
- b. Kip Crandall shared that in his SIP outline, the academic portion not only highlighted how students did in the fall, but it has also been a great predictor for how students will do on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR). He stated that part of the dialog during the teacher institute was finding the gaps in academics and working towards filling them.
 - i. Baker asked how use of the Beyond Textbooks (BT) was going. Mr. Crandall stated that the teachers are following the pacing guide to ensure all standards are covered, but due to the pace it is challenging. Following the pacing guide has proved to be a benefit to students' learning as it is designed to assess and reteach each individual student on each standard.
 - ii. Baker asked what leadership roles would look like in moving to the High School as a consolidated Jr/Sr High. Mr. Crandall that there will still be opportunities for leadership roles, possibly more than usual. Dr. Mahoney stated that any current leadership opportunities at DLR will not change for the 22-23 school year.
- c. Heidi Deininger shared in follow up to Baker's question on leadership roles that SAE has created a Jr High Ag Program and the Open Program at the high school is creating more leadership programs as well. She seconded Kelli and Kip's comments on the Teacher

Institute, stating that there was great discovery of learning gaps in writing and math and the teachers are now doing the work and have the resources to be more proactive in outcomes. She commended Ava Wight for making it to state for bowling and announced that Kim Radostits has received the Norwest Illinois Teacher of the Year. She also announced that the spring musical, Annie, will be March 10-13.

- i. Baker asked what Parking Tags monies are used for. Dr. Deininger stated that it is used for parking lot upkeep, striping and numbering of spaces, as well as to purchase the display tags for students' vehicles.
- ii. Baker inquired about the Leaders for Change club – is there a teacher advisory overseeing that? Dr. Deininger stated that she and Miss Cremeens are involved but it is very student-led. There are approximately 25 students involved from all grade levels and demographics.
- d. Dr. Mahoney shared the academic data from the 2021 Illinois Report. He stated that the 2021 data is the most current data available to assess our academic progress. He emphasized that the 2021 data is not where the staff or administration want it to be but the data showed the OCUSD in a far better position than it was in 2019. He emphasized that the staff and students have been working hard over the past two-plus years and wanted to ensure that the most recent results were shared with the Board.

17. Recognitions:

- a. Izzy Ruter – State Qualifier IHSA Girls Wrestling
- b. Lane Halverson – State Qualifier IHSA Boys Wrestling
- c. Seth Stevens – State Qualifier IHSA Boys Wrestling
- d. Kip Crandall – Inducted into the IL Wrestling Coaches and Officials Association

18. Motion by Buck, second by Duke to approve the consent agenda as presented. Dr. Mahoney shared information regarding some of the bills paid by the district this month.

Roll call vote. 6-0. Motion carried.

19. Motion by Nesemeier, second by Buck to approve the TRS Supplemental Savings Plan.

Roll call vote. 6-0. Motion carried.

20. Motion by Buck, second by Nesemeier to approve the Early Graduation Request.

Roll call vote. 6-0. Motion carried.

21. Motion by Nesemeier, second by Guzman to approve the Ogle County Health Department iHealth MOA.

Roll call vote. 6-0. Motion carried.

22. FOIA Requests:

- a. IRTA requesting records for the name and email address of any certified staff who are retiring this year. Requested January 18, 2022. Response sent January 20, 2022.
- b. Village of Mt. Morris requesting records for information from the OCUSD January 18, 2022 School Board Meeting. Requested January 19, 2022. Response sent January 19, 2022.
- c. SmartProcure requesting records for all current employee/staff contact information. Requested January 26, 2022. Response sent January 26, 2022.

23. New business: None

24. Old business: None

25. Other matters before the board: None

26. President's Prerogative: Dr. Wills thanked the teachers, administrators, and support staff for all of their work throughout the pandemic and for keeping the students safe. He thanked the board for all of their work and emotions put into the decision to close DLR Jr High. He stated that he maintains respect for each one of the members. He then thanked the committee, they did a great job presenting their evidence and fighting for the building.

Dr. Wills also expressed his thoughts on the many emails, calls, and texts that the board received from people name-calling, threatening, and personally attacking board members. Those types of attacks are unnecessary and do not further the dialog. He emphasized that not everyone is going to agree with the decision of the board. No matter what decision is made, there are always people that will be upset and will take the decision as a personal threat. He closed by stating "I know that the advisory committee will never support a decision to close DLR, but I am hopeful that you will still support our children if that decision is made because, in the end, we are all working for our children's success."

27. Motion by Nesemeier, second by Guzman to adjourn.

Voice vote. All voted aye. Motion carried.

28. Meeting ended at 9:31 p.m.

Board President – OCUSD #220

Board Secretary – OCUSD #220