

Saranac Community Schools
Board of Education
Meeting #20

The Workshop meeting of the Saranac Community Schools Board of Education was held on Thursday, May 1, 2014 in the Library, Saranac Jr/Sr High School, 150 Pleasant Street, Saranac, MI.

Board President, Steve LaWarre called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Coulson, Denny, Doll, Hawkins, Lauer, LaWarre and Tutak-Hill.

Chris Coulson led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADDITIONS & DELETIONS: Superintendent Geiger would like to delete from the agenda, Presentation Items: Preliminary 2014-2015 Budget, and add Preliminary Staff Projections.

COMMENTS FROM GUESTS: None

STUDENT REPORT: Brendan Klynstra from Student Council reported they recently held their class elections. Next week is staff appreciation week. Students will have an opportunity to show their appreciation for their teachers. June 6 is the “Last Chance Dance”, and they have begun discussing Homecoming plans for next fall.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE: Elementary Co-Principal, Connie Hamilton, reported the students met their goal for AR points in March is Reading Month. Teachers, Teri Brunette, Mike Catrell, Sarah Gallagher and Maureen Jorgensen trained staff on their Professional Development Day on the use of “Thinking Maps” to teach narrative writing. Parent, Tanja Greenfield also attended the training to learn more about thinking maps as part of our school improvement strategy. This week our VIP day will be 3rd graders. The first Beginnergarten program began. Students will attend class once a week for four weeks to help familiarize themselves with school to get ready for Kindergarten next fall. Congratulations to the PAC award nominees: Administrators, Beth Simpson and Jason Smith; Teachers, Carmen Brown, Erica Darragh, Roxie Gullikson and Bridget Harder; Para educators, Jamie Girvin and Caroline Dibaba and student, Allison Hamilton.

Jr/Sr High Co-Principal, Josh Leader reported they have completed the ACT Aspire testing. Band Director, Matt Stauffer, did an excellent job with Club 2014. Prom is this weekend at the Grand Volute in Lowell. Mr. Leader thanked teacher, Phyllis Plumley and her Prom Committee for their work preparing for this event. They had seven CMAC Senior Scholar Athletes who received awards; they were Sadie Guernsey, Briley Harder, Ali Beckhorn, Greg Shaffer, Megan Wolters, Kristi Mileski and Kendall Seiler.

Jr/Sr High Co-Principal, Beth Simpson reported they held their last PRIDE Assembly of the year. The school improvement teams have been working very hard.

INSTRUCTIONAL HIGHLIGHT: Elementary teacher, Tara Rasmus presented how she has implemented a formative assessment strategy in her 3rd grade classroom called “My Favorite No.” She poses math problems to her students. She gives them about 5 minutes and then quickly collects their written responses and sorts them into yes/no or right/wrong answers. Mrs. Rasmus picks her favorite "no" or wrong answer. She then

walks the class through identifying the good thinking in the response, but more importantly, unteaches misconceptions or common math errors.

BOARDBOOK REVIEW: Technology Director, John Mileswki was here to answer any questions regarding the use of boardbook.

TELEPHONE SERVICE REVIEW: Technology Director, John Mileswki reported our current phone system is a Tadiran System from approximately 2003. Mr. Mileswki stated, “We have maintenance support costs by contract with ITI annually. The last bill was just under \$8,000, and it has been increasing by about \$2,000 each year over the last three years. The Tadiran Coral Flexicom 400, should it have a failure, is going to require significant searching for parts to bring the system back up. Replacement of the phone system has been at the top of my list of projects because of that possible downtime involved in seeking parts.”

“Initially, a VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) solution was the only consideration. The setup would replace the existing system onsite and cost between \$50,000 - \$75,000 based on the features selected. This sort of expenditure is not an e-Rate reimbursable cost as it is hardware. The School Safety and Technology Millage funds could have been used. But with the failure of the vote, that option is not available.”

“A hosted VOIP solution puts the phone system off-site and uses a dedicated internet connection for the calls and services. This is akin to a home VOIP solution offered by Charter Communications and Comcast Cable. The vendor selected offers free handsets with a multi-year contract. This is part of their service, so there is no additional cost to do this part of the upgrade. The service is entirely e-Rate reimbursement eligible. So we are able to get away from a phone system that is aging and increasing in likelihood of failure, and use a solution that will have reduced costs and move the current maintenance costs into operational costs.”

