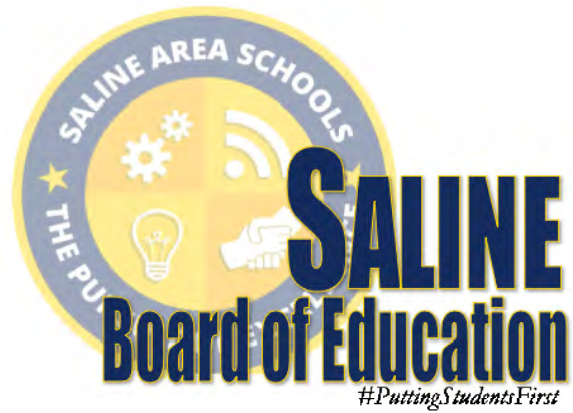


Board of Education Meeting

Liberty School Board Room

November 12, 2024 at 6:30 PM



MINUTES

Mission

We, the Saline Area Schools, will equip all students with the knowledge, technological proficiency, and personal skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly complex society. We expect that our students, staff, and the Saline Community will share in these responsibilities.

OPENING

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Education meeting of November 12th was called to order by President Michael McVey at 6:30 pm

Board Members Present: Tim Austin, Susan Estep, Brad Gerbe, Lauren Gold, Michael McVey, Jennifer Miller, and Jennifer Steben

Central Administration Present: Superintendent Laatsch, Assistant Superintendent's Owsley & Diglio, Executive Directors Davis, Martin and Voelker

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOGNITION

Introduction of Dr. Amina H. Allen

Recently hired as the Liberty, Saline Alternative HS Principal.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

STUDENTS

Cruz Hansen - Spoke regarding accountability of the Athletic Department, supports an independent review

Ayden Burton - Spoke regarding accountability of the Athletic Department, supports an independent review

Jack Bersuder - Spoke regarding accountability of the Athletic Department, supports an independent review

Issac Furlong - Spoke regarding accountability of the Athletic Department, supports an independent review

James Rush - Spoke regarding accountability of the Athletic Department, supports an independent review

Coleman Ross - Spoke regarding accountability of the Athletic Department, supports an independent review

Leah Mueller - Spoke in support of the football team and marching band and the impact the game forfeitures had on fundings since concession monies from home games were lost.

OTHER PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS

Larry Osterling, Saline Rotary - Spoke in appreciation of recent tribute to Paul Thibault and the excellent job of Ben Goodman in creating the video.

Amy Tesolin, Parent - Spoke regarding concerns to proposed changes to the DEI policy

Tiffany Alexander, Parent - Spoke regarding concerns to proposed changes to the DEI policy and conducting business in accordance with OMA. In support of the proposed SEAB curriculum.

Cory Belote, Parent - Spoke regarding concerns to proposed change to the DEI policy and in support of the proposed SEAB curriculum.

Shelby Reitmeier, Aunt, Saline Resident - Spoke regarding both the DEI initiatives in the district and the proposed SEAB curriculum.

Nicole Gibson, 5th Grade Teacher - Spoke regarding concerns about the proposed SEAB curriculum

Marcy Goyette, 5th Grade Teacher - Spoke regarding concerns about the proposed SEAB curriculum

Charlie Hirst, Parent - Thank you for the voice of the Marching Band. Spoke in support of the proposed SEAB curriculum.

Libby Williams, Parent - Spoke regarding the importance of district DEI initiatives.

5. **RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC COMMENT**

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| AGENDA |
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6. **REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION made by Trustee Austin, support Vice President Steben **to revise the agenda to add an Action Item (8) A. which reads ... to approve the Board of Education to conduct an independent 3rd party review of the athletic department.**

Ayes - Austin, Estep, Gerbe, Gold, Steben

Nayes - Miller, McVey

MOTION CARRIED 5-2

7. SCHEDULED REPORT

a. **Audit Report**

Presenter: Plante Moran, Jeff Higgins, Partner

The audit opinion is the auditor's expression of their opinion on the fairness and accuracy of the financial statements of the district. In this case, the auditor rendered a "clean opinion" which is the highest level of assurance that can be provided. The general fund balance sheet presents a snapshot of the district's assets, liabilities and fund balance as of June 30, 2024. The general fund revenue presents the district's revenue for the fiscal year 2024 and then the general fund expenditures were presented as well in comparison to the previous year. The statewide average fund balance is reported in November. This percentage has been around 10-15%. The MSBO recommends a 15% fund balance level. Saline's current fund balance is 23.9%. Due to the COVID-19 relief funding, Saline's fund balance exceeded the allowable amount. As a result, the district is required to submit a spend down plan to reduce the fund balance to an acceptable level.

b. **Hiring Process**

Presenter: Carol Baaki Diglio, Assistant Superintendent of HR

Assistant Superintendent Diglio presented about the district's hiring process. This involves many stages including the request to post, the actual job posting (on various platforms and job boards), application review, interviews, reference checks, job offer and then the onboarding process. The onboarding and retention are critical components of the district's staff process. Onboarding includes: orientation, training, mentorship, and check-ins. The district prioritizes communication throughout the hiring process with all stakeholders.

