

Webberville Community School's Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 21, 2006

This Regular Meeting of the Webberville Board of Education was called to order by President Clifford Simmons in the Spartan Center Community Room on Monday, August 21st, 2006, at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Clifford H. Simmons II, Teri Chamberlain, Caron Guidroz, Kristine Brenner, Kathe Westbrook (arrived at 7:20 pm) and Mark Miller

Absent: Patricia Shanabrook

Also Present: Dr. William C. Skilling, Superintendent

Mr. Simmons addressed the board and the crowd before the start of the board meeting.

Before the meeting starts I have a few things to say to set the tone for the meeting and the coming school year. We are going to have a great year this year!

I have been a member of this community for over forty years and I have a perspective I would like to share tonight. I believe it is time to lay it out and call a spade a spade. I am very proud of the Webberville School District since I have been President. Now I am starting my fourth year. In that time we have seen the hiring of a new Superintendent, new principals in each building, a new Athletic Director, a new special ed coordinator, and a number of staff hiring's. We as a community have come together each year to first construct, then adopt, a Strategic Plan as a road map for this Board and these Administrators to use in making decisions relating to the running of our District. We have seen amazing buildings and facilities erected and facilitated. Each is something that our kids need and deserve. I think that is what this is really all about tonight. Affording our children the best education and facilities that we can, just as our parents and grand parents afforded us when we were children. Why should our children have to settle?

It makes me angry to hear neighboring districts taunting our athletic teams when they arrive to compete because of a preconceived notion they may have. I dislike that sometimes our children can't be brought to the head of an academic placement line because of where they got their education. I want NO door closed to a graduate of Webberville High School. I want our children to be able to compete for the best jobs or compete for the best positions in the best schools in the United States of America. That is what drives this Board. Not settling anymore. Not settling for average standardized test scores, not settling for an adequate campus, not settling for athletic teams that show up and don't compete. I want our kids to do two things in every arena they participate in whether it be athletic, fine arts, or academic: #1 look like a million bucks, and #2 be ready to compete. Success will be achieved, and accolades will be won, if those two criteria are met.

There are some members of our community who have decided that they are against the direction our community school has taken. I disagree with them but am more than willing to listen, as I have for the past year, to constructive recommendations to better either the academic processes or how the school is run. If the complaints are either vindictive or personal in nature and serve no purpose other than to run someone out of town, don't bother bringing them here anymore.

I am proud of the job our Superintendent has done administering our district. Dr Skilling is a very bright and articulate man who has a passion for the education of our children. He is vested because the daily decision's he makes directly affects his children as much as they affect ours. Dr Skilling has spoken in Germany about education since he has been our Superintendent, in Arizona about education, and he is sought by Superintendents from around the state of Michigan, as a keynote speaker at nearly every Superintendent conference and a presenter at nearly every Board conference. And yet our community of roughly 1500 people is questioning whether he has the ability to administer our district of roughly 650 children. He is sought out for his expertise.

This Board will not tolerate or condone discrimination of any kind, especially religious discrimination. Our country was founded on religious freedom and if we cannot honor that here in Webberville, when our founding fathers could in 1776, then there is something wrong here. Our fathers and grandfathers fought for our freedom to live in America and pray how we choose. How dare we question that?

This Board stands firmly behind the leadership of the Webberville Community Schools and a personal criticism of its administrators is viewed as a criticism of us ourselves. We approve the vision, the strategic plan, and the direction of our schools. More work that any of you probably realize has gone into getting our district positioned where it is today. These facilities and the increased expectations of our students are not by accident. It has been planned and carried out with the future in mind. They are the combined work of many, many, people, some of which are in this room now. We should all be so proud of what we are doing here and be so positive.

I have never heard so many people outside our community praising the work that is being done here. They are praising our staff for tremendous awards that have been won, praising our athletic teams for playing with such heart and determination, and praising our choirs and dramatic productions for achievements that have never even been dreamed of within the walls of our schools. That is such amazing stuff!! Honestly, I am ready to move forward from today on and create a tone for the district that will allow our children to have the best years of their academic careers. I love Webberville and I am very proud of its community and its school.