“The district would also no longer use the CMC Telecom as the phone service vendor. We have had periodic challenges with their services ranging from not being able to place local calls or 911 calls at times too. The problems always seem to get resolved, but the fact that the problems arise to begin with is what prompted me to look at another service vendor. This solution blends both a replacement phone system & phone service provider. The original numbers used are below to show the costs.”

Encore's Annual Cost: \$13,185 after discount
Upfront fees: \$1318.50 after discount.
Total Year 1: \$14,503.50
Total 3 year contract cost: \$40,873.50
Annual Spend Currently LD and Maintenance: \$21,197.99
3 year spend on current LD and Maintenance: \$63,593.97
Year 1 Savings: \$6694.49
Total Savings over a 3 year contract: \$22,720.47

Mr. Mileswki concluded, “Overall, there are savings, but most important is that our main form of public communications has a renewed life.”

SCHOOL BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES: The Board has been reviewing the board operating procedures manual and will continue to review this document until it is completed and board approved.

SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE: Special Education Director, Beth Simpson, updated the board on the various services and programs that are offered through the special education department.

REVIEW STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY – 8453: Food Service Director, Carmen Smith, reported that this policy needs to be reviewed yearly. There are a few changes that need to be made to follow the State of Michigan food service guidelines. This will be brought back for another review before changes are approved.

AUDIT BID REVIEW: Jammie Sprank, Finance Director sent out to seven different firms and received three proposals for Audit Bid RFPs. The recommendation would be to continue services with Biggs, Hausserman, Thompson & Dickinson, P.C. This will be brought back for action at the May 15 meeting.

TEACHERS PARTIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE: Superintendent Geiger reported per the SEA collective Bargaining Agreement any tenured bargaining unit member (teacher) who was at one time a full-time employee and is currently less than full-time is considered to be on a partial leave of absence. An employee on a partial leave of absence is entitled to return to a comparable position for which he/she is certified and qualified, even if such a return necessitates displacement of a bargaining unit member. Those employees on a partial leave of absence must notify the Board of Education in writing by April 15th if they wish to return to full time employment for the following year or request a continued partial leave of absence.

We have notified both teachers, Tina Catrell and Tara Rasmus and have received their responses, for the 2014-2015 school year. This request can be handled in one of two ways.

1. Agree to the request as submitted. This will allow the teacher to continue to work half time but have the right to request to return to full time at the end of the year.
2. Deny the request. This will require the teacher to either return to full time employment next year or resign half of their position and become a half time teacher. This would only entitle them to half time employment in future years.

This will be brought back for action at an upcoming meeting.

Board member Dan Lauer had to leave the meeting for other commitments.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT UPDATE: Superintendent Geiger updated the Board on the current enrollment numbers and projected enrollment for next school year.

STAFFING PROJECTIONS: Superintendent Geiger went over the projected staffing considerations for the 2014-2015 school year. With the retirements, resignations and projections of kindergarten/young 5's numbers we will be moving staff around. We will also need to recall Sandra Kemperman, which will take care of our lay-off list.

RECALL OF CERTIFIED STAFF: Motion by Coulson, supported by Denny and unanimously approved that the Saranac Board of Education grant the Superintendent authority to recall Sandra Kemperman as needed through September 1, 2014 in accordance with new board policy.

COMMENTS FROM GUESTS: None

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT: Superintendent Geiger reported the appreciation dinner went very well. Next week is staff appreciation week and we will be passing out a healthy snack for staff.

BOARD REQUESTS/REPORTS: Board member Sarah Doll wondered if there was any upcoming professional development for staff regarding inappropriate staff conduct. Mr. Geiger reported there will be some training with all staff coming up.

Board President, Steve LaWarre reported there will be a Board Workshop on May 29 at 6 pm with MASB for the superintendent evaluation process.

Board member, Brent Denny reported there will be a driving simulator from the Sherriff's Department that will be here at the district the week before Memorial Day for students to review the dangers of driving and drinking.

COMMUNICATIONS: None

CLOSED SESSION FOR NEGOTIATIONS PLANNING: Motion by Denny, supported by Tutak-Hill that the Saranac Board of Education go into closed session at 9:18 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations planning returning to open session at 9:40 p.m. Roll call vote was taken: Voting Yes: Coulson, Denny, Doll, Hawkins, LaWarre and Tutak-Hill. Motion Carried.

OTHER: Superintendent Geiger informed the board that they had to put another teacher on non-disciplinary administrative leave today.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, and no objection, the meeting adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roy Hawkins
Secretary