

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING APRIL 23, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District met in a special session by Zoom Meeting, pursuant to law on April 23, 2020.

Members Present: President, Nicole Bunch; Vice President, Ralph DiCesare, Dawn Reeves, and Jen Held in together with Superintendent, Tom Wood, Secondary Principal, Josh Moser; Elementary Principal, Beth Happe; and Business Manager, Jill Gavin.

Absent: Jeff Bowlin

I. Welcome – Board President

Mrs. Bunch called meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. Public Comments – none

Supt. Wood

III. New Business

A. COVID19 Update

Supt. Wood

Mr. Wood provided a COVID19 update with the Board. Since we met last, the Governor announced to completely close schools for the remaining of the school year. All employees have been asked to work from home. Jill, Karen, and I are in our offices intermittently. Josh and Beth are also in the office at various times, especially this week and next as they organize materials pick-up for students and families for the elementary and secondary. Lorretta and Cheryl are coming in during the grab-and-go pick-up and pantry hour. We have several employees in high-risk health categories, so we are being careful about how employees access the building and adhering to strict cleaning procedures throughout.

Mr. Wood participates in Zoom meetings three days a week with central Iowa superintendents, AEA personnel, IASB, and School Administrators of Iowa. I am also on Zoom meetings with the DE two times a week that allows districts access to the most current guidance, recommendations, and information from the state. We have a detailed contingency plan to cover us in the event of a tornado, fire, and a myriad of other disasters but no plan to prepare for an entire shutdown of the community. Parents ask why virtual learning is not easier. We have not had any teacher training for this, infrastructure within the state is not up to speed, and individual families are all in unique situations. Elementary virtual training also looks different than secondary virtual training. Approximately 90% of public school districts, including MStM, opted for the voluntary model (VEEO). The Required Learning model was prohibitive to us and most other schools for a variety of reasons including infrastructure, equity considerations, and the inability to meet all federal and state legal requirements and assurances. We are also conscious of the ability and inability of parents to assist students in learning during this time. Under VEEO, participation by students is voluntary, and missed learning due to the closure will be addressed upon our return to school. Participation is voluntary, but we are collecting data on the number of students participating and the number of activities/assignments completed at the secondary level.

Ms. Happe updated the board on the participation of virtual training in the elementary. Out of 318 elementary students, 280 students are participating. We even have one classroom that has 100% participation. Parents response to virtual training have been very positive. Some families faced issues of no internet or a Chromebook. We have connected with those families to provide Chromebooks and have purchased hot spots that will be delivered to parents along with two months of services. The 2nd and 3rd grade teachers have been collaborating on a project to cross content areas of science and math and essential skills. The teachers have been doing a great job!

Mr. Moser updated the board on the participation of virtual training in the secondary. Only 29% of students are participating in virtual training. He does have one teacher with 80% student participation and one teacher with 0% participation. These teachers are still sending out materials and resources. Mr. Moser and teachers are contacting students and parents to make sure they are aware of the opportunities. There have been 160 assignments that have been turned in to help raise grades. Mrs. Bunch commented that there are probably more high school students working which would result in a lack of participation. Mrs. Bunch asked if there were any concerns regarding the selection of Valedictorian and Salutatorian. Mr. Moser stated that there was not an issue and if there had been an

issue, they had agreed to freeze class rank at the end of the first semester. Mr. Wood stated that we should see more participation from the secondary before grades are final.

Mr. Folkerts, Mr. Newbury, and Mrs. Dickinson have been reaching out to students along with special education teachers. Teachers are truly sad about closing school. We have received several emails from parents whose children are being served by our special education teachers and how well they have been doing. They have appreciated their help and thankful for what they are doing.

The governor floated the idea of an early start, but this is not a requirement. The August 23 date has been waived, but our teachers are under a negotiated 185-day contract. We cannot force teachers to start earlier unless we plan to let out earlier. Further guidance will be coming on this issue. Right now, we anticipate a summer school jumpstart for students to catch up on missed learning. This would be a combination of students who qualify based on educational criteria and those who choose to participate. Again, this is only an idea, as we are awaiting further guidance. There will be CARES Act money to pay teachers, but it will not be enough to bring back the entire staff for a sustained period. Right now, most schools are keeping their adopted calendar intact until we know more. Mrs. Bunch asked if we do not do an early start, will the teachers need to do some sort of review. Mr. Wood responded that yes, that our Return to Learn plan will explain how we will be making up for lost time, catch up, review and focus on core areas and ideas before they start the next grade level or the next course. At this point, schools are planning on sticking with a regular start date and supplement learning in the summer. Mrs. Bunch is concerned with a second outbreak. Mr. Wood explained that they are already talking about this for future PD learning for teachers to teach in a virtual environment.

The Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union and the Iowa High School Athletic Association have decided that an announcement will be made on summer sports June 1. Most independent leagues, including AAU, have canceled or suspended their schedules as well. Should any of those independent leagues change course and have their seasons, school districts have no authority over students' participation. Coaches and players are still barred from contact of any kind, including practices, weightlifting sessions, or other forms of interaction.