Approval of Agenda:

Teri Chamberlain moved, Mark Miller seconded a motion to approve the Agenda of the Regular Board of Education Meeting being held Monday, August 21, 2006, as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Kristine Brenner moved, Teri Chamberlain seconded a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

Discussion Items:

New Math Textbooks 5-12 - Grant Melville, Math Department Chair & Brian Friddle

Mr. Melville and Mr. Friddle discussed the process of choosing the new math text and gave a demonstration of the text and CD that will come with the book. The new text will offer numerous web-based activities and practice tests for the students to use at home.

New Spanish 1 Textbooks– Brian Friddle

Mr. Friddle presented the new Spanish text that will be utilized this year for Spanish 1 students. The text is recommended by Spanish teacher, Katy Raphael. There is a strong focus on grammar with this new book.

Elementary and Secondary Writing Requirements – Brian Friddle & Suzi Slater

Ms. Slater presented the new elementary writing requirements for the curriculum. Mr. Friddle presented the new secondary writing requirements. The goal is to improve the writing abilities of the students by standardizing the writing curriculum K-12.

Music Media Class & Music Theatre Class – Christopher Card

Mr. Card gave a demonstration of the new Music Media – Digital AV Class that will be offered this fall. The class will incorporate a variety of technologies including recording, editing, composing, exporting with computers, video cameras, and editing software. 28 students per year can take the class due to the number of computers that will be available – 14 students per section. Grades 10th – 12th will be able to take this class.

Mr. Card gave a presentation regarding the new Music Theatre Class that will be offered this fall. The class will concentrate on the acting, singing and dancing skills of the students. The class will be offered to grades 9th -12th.

Konnech Software– Eugene Yu, Brian Friddle, Andrew Mason

Mr. Mason introduced the new Konnech software that the teachers will use for their websites. The software will make it easier for teachers to post their class information i.e. syllabus, lesson plan, homework to their websites for parents to view. Parents can receive emails, text messages, or phone calls regarding changes to the school schedule or other communication issues. The software will work with Pinnacle.

English 12 Class – Kathy Pierman, English Department Chair

Ms. Pierman gave a presentation on the new English 12 class for senior students. The class will give the students an opportunity to have a fourth year of English. The course will continue the study of reading, writing, listening, and speaking through use of effective communications strategies.

AG facilities Update – Dr. Skilling & Teri Chamberlain

Dr. Skilling gave an update regarding the AG barn and greenhouse project. Dr. Skilling and Ms. Chamberlain met with Mr. Culver regarding the driveway and parking lot for the building. Culver Excavating has begun work on site. Future bond work would include paving the parking lot. Dr. Skilling also went over the spreadsheet from Clark Construction that details the cost of the AG barn project and how the project went from \$153,544.00 to \$304,191.00. Ms. Chamberlain went over the work that has recently been completed within the greenhouse and barn i.e. electrical outlets and the weather station alarm. Ms. Chamberlain thanked Mark Miller for all his help with getting the project completed.

Reports:

Policy – Ms. Westbrook stated that the policy committee has not yet met. A meeting will be called once school is back in session. The committee will resume work on updating the policies from NEOLA.

Finance – Ms. Brenner stated that they have started the audit this week. The athletic fund appears to be sufficiently below normal at an \$11,000 shortfall. This appears to be related to the fall sports. The audited report should be available for the October board meeting.

Building and Grounds – Ms. Chamberlain will be scheduling a meeting before the next board meeting.

Personnel – No report

Legislation – Ms. Westbrook stated that the NSBA is refocusing their energies to reach out to congress to fund NCLB. All energies are focused on school funding issues.

ISOA – Ms. Brenner stated that ISOA will have their first meeting in September.

Superintendent – Dr. Skilling highlighted the following items that are on the agenda for approval: teachers posting lesson plans to the website which will include the state standards that they are teaching to and help links. In addition, teachers will post the class syllabus to the website so that parents know what and when students are learning particular subjects. Maintenance update – we have been able to save money (15%) with our custodial supplies this year by utilizing the competitive bidding process. Student enrollment today is around 660 and may hit 675 by the start of school. We are seeing an increase in our school of choice enrollments. Dr. Skilling cited a study that showed that the performing arts were the most important element in predicting successful leaders.

Communications and Petitions:

Tony Choszczyk – Asked who authored the study Dr. Skilling just referred to. Dr. Skilling stated that it was a group of researchers.

Tony Choszczyk – Asked for the name of the person who wrote it? Dr. Skilling said it was not an individual researcher; it was a group of researchers who did the study over a period of 27 years. He said he could not remember their names.

