

ENNIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
*******MONDAY FEBRUARY 1, 2016*******

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
FINAL AGENDA – ROOM 3
5:00 P.M.

PLEDGE

- I. VISITORS**
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- III. OLD BUSINESS**
 - A Eligibility Policy

**SCHOOL DISTRICT 52
ENNIS, MADISON COUNTY, MONTANA
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2016**

SPECIAL MEETING - 5:00 P.M.

John Scully	Chairman
Maria Lake	Vice-Chair
Craig George	Trustee
Chad Coffman	Trustee
Kris Inman	Trustee
Rich Borden	Principal
Brian Hilton	Principal
Jon Wrzesinski	Superintendent
Ginger Martello	District Clerk

VISITORS

Brenda Glines	Teacher
Marc Glines	Community Member
Travis Lohrenz	Community Member
Mellissa Newman	Teacher
Jenny Clark	Teacher
Betty Klein	Teacher
Brett Owens	Community Member
Leif Funston	Community Member
Nichole Bailey	Farm to Fork

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Scully informed the visitors the district has three trustee positions open and only one person has filed to date. He also explained, it will be important to educate community members on a proposal that will be put in front of the county commissioners in the near future, regarding a TEDD district at Big Sky lead by Kevin Germain. This growth area in Big Sky would not be available for tax levies up to forty years and would affect the school, hospital, fire and entire county. Chairman Scully attended a county commissioner meeting where Kevin Germain proposed having the county commissioners allow him to work with Dorsey Whitney, who represent the county. The Big Sky Chamber of Commerce would cover the cost. Chairman Scully opposed the proposal as it was a conflict of interest,

therefore, a decision was not made that day. Another meeting was held on Thursday where John Bishop, CEO Madison Valley Medical Center, opposed the same proposal. The school district has hired counsel to help prepare for this proposal. At this time, the county attorney doesn't have any background regarding TEDD districts and the county will need to seek help in this matter as it has huge tax implications for the entire county.

OLD BUSINESS

Eligibility Policy

Chairman Scully explained the eligibility policy was changed for this year by taking out the death penalty and added study hall. It has been discovered that the language in the policy for first semester is unclear. This fall the board added the three D rule and study hall available to all students, to be effective second semester. This policy still contained the same unclear language. The confusion is whether or not the quarter or semester grade is used at the end of semester one. Either way students are effected. There are three issues to clear up. First, does the semester or quarter grade count. Next, should the grades carry over to the next year and what happens if a student doesn't retake the course? No one contemplated these issues. The attorney did provide language for review.

Trustee Lake said both quarter and semester should be used and this would cover the loop hole.

Trustee George also wanted to define failing as a grade.

Trustee Coffman said his suggestion would gut the entire policy. He has looked at several policies from other schools. He recommended giving the first week as a grace period, if the second week they have an "F" they go to study table, by the end of the third week they would be ineligible until the grade becomes passing. This would handle track and golf seasons too. The teacher would need to have at least two grades per week and this would put responsibility on the students and teachers. He was concerned that students who have "F's" shouldn't be playing.

Superintendent Wrzesinski explained that at the end of the semester the grade starts over and everyone starts fresh.

Trustee Inman felt there were three alternatives. Stay with current policy, change to quarter or semester to make it stronger or go with Trustee Coffman's suggestion which is even stronger. We need to determine the goal of the policy, are we benefitting the students and making them upstanding adults?

Trustee George also did not agree with students who are failing still participate. If the quarter or cumulative grade was used, it would enhance the policy. Failing also needs to

be defined as an “F”. We are raising kids to participate in society.

Travis Lohrenz asked when the issue was discovered and why wasn't it addressed earlier? Why wasn't the policy checked before the grades?

Chairman Scully reminded the policy covers all extracurricular activities, not just sports. He said the confusion in the policy was discovered two weeks ago and they waited for grades to post.

Marc Glines asked to hear from the teachers to see their thoughts on the policy?

Mellissa Newman said she wants to see students involved and it isn't asking too much to pass a class. She is probably one of the tougher teachers, but if you do the work you will pass. She felt choosing quarter and semester was like comparing apples to oranges. The quarter is nine weeks and the semester adds quarter two and a semester assessment. It needs to be consistent.

