

Board of Education Committee of the
Whole Meeting
Monday, February 26, 2018 6:00 PM Central

Administration Building - Student Programs
Conference Room
320 N 5th St
Beatrice, NE 68310

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication and/or posting in accordance with the Board approved method for giving notice of meetings. Notice of this meeting was given in advance to all members of the Board of Education. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the publicized notice and a current copy of the agenda was maintained as stated in the publicized notice. All proceedings of the Board of Education, except as may be hereinafter noted, were taken while the convened meeting was open to attendance of the public.

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Present: Janet Byars, Doris Martin, Nancy Sedlacek, Steve Winter, Jon Zimmerman, **Absent:** Lisa Pieper. Present: 5, Absent: 1.

Mrs. Martin, Vice-President of the Board of Education, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM in the Administration Building Student Programs Conference Room. At the beginning of the meeting, Mrs. Martin announced and informed the public that a current copy of the Open Meetings Act was posted on the west wall of the meeting room.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Board of Education of District #15 approve the agenda as presented passed with a motion by Jon Zimmerman and a second by Nancy Sedlacek.

Janet Byars: Yea, Doris Martin: Yea, Nancy Sedlacek: Yea, Steve Winter: Yea, Jon Zimmerman: Yea
Yea: 5, Nay: 0

3. Curriculum: Compass Program

Mr. Sutter and Chuck Hamilton shared a handout that evaluated the Compass program. Compass is an alternative learning setting provided for students who have demonstrated difficulties within the traditional high school setting and it is located across from the high school, but not on school grounds. The four program goals outlined in the handout were (1) provide students who are at-risk of dropping out of high-school a learning environment where students can be successful and graduation from BHS, (2) prepare students for college or work upon graduation, (3) promote positive decision making and responsible behaviors choices, and (4) provide rigorous coursework to students. Next, Mr. Hamilton shared some data that he collected over the last three years regarding student outcomes. An alternate curriculum is part of the program also and includes life skills, financial, and mentoring areas. Mr. Sutter informed the Board that a new attendance policy was implemented in the spring of 2017 and it has helped with student accountability. Program strengths and areas of improvement were summarized and included in the handout as well. Mr. Sutter stated that overall, administration and Mr. Hamilton feel like Compass is a good and viable program. He added that some students have expressed concern about it being back on the high school campus, but he thinks the program could still be successful if it were moved. Board members asked questions about the potential effect of the move as well as the current waiting list. Mr. Sutter shared that they have looked at other location options and a portable/temporary building over at Paddock Lane may be an option.

4. Updated Job Descriptions

Mr. Brazell shared that some Medicaid changes prompted some revisions to a number of certified and administrative job descriptions. He added that at this time there are still two certified positions (OT/PT and deaf educator) that are still in the works, but the rest are complete and available electronically for Board members to review. The job descriptions were reviewed by staff that are currently doing those jobs. Mr. Brazell expressed appreciation to Bonnie Muller, sub coordinator, for all of her work on updating and formatting the job descriptions. Mr. Brazell added that some new job descriptions that are required will result in an update to board policy and that policy will come to the board for first reading in March. Lastly, he noted additional classified job descriptions will be shared at the March Committee of the Whole meeting.

5. Facility Use Agreement

Mr. Brazell informed Board members that he has made a couple of minor changes to the facility use form and the district's procedure for such. The changes include not charging the BPS Booster clubs for fundraising activities and making sure that groups that use district facilities are at least 50% BPS students or they will be charged for using the facility.

6. Elementary Structure

Mrs. Replogle provided some background information and noted that the thought of grade level buildings is not a new concept in the district. Next, Mrs. Replogle and Mr. Janssen presented some potential options for the configuration of the elementary buildings within the district. The options included:

- Option 1: Based on student numbers and Board policy, run five sections of 3rd grade and six sections of 2nd grade for the 2018-2019 school year. This would require movement of students.
- Option 2: Leave students in current buildings. This would require an additional staff member and costs associated with the new position.
- Option 3: Begin to reduce a building to a 1.5 section building and transition Paddock Lane to a 3 section building. This would require movement of students and staff.
- Option 4: Grade level buildings.
 - Lincoln: Kindergarten- 2nd grade building (three or four sections each depending on numbers)
 - Stoddard: 3rd- 5th grade building (three or four sections each depending on numbers)
 - Paddock Lane: Kindergarten- 5th grade building (two or three sections each depending on numbers)

The elementary administrators shared pros and cons of the final option. They noted that both transportation and starting times have been considered and that they realize these may be concerns for parents. Mrs. Replogle and Mr. Janssen noted that the grade level buildings would help keep things more basic and numbers more even while not having to move kids each and every school year.

7. Short Term Budget Recommendation

Mr. Brazell opened by informing the Board and patrons that many of the agenda topics and discussions were due to changes within the district's budget. He stated that a loss of 118 K-12 students over the past five years has resulted in a loss of over \$1.1 million in state aid. During that same time, property taxes went up about \$2.6 million and expenditures went up approximately \$1.6 million (average increase of 1.5% per year), but district revenue has only increased by \$1.4 million. He noted that the district needs to look at reducing expenditures by approximately \$500,000 to balance the budget for next school year. Measures that the district have taken over the past three years to help balance the budget include: reducing the contingency fund to zero, a zero balance in the general fund for building projects, no longer transferring any excess funds to the depreciation fund, some positions have not been filled through attrition, and reducing the allocation that is given to buildings.

Mr. Nauroth noted that his budget reduction recommendation has not changed since the last meeting. He added that about half of the list is pretty easy as measures have already been done to accomplish those, but the move of Compass, reducing paras and an elementary position are harder and have warranted deeper discussion. He added that it is getting more difficult to move elementary students each year; however, his budget reduction could be done without a change to grade level buildings. Mr. Nauroth reminded the Board and those in attendance that any total under \$500,000 will require the district to use some money out of reserves. Byars and Sedlacek stated that they would like administration to explore the possibility of moving Compass to the Paddock Lane campus.

8. Public Comments - This is the proper time for public questions and comments on any topic. Please make sure a request form is given to the Board Vice-President before the meeting begins.

Brent Essink addressed the Board on the elementary structure topic. He encouraged Board members to always keep what is best for kids at the forefront when making decisions. Essink noted that a big change in elementary structure would not help community relations after the big decision to close Cedar just a year ago. He noted that shifting kids between buildings is often times drastic for them.

Next, Neal Trantham addressed the Board. He informed the Board that he is not necessarily for or against the change to grade level buildings, but came to learn more about the options. Trantham asked the Board to think about the value and possible unintended consequences that a decision like this may have. He voiced concerns about kids getting lost in the mix and encouraged the Board to be very transparent with this topic and allow opportunities for parents to discuss and ask questions.

Zimmerman and Byars stated that they do not want to have to move students around each school year as equalizing class sizes with the current configuration is a huge problem. Byars added that she would like to make a decision so there is not anxiety among parents with where will my kid(s) go to school next year. Mr. Nauroth stated that if the Board is open to the idea of grade level buildings then the first part of March would be spent having conversations with parents and then coming back to the Board to continue discussion. Board members requested administrators move forward with parent meetings.

9. Adjournment

Board of Education of District #15 adjourn passed with a motion by Janet Byars and a second by Jon Zimmerman.

Janet Byars: Yea, Doris Martin: Yea, Nancy Sedlacek: Yea, Steve Winter: Yea, Jon Zimmerman: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Danielle Fairbanks

Board Secretary/Superintendent

Date