Tony Choszczyk – Asked where to find the study?

Dr. Skilling stated that he could find the name of the study in an article he wrote for The American School Board Journal in its October 2003 issue. The study is referenced in the article. He said to do a search on the web and find it.

Julie McKenzie – Asked what the enrollment was last year.

Dr. Skilling stated that it was around 650 students.

Raynie Bohlmann – Asked how many kids have left the district since last year.

Mr. Friddle stated that 4 students from the MS-HS have left. Ms. Slater stated that around 5 students have left the elementary school. It was noted that the main reason for students leaving is due to families moving out of the district. Ms. Slater said that one family that moved has asked us to not send their student records. They wanted to school of choice their students back to Webberville.

Action Items:

Ms. Westbrook moved, Ms. Guidroz seconded a motion to approve the 2006-07 general fund, sinking fund and debt retirement fund tax levy as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Chamberlain moved, Ms. Guidroz seconded a motion to approve the 2006 refunding bonds resolution as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Brenner moved, Ms. Chamberlain seconded a motion to approve the secondary teacher syllabus as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Chamberlain moved, Ms. Brenner seconded a motion to approve the teacher website requirements as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Westbrook moved, Ms. Guidroz seconded a motion to approve the elementary and secondary writing requirements as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Brenner moved, Ms. Guidroz seconded a motion to approve the music media class as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Guidroz moved, Ms. Chamberlain seconded a motion to approve the music theatre class as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Guidroz moved, Mr. Miller seconded a motion to approve the job description for the department heads/teacher leaders as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Brenner moved, Mr. Miller seconded a motion to appoint Mr. Simmons as the voting delegate and Ms. Chamberlain as the alternate for the 2006 MASB Delegate Assembly. Motion passed 6-0.

Question or Comments from the Audience:

Charlie Stringham – Mr. Stringham recalled the technology that was available to him when he was in school in 1945. For example the blackboard and chalk in the classroom and the radio at home. He stated that he was at the board meeting tonight because he has some concerns. Mr. Stringham stated that at the last bond vote, the district showed overwhelming support for the bond with the track, bleachers, Spartan Center etc. at 300 + yes, 150 no. The same was true for the sinking fund vote. The community wanted to give the students the best just like in other districts. Mr. Stringham stated that he stands behind the vision that the district has for our schools and for our students. He stated that he knew people were in the audience because they had concerns, but remember that everyone makes mistakes and is not perfect. But the only way is to work together as a school board, superintendent, and the community and cut out the dissention.

Julie McKenzie – The teasing and bullying policy needs to change because students are being forced out because the teasing and bullying is a problem that is not being addressed. Her daughter is going to be pulled out and forced to go to another school district because of the bullying. The policy needs to be addressed by the school and enforced.

Dr. Skilling stated that the school has no authority to act on the incident that happened over the summer. The district can also not tell other parents what is happening with another student and their discipline. In addition, the community needs to also hold kids accountable for discipline. The school district doesn't have the legal authority to do as much as they would like to do. Discipline issues that happen during the summer outside of school are not within the school district's authority. You need to contact the police.

Janeine Crandell – Why is the administrative assistant at the high school being laid off and will she be called back?

Dr. Skilling – No, not necessarily, at a community meeting last year, January 29, 2005, the community was asked to prioritize what was important to the district and how we could make financial cuts (if needed) that would not affect student programming or hurt students. We prioritized our cuts and where those cuts would come from in the future. The administration is taking up more responsibility due to the cuts. An administrative assistant was cut from the district administration office, an elementary library and computer aide was cut, and we cut playground aides all before we laid-off the secondary administrative assistant.

Janeine Crandell – Asked what it would take to get a call back from the administration. She is finding it difficult to get a call back when she leaves messages.

Dr. Skilling – Stated that the administration has made a commitment to communication. They will reply to messages within 24 hours. They will also change voicemail greetings and use email auto messages to let people know if they are out of office.

Debbie Feeney – Will the layoffs affect the special needs students?

Dr. Skilling – No it will not. Special need students' paraprofessionals are determined by an IEPC. IEPC will determine the additional support a special need student receives.

Teresa Michalski – Regarding the emphasis towards technology – what about the need for human contact? Don't these kids need human contact? What about without Ms. Farris there and students not having her there? How is that going to affect the kids?