The district prioritizes retention by providing competitive compensation, opportunities for professional growth and fostering a positive work environment. The district places emphasis on continuous improvement through the collection of data, conducting surveys and then analyzing feedback which helps to inform decision making and identify areas for improvement to staffing and master scheduling processes.

Employee retention strategies include providing staff with easy access to information and resources through Staff Links and a "Whom to Ask" directory. In addition, group calendars have been created for each employee group providing a clear outline of tasks and responsibilities.

The education sector is facing a critical shortage not only in Michigan but nationwide and every position in education is now considered critical. The district is exploring ways to recruit teachers from non-traditional places and diversifying the hiring process. The district is also considering joining a consortium of schools to list job vacancies. In addition, the district has used alternative certification programs to attract candidates. These programs provide a pathway for individuals to become certified teachers while working in the district and in some cases have used emergency certification to fill vacant positions.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- A. **MOTION** made by Trustee Austin, support Vice President Steben **to approve the Board of Education to conduct an independent 3rd party review of the athletic department.**

Ayes - Austin, Estep, Steben, Gold

Nays - McVey, Miller, Gerbe

MOTION CARRIED 4-3

Key Discussion Point: this will not be an investigation but rather a review process of Athletic Department processes and procedures.

MOTION made by President McVey, support Trustee Gold **to direct the Board President to create an ad hoc committee to research the parameters for engaging in an independent third party to conduct a transparent review of the Athletic Department and present their findings by the next meeting of the BOE or as early in January as possible.**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- B. MOTION** made by Vice President Steben, support Trustee Gold **to approve the re-appointment of Lesley Hundley to the Saline District Library Board for a two-year term beginning December 1, 2024 as submitted by Superintendent Laatsch and recommended by Karrie Waarala, Library Director. Lesley Hundley currently serves on the SDL Board and her term expires November 30, 2024.**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- C. MOTION** made by Treasurer Gerbe, support Trustee Austin **to accept the Audit Report as submitted by Assistant Superintendent Miranda Owsley**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- D. MOTION** made by Trustee Austin, support Vice President Steben **to adopt the Annual Summer Tax Resolution as submitted by Assistant Superintendent Miranda Owsley.**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- E. MOTION** made by Treasurer Gerbe, support Trustee Gold **to approve Blue Energy Group in the amount of \$73,002 for tax consulting services related to IRS Investment Tax Credits (ITC) as part of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) as submitted by Assistant Superintendent Owsley.**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- F. MOTION** made by Treasurer Gerbe, support Trustee Estep **to approve the closed session minutes from the October 21st Special Board Meeting under section 8(1)(b)**

Ayes - 6 Austin, Estep, Gerbe, Gold, McVey, Miller
Abstain - 1 Steben (was not in attendance)

MOTION CARRIED 6-1

MOTION made by Trustee Austin, support Trustee Estep **to approve the closed session minutes from the October 22 Board Meeting under sections 8(1)(a) and 8(1)(h)**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- G. MOTION** made by Trustee Estep, support Secretary Miller **to adopt the Sex Education Curriculum (grades 4th thru 8th) as proposed by the SEAB in compliance with Michigan Law. (Option A)**

Ayes - 5 Estep, Gerbe, Gold, McVey, Miller

Nays - 2 Austin, Steben

MOTION CARRIED 5-2

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Board Finance Committee Meeting Updates**

Facilitator, Chair Brad Gerbe

The Board Finance Committee met this evening. We are pleased to report that the audit process has been completed and successful and, as we heard this evening, the district is in good financial standing. Thank you to Miranda Owsley and her staff for all their hard work. We also discussed student count. The district did budget for a loss of 110 students but after calculating the headcount and FTE it was determined that the actual loss would be 75 students. This is a positive difference of 35 students which translates to significant financial gain.

- B. Board Policy Committee Meeting Updates & Policy Discussions**

Facilitator, Chair Jenny Miller

1. Title IX Policy 2264 Nondiscrimination Policy

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex-based discrimination in educational institutions. It requires schools to provide equal opportunities for students of all genres and to have policies and procedures in place to address sex-based discrimination. This new policy pertains to sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, which occurs on or after August 1, 2024. Allegations of sex-based harassment that occur on or before July 31, 2024, shall be addressed pursuant to Policy 2266 which has already been adopted. There were 2 policy packets for consideration by the Policy Committee, one presented from Neola and one presented by Thrun. The Board Policy Committee is recommending the Thrun version because it is more comprehensive and aligns with the training that was provided to all administrators by Thrun Law Firm. The Thrun version also includes forms that are consistent with the training they provided and can be added to the website immediately. The district plans to make the grievance process and forms transparent on the website to ensure the public has access to the information they need to navigate the process. The policy will come back to the full board for an additional reading in December.