The regularly scheduled dates for both prom and graduations have been postponed. We likely will tentatively schedule these for July and hold them if we are allowed. If restrictions are lifted somewhat, we will plan a limited attendance graduation ceremony at the stadium to allow for social distancing. Prom will be dependent on what restrictions exist in July. Again, we are awaiting further guidance from IDPH and the governor's office. Many schools in central Iowa have just cancelled prom.

Assigning grades and scores are a little bit of a gray area, and our guidance from the DE is continually updated and changed. High school students will receive credit for work completed before the school closure. They also have opportunities to redo assignments, assessments, and additional work to better their grades. The DE has urged schools to be flexible with this, and we are heeding this advice. Elementary students will be promoted to the next grade level. Missed learning will be addressed in our required "Return to Learn" plan. Teacher professional development will focus on the best means of catching students up, teaching essential concepts and skills from this time, and addressing gaps in standards. This will likely be the focus of a summer school jumpstart program as well. We are awaiting more guidance from the DE.

We are currently operating on a small maintenance crew who are social distancing and wearing protective gear. Luckily, we have no major projects slated this summer. The regular deep clean, floors, and general summer maintenance will get underway when it is safe to do so. The regular summer cleaning is on hold until teachers have rooms cleaned out after the official end of the school year. Each time we have people in the building we are scheduling it carefully to avoid contact, too many at a time, and thorough disinfecting afterward. The facilities committee can meet remotely in May to review purchases, projects, and needs. Buses were a priority, and I believe we are on schedule with those orders.

We have far too many unknowns at this point to say anything definitive about what school will look like in the fall. However, there are several things we will be doing to prepare. Teacher professional development will continue in a virtual setting. Our focus will shift to strategies and capabilities to teach in a distance learning setting. Teachers will also receive professional development on curriculum compacting and strategies to address learning gaps caused by

school closures. We are awaiting some guidance from the DE and IDPH to determine plans for classroom set-up, social distancing procedures in school, and possible schedule changes.

B. Consider Approval to Ratify the Negotiated Agreement with the MSTM EA Supt. Wood
Mr. DiCesare motioned to approve a 1-year contract of a total package of 2.64% which is \$400 on the base and cleaned up Master Contract language regarding teacher coverages for the elementary for the 2020-2021 school year, seconded by Mrs. Reeves. Roll call: 4 ayes.

C. Discuss/Approve Classified Contracts Supt. Wood
Mr. DiCesare motioned to approve a 1-year contract for the Classified staff of 2.64% for the 2020-2021 school year, seconded by Mrs. Reeves. Roll call: 4 ayes.

D. Discuss/Approve Administration Contract Supt. Wood
Mrs. Reeves motioned to approve a 2-year contract for Mr. Moser and Ms. Happe and a 3-year contract for Mr. Wood of 2.64% for the 2020-2021 school year, seconded by Mrs. Held. Roll call: 4 ayes.

E. Discuss/Approve Resolution Pandemic Response and Emergency Suspension Supt. Wood
This Pandemic resolution will extend the already approved resolution through the end of the year. The previous one only went through April 30 per the governor's proclamation. It allows continued pay of all employees and suspension of policies that conflict with federal or state orders. Mrs. Reeves motioned to approve the extended Resolution Pandemic Response and Emergency Suspension, seconded by Mrs. Held. Roll call: 4 ayes.

F. Discuss/Approve Conflict Waiver Letter Supt. Wood
We are nearing an agreement with Norwalk schools to contract tech services in order to replace Don Millage next year. This waiver allows Ahlers & Cooney to represent both schools in creating the agreement contract for this service. The service we are working towards purchasing essentially duplicates the service we currently receive from Don Millage. It gives us access to Norwalk's team of techs and purchasing discounts by combining our orders with theirs on things like Chromebooks. We plan to have the sharing agreement for your approval at our regular May meeting. Mrs. Held motioned to approve the Conflict Waiver Letter between Ahlers & Cooney and Norwalk, seconded by Mr. DiCesare. Roll call: 4 ayes.

G. Discuss/Approve Personnel Resignations Supt. Wood
Mrs. Reeves motioned to approve the following personnel resignations: Jordan Bunting, 1st grade teacher; Matt Andrews, Special Ed teacher; Emily Watson, Special Ed Associate and Yearbook; Jessica Hart, Preschool Associate; Ashley Blaisdell, Special Ed Associate, seconded by Mr. DiCesare. Roll call: 4 ayes.

H. Discuss/Approve Personnel Recommendations Supt. Wood
Mr. DiCesare motioned to approve the following personnel recommendations: Kyle Flynn, 7-12 Social Studies; Jessica Hart, Elementary School Secretary, seconded by Mrs. Reeves. Roll call: 4 ayes.

I. Confirm – Next Meeting Dates Supt. Wood
The next regular board meeting will be held on May 11, 2020 at 4:00.

IV. Adjournment

Mrs. Reeves motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. DiCesare. Roll call: 4 ayes. Time: 4:47