Dr. Skilling – The technology is important in helping the kids with their productivity of learning. However, the technology will not take away from having contact with a teacher. The technology is there to help and engage the students. The layoffs are being done so that they aren't affecting kids first and foremost. The district has to make cuts due to the budget.

Chris Eaton – Why was a maintenance supervisor hired when parapro's and Tammy Farris were let go? The maintenance supervisor is not a student focused position.

Dr. Skilling – The Spartan Center addition meant that we needed another custodial position and the cost is only about \$5,000 more than a regular custodial position. We need to take care of the facility. The new position has already saved money for the district and allows the person to do forty hours of custodial work. The Spartan Center provides the students with new opportunities and allows us to end all practices no later than 7 p.m. The cuts that were made were due to budget constraints. The community needs to contact their representatives. The amount of increase revenue we receive is not enough to off-set the additional cost they pass on to us.

Jennifer Eberly – What about putting the names of the state representatives and senators on the school website so people would know who to contact?

Dr. Skilling said this was something the district could do.

Julia McCarty – There is community support for discipline as we had a community group that made suggestions for discipline. The community has support for the discipline, but not the way it was being handled by the school.

Janeine Crandell – This was a very stressful year for the community as things are getting dropped by the administration. Excellence needs to go both ways. It needs to be the standard for the parents, but also for the administration.

Dr. Skilling stated that we have tremendous accountability in place. Our website has information available to parents and to hold the administration accountable. We have not

arrived at the level of excellence that we have set for ourselves, but we have made progress. The groundwork is being laid so that we will have excellent test scores in the future. We are currently doing the work to make things better for the students in the future. When are people going to be concerned with the academics of the students? People are not here to complain about the academics and the test scores. We are laying the groundwork to improve the high school test scores. Everything is geared toward improving the academics – we are not excellent, but we are heading in that direction.

Alex Chase – If you are heading toward excellence, why did you let the best teachers go last year?

Dr. Skilling – Stated that he can't speak for Mr. Coe as to why he left because he shared one thing with him, and a different one with the community members. If we had the best teachers, then our high school test scores would not be the lowest in the county. The staff we have today is better than what we had three years ago. It will take time to get everyone there. Parents are still the number one factor in the success of their children. This is why we are implementing the communication technology that will help parents be more involved with their student's education. But teachers do make a difference as well.

Raynie Bohlmann – Regarding the recreation millage, it did not pass because the community is taxed out and can not support the vision for new fields etc. We need to support what we have right now before we go for more.

Pam Nack – It isn't about materialism, it's about what the kids are doing. It isn't about the things. The message is that the buildings are more important than the academics. I do not care if the athletes are dressed in rags as that isn't the point.

Raynie Bohlmann- If I wanted nice facilities and uniforms I would have moved to Okemos or Haslett. I chose to live in Webberville because of what it was. What do people think when they see "Webbertucky" in a PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Skilling – Stated that she was not there to hear the presentation and "Webbertucky" was taken out of context. A PowerPoint is an outline, not a complete essay. The term Webbertucky was used to show what the perception was of Webberville in the past, and how much that has changed now. The presentation was misrepresented and misinformation was given out to the community intentionally.

Candi Langenderfer – Is the high school going back to the seven period day schedule? What kind of support will be there for the students with the change?

Dr. Skilling – Yes they are going to a seven period day. We were not ready to teach in an eight block schedule. Kids take seven classes in the block schedule and also in the new schedule. Ms. Westbrook stated that the teachers will help students through the change.

Todd Benjamin – Why are we not offering any AG classes for Webberville kids?

Dr. Skilling – It is a regional position for the county. We don't have the resources to offer more AG classes right now. We have to grow the program for the county and there needs to be increased demand for the classes. We do want to expand the AG program, but there needs to be resources to do it while still meeting the state standards.

Chris Eaton – The AG program needs to be sold within the middle school and within the school district for it to be successful. Our students need to be encouraged to enter into the AG program. We need a botany or zoology class to support and feed this program. The greenhouse project was not done very well.

Dr. Skilling stated that there was a lot more to this project than anyone thought. The district should have just done the project and not relied only on volunteers because the scope of the project was too big. We were expecting too much of volunteers. I do not know how the Benjamin's and others were able to give as much time as they did. The volunteers did a great job of constructing the facilities. However, they did not have the equipment it would take to do the roof. It was not safe. The projects left to do were add-ons that were not a part of the original project. However, we do have the resources now to complete it. We can complete the additional requests by the end of the year but hopefully we can do it by October.