Betty Klein said as a coach she wanted something that was enforceable and easily interpreted. This wasn't clear, and she wants the students passing.

Brenda Glines asked why the problem was with a quarter grade?

Chairman Scully explained the interpretation of “failing” could mean failing the course which is based on a semester grade.

Superintendent Wrzesinski said the only grade of record is the semester grade so it never entered his mind to look at second quarter. It is hard to tell someone they passed the class but are ineligible and it will be challenged. The first quarter is a grade in progress.

Brian Hilton felt there needed to be clarity in the policy and looking at quarter and semester for the remainder of this year would work. He didn't want to see us break down the whole policy this semester, which can be done for next year.

Rich Borden agreed we need something that works right now. It is hard to tell someone if they pass the semester they aren't eligible. A lot of students don't have support at home and extracurricular are what keep them at school. We don't want to lose them because we are forcing penalties. We need compassion and balance.

Leif Funston said education is important and he understands kids have problems and are saved by participating. What are the standards to graduate? He said it isn't fair if they play all semester and all of a sudden are not eligible. This is also not fair to the coaches. Kids need to be accountable and not try to cram so they can pass. They also need grades from teachers so they can bring up their score.

Brett Owens asked if this was the first time there was an issue?

Chairman Scully said the policy was rewritten last spring and this fall the three "D" rule was added. The issue is the wording "failing" the class. This has been interpreted as failing the semester and wasn't discovered until the semester.

Discussions continued about using a grade point average, only calculating core classes, parent notification, carrying over the penalty to the next year, clearing up the board's interpretation of participation and making a policy that was best for the district while still giving the student an incentive to be at school.

The board recessed at 6:10 p.m. and reconvened at 6:16 p.m.

Trustee George made a motion to add parent notification by administration to the policy. Trustee Inman seconded the motion. All members present were in approval. Trustee George also proposed looking at the policy paragraph by paragraph. The first two paragraphs were fine. Trustee George made a motion in paragraph if a student has attended study hall for three consecutive weeks and they have not rectified their grade deficiencies, they will be ineligible to participate until the grade is not longer an "F" or the three D's have been reduced to two or less. Trustee Coffman seconded the motion. Discussion included that once a student was no longer ineligible the process would start again, grade check would be each Monday and what is the penalty if they don't show up for study hall. Chairman Scully called for a vote. Trustee George, Trustee Coffman, Trustee Inman and Trustee Lake were in favor. Chairman Scully was opposed. The motion passed.

Discussion about carrying the grade to the next year took place. Students can change and grow over the summer and they should get to start fresh. Trustee George made a motion not to carry grades over to the next year. Trustee Lake seconded the motion. All trustees present were in approval.

Paragraph four would not be needed as eligibility was already addressed. Superintendent Wrzesinski said there were a couple of issues. Enforcing the policy with sports was fine but there were other clubs involved and some raise money to participate. Another concern is a student could be eligible to participate at the end of a grading period if they are in within the three-week study table requirement. He recommended staying with the recommendation from the attorney and rewrite the policy next year. Mr. Borden said this would also be a tracking nightmare with each student. Trustee George made a motion to rescind his motion in paragraph three regarding study table. Trustee Lake seconded the motion. All members present were in approval.

The board discussed wording for the grading period and trying to make it clear for the remainder of this year. Trustee Lake made a motion to change the language to read "A student with an "F" and/or receiving three D's on any quarter or semester grade will be ineligible for a period of two weeks". Trustee Inman seconded the motion. Mr. Funston was concerned we were back to the beginning and if a student passed the semester and was ineligible we were opening the district to litigation. Mr. Hilton felt this was clear and would get us through this year. The policy will not be retroactive and will be used from second semester forward. Trustee Coffman said we have an obligation to give the students an education and not an obligation to play ball. If they want to play, they will sign or get an attorney. Chairman Scully called for a vote. Trustee George, Trustee Lake, Trustee Inman and Trustee Coffman were in approval. Chairman Scully was opposed. The motion passed.

As there was no other business the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

ATTEST


Ginger Martello, District Clerk


John Scully, Chairman

3-9-16
Date Approved