

March 22, 2021

Work Session

The Schaller-Crestland Board of Education, along with the Galva-Holstein Board, met for a joint work session on March 22, 2021 in the commons area of the Galva-Holstein school in Galva, IA. The following board members were present: Christy Horan, Alan Movall, Tim DeLance, and Mike Schmitt. Others present were: Supt. Wiebers, Brd. Sec'y Wandrey, Principal Sussman and Jane Schomaker.

Call to order at 7:01 by President Christy Horan.

Motion by DeLance, second by Movall to approve the agenda as posted. Motion carried 5-0.

The session started with discussion on the wage set for the education aides. Supt. Wiebers expressed that the wage for the aides is set so low that we are finding it increasingly difficult to hire new ones. Currently the average pay for aides is \$13.24. Most starting anywhere between \$9.50 an hour to \$15. If the district would increase the wage of the aides by even a \$1 an hour that would be a district cost of around \$1,400 per aide per year. Supt. Wiebers proposed a tiered wage for aides. Allowing them to make a little more if they have a paraprofessional certification and depending on the level of the student. Some students don't need as much assistance as others require. Supt. Wiebers also stressed that we have to be competitive with the area in order to attract quality staff. Both district board's agreed that the special education aides need to be compensated more based off of the work they are doing. Increasing the wage could also cut down on the constant turn over. The boards wanted Supt. Wiebers to look at the current educational aide's wage per hour and see where we are currently at with the expense.

The boards agreed that the last 11 years of sharing have been extremely beneficial for both districts. The districts are both more financially sound than they were 11 years ago. With operational sharing due to expire in 2023, the Galva-Holstein board wanted to know what the 5-year plan or goals were for Schaller-Crestland, when should the districts look at consolidation? Tim DeLance agreed that both boards have come a long way in 11 years and feels that the boards work very well together. He also felt that even though things are working very well right now it's important to keep a watchful eye on the future, however keeping things running the way they are seems like the right thing to do. Alan Movall also agreed that both boards have done a great job these last 11 years. However, he questioned how much time should both the boards really spend on looking at consolidation if the states give the districts plenty of time to make that decision. So he felt when if that time should come, both districts would have plenty of time to plan and make that choice. Christy Horan also agreed that if something drastic would happen she is confident the boards would come together as one rather than stay apart. Galva-Holstein's board member Dave Kistenmacher agreed that as long as operational sharing was in place and both districts are financially sound then we should stay as we are. If things would change and finances turn red then we would need to look at consolidation.

Galva-Holstein board member Jamie Whitmer brought to discussion on how we as a whole district can make our schools more competitive for students to attend. Stating we are economically sounds, but are we efficient? How can we pay our staff adequately and create a school that students want to attend? Schaller-Crestland board member, Alan Movall questioned what things can be done at the middle school to better prepare students for high school. Can we offer more exploratory studies, like industrial tech?

Supt. Wiebers suggested utilizing the communities to help bring the skills into the school. GH's Kistenmacher asked Supt Wiebers if we are ready for 1 to 1 in technology? Supt. Wiebers said that the school is ready, students are ready, but teachers are not. A true 1 to 1 would mean that students would be issued a chromebook and that instruction would be based using that chromebook rather than instruction out of a textbook. At this point, Principal Sussman stated that there are enough chromebooks for students to be 1 to 1 but they would essentially be digital typewriters. Teachers are not quite ready to do instruction as 1 to 1. It was unanimous that both boards wanted this to be a priority for next year. Supt. Wiebers stated that he would get with both leadership teams to make goals on how to make this happen.

Next topic of discussion was the sharing agreement. It was expressed by GH's President Jamie Whitmer that with the new gym due for completion in August 2021, they would like to see all the high school gym athletics be held in Holstein. This caused much discussion between the boards on how to still utilize the gym in Schaller. It was proposed by SC's President Christy Horan to possibly move some of the middle school gym athletics to Schaller when feasible. This would allow for more spectator seating. SC's Movall suggested if we moved the current athletics, volleyball and a small amount of basketball, in phases that would make the best sense. With not fully knowing the completion date of the new gym, it wouldn't make sense to schedule something in it. With not being able to find a compromise, the SC board asked to have a work session within their board to discuss further.

With nothing further to discuss, President Horan adjourned the meeting at 9:17 pm.