We are promoting the AG program and the kids have to sell it too. If kids like the program, they will sell it to other students. We know that we need to add programming, but that will come as the program grows.

Todd Benjamin – We are strangling the AG program because they can't enter it until their Junior or Senior year.

Mr. Friddle stated that it's a matter of enough time to fit in electives and the required classes that the kids need to have by their junior year.

Dr. Skilling stated that the state mandates make it hard because there is so much that the students have to take to meet the state standards. Our students have to take physical science, biology, and chemistry so they are prepared for the Merit Test. The AG classes cover some of the outcomes, but not all. Maybe we can integrate some of the science classes and switch the Ag teacher and other science teachers around to make this happen. We don't have the ability to expand programming right now.

Lance Young – The number of students in athletics have decreased not increased as stated.

Dr. Skilling stated that he was incorrect. If you check on the website within the strategic plan you will see that the numbers have increased. Girls basketball, track, we added freshman basketball, a cross country program, etc. Overall numbers are growing.

Teri Chase - What are we doing with the kids that aren't college bound since we don't have the industrial arts etc?

Dr. Skilling stated the future will be to add a technology education program and completely eliminate the industrial arts program so that the kids are employable in the twenty-first century. Our students need be proficient in critical, analytical, and creative thinking so they can be productive thinkers. They have to learn to create and invent their own work in order to be functionally employable. The process is not taught in industrial arts program. Therefore, we are not offering everything that we would like to be offering in the future, but we are providing the best programs possible given our limited resources. There is also the career center for those students who aren't college bound.

Sarah Crockett - Why do we not have enough funds for the AG program, but we have them for technology and the arts? Miss Crockett wanted Dr. Skilling's word that he supports the AG program.

Dr. Skilling stated that we receive a supply budget of \$27,000 annually from Ingham Intermediate and through federal funding for operating the regional AG program which services less than 20 students. Our secondary school and elementary school, which serves over 300 students each, only has \$9,000 in their supply budgets respectively. The AG program is the best funded program we have. The future is away from the industrial arts programs and more toward the technology education based programs. The industrial arts programs will not help

students to be functionally employable in this century. It is intentionally that we got rid of the program. We will be replacing it with a technology education program next year.

We have two different funds – the technology we purchased over the last few years came from the 2002 and 2004 bond funds. The lack of resources is coming from operational funds where the state is under funding schools. We are limited by how we can spend the funds. Dr. Skilling stated that any time that the AG program has needed anything, he has supported the program and followed through on any request that Ms. Benjamin has requested.

Dr. Skilling stated that with the exception of adding more AG classes, because we do not have the funding, he has supported every request Ms. Benjamin has made to him. He then asked Ms. Benjamin if this was a correct statement with the exception of the AG classes. Ms. Benjamin stated that she feels that she is not supported with the lack of classes that are being offered. Dr. Skilling repeated that he can not address the classes due to the budget. She stated that the money does not come from Webberville to support the AG program. Dr Skilling stated that he never said it did, he said he already stated that the money came from Ingham Intermediate and the federal government. Ms. Benjamin stated that Dr. Skilling froze her budget the first year. Dr. Skilling said he received a call from Ingham Intermediate saying it appeared that we were over spending on the AG budget and that he needed to freeze it until they can make certain whether we had any money left. He stated that he was not telling Ms. Benjamin it was her fault, but it did happen. He stated that they learned later that there was some money left. Again Dr. Skilling asked Ms. Benjamin has there been a time he had not supported her on one of her requests. Ms. Benjamin stated that she has been supported with her requests.

Closed Session:

Ms. Westbrook moved, Ms. Guidroz seconded a motion to move into closed session to discuss negotiations. Roll Call Vote: Simmons – Y, Chamberlain – Y, Brenner – Y, Guidroz – Y, Miller – Y, Westbrook – Y. Motion passed 6-0. The board moved into closed session at 11:06 p.m.

Ms. Westbrook moved, Mr. Miller seconded a motion to move back into open session. The board returned to open session at 11:57 p.m.

Questions or comments from the Board of Education:

None

Adjournment

Ms. Chamberlain moved, Ms. Brenner seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:58 p.m. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Teri L. Chamberlain, Secretary, Webberville Board of Education