2. DEIAC Policy 9141 - Review of Proposed Modifications

In discussing the proposed modifications to this policy it was broken down into 2 parts to allow the DEIAC to move forward with seating new members. The first consideration is membership and the second consideration more addresses implementation and operationalizing the policy. The policy, with its recommended revisions was read. Some of the revisions include the following: Superintendent and/or their designee shall serve as co-chair, an additional co-chair shall be selected by the Superintendent and/or their designee with committee feedback, excluding BOE representatives, the co-chair shall be selected from the existing committee and at least one of the co-chairs shall be a parent of a child attending the school district, the application process shall be revised and decided upon by the superintendent and/or their designee, co-chair, one student representative and two additional volunteer committee members. BOE trustees may observe the application process but not deliberate or decide. The committee will not seat new members until the policy is finalized, but has begun the process of contacting potential new members. Change "recommendations" to "share & review insights". Reports to the Board should be made regularly with one of them being in-person at a Board Meeting. Also maintaining a practice of minutes/summary reports. This would be addressed in a change to Board Operating procedures. When reviewing changes to this policy, it's important to have consistency with other Board Advisory Committees such as SEAB and align the processes so that they are similar. With one policy meeting left in the year, the latest Neola updates will be reviewed and will also ask the district for an update on the flag inventory. Next steps will be that the policy committee will continue to review and revise this policy. Committee members are encouraged to bring concerns and questions to the next reading of the policy.

C. 25/26 BOE Meeting Calendar

Facilitator, President McVey

After minimal discussion, dates were agreed upon and this will be moved to the consent agenda of the December 10th Board meeting for approval. Noted that there will be 5 months with only 1 meeting.

10. ADMINISTRATION / BOARD UPDATES

Vice President Steben: Thank you for all the hard work of the FSAS and the success of the fall luncheon.

Trustee Austin: Thank you to the community for supporting the Special Education Millage.

Treasurer Gerbe: Happy Thanksgiving wishes to our staff and school community.

Trustee Gold: Thank you to our Veterans for their service and for participating in activities throughout the district with our students.

Trustee Estep: Thank you to SEAB and their recommendations. Very thankful for their work. Acknowledgement for both Transgender Awareness Week and November 20th Transgender Day of Remembrance.

11. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION made by Vice President Steben, support Secretary Miller **to authorize the Consent Agenda as printed:**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

- A. **Approval** of the Board of Education Meeting Minutes of October 22, 2024
- B. **Approval** of the Special Board of Education Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2024
- C. **Approval** of the Board Policy Committee Meeting of October 29, 2024
- D. **Approval of Payment** of the General Fund Accounts Payable of November 12, 2024, in the amount of \$3,160,439.34
- E. **Approval of Payment** of Bond Series III Accounts Payable of November 12, 2024, in the amount of \$205,434.90
- F. **Approval of Payment** of 2023 Bond Fund Series I Accounts Payable of November 12, 2024, in the amount of \$2,347,940.98
- G. **Receive and File** Finance and Human Resources Reports

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| CLOSING |
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12. **ITEMS SCHEDULED ON NEXT AGENDA**

State of the District End of Year Report

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

STUDENTS - None

OTHER PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS

Scott Lemm, Resident & Parent: Thank you to Carol Diglio for her presentation. Spoke in regards to the functioning of the Board

Tiffanie Alexander, Parent: Spoke in regards to OMA / DEIAC Policy / Athletic Dept independent review

14. **NEXT MEETING**

The next regular Board of Education Meeting will be held on December 12, 2023, at 6:30 PM.

15. **CLOSED SESSION**

MOTION made by Trustee Austin, support Secretary Miller **to enter Closed Session of the Board of Education at 11:35 PM, with the intent to re-enter Open Session at 11:59 PM, for the purpose of Disciplinary Action against a School Employee (8a) and Complaints against a**

~~School Employee (8a) and Collective Bargaining (8e) of the open Meetings Act. Under both Sections 8(a) and 8(e) A simple majority vote is sufficient to enter into a closed session.~~

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

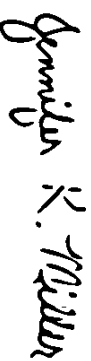
MOTION made by Trustee Gold, support Trustee Estep **to approve the negotiated settlement as discussed in closed session**

Ayes - All Present - **MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

16. ADJOURNMENT

Without objection, the Regular Board of Education Meeting of November 14, 2023, was adjourned at 12:11 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Miller
Board Secretary

Recorded by: Betty Jabnke