

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 64  
Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting held at 7:00 p.m.  
February 24, 2022  
(this meeting was rescheduled from February 17, 2022)  
Emerson School - MPR  
8101 Cumberland Ave, Niles, IL**

Board President Pearl called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Other Board members in attendance were Phyllis Lubinski, Gareth Kennedy, and Tom Sotos. Board member Carol Sales missed the roll call to go into closed session but joined the meeting shortly after. Dr. Nicole Woitowich was absent from the meeting. Board member Rebecca Little had resigned from the Board on February 8, 2022. Also attending were: Superintendent Dr. Eric Olson; Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Dr. Joel T. Martin; and Hodges Loizzi legal counsel Steven Richart.

Board of Education meetings are videotaped and may be viewed in their full length from the District's website at <http://www.d64.org>. The agenda and reports for this meeting are also available on the website or through the District 64 Educational Service Center, 164 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge, IL 60068.

**BOARD RECESSES & ADJOURNS TO CLOSED MEETING**

At 6:20 p.m. it was moved by Board member Sotos and seconded by Board member Kennedy to recess from the regular Board meeting and adjourn to a closed meeting to discuss the following: the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors, or specific volunteers of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor, or a volunteer of the District or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. However, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee of a public body that is subject to the Local Government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and shall be open to the public and posted and held in accordance with this Act [5ILCS 120/2(c)(1)]; and collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees [5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)].

The votes to adjourn to the closed meeting were cast as follows:

Ayes: Sotos, Pearl, Lubinski, Kennedy

Nays: None

Present: None

Absent: Woitowich, Sales

The motion carried.

## **BOARD ADJOURNS FROM CLOSED MEETING & RESUMES REGULAR MEETING**

The Board adjourned from the closed meeting and resumed the regular meeting at 7:02 p.m. In addition to those listed above, also present were: Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning Dr. Lori Lopez; Director of Business Services Valerie Varhalla; Assistant Director of Facility Management Anthony Bersani; Communications Coordinator Nick Shepkowski; Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent Natasha Nedeljkovic. Approximately 15 members of the public were present.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

## **OPENING REMARKS FROM PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD**

Dr. Pearl noted that Board member Woitowich was absent, having just welcomed a new baby two days before.

## **STUDENT/STAFF RECOGNITION**

Roosevelt principal Dr. Kevin Dwyer and Lincoln assistant principal Tim Gleason were proud to announce that District staff and retirees had collected over fifteen thousand dollars for the Park Ridge Community Fund during the annual holiday campaign. They had exceeded their goal and had more participation than in previous years. Mr. Dwyer and Mr. Gleason thanked all the building representatives for their help with the campaign. Mrs. Meghan Keefer, curriculum specialist and coordinator of the District Spelling Bee presented two of the three finalists from this year's spelling competition. The three finalists were Avi Mirani, Sarah Winger, and Ayesha Hakeem. Ayesha and Sarah received their certificates from Mrs. Keefer, Avi Mirani could not attend. Ayesha Hakeem was the winner of the competition for the second year in a row and will represent the District in the regional competition.

## **COVID-19 & PREVENTION STRATEGIES UPDATE**

Dr. Olson noted that various legal case rulings had had an impact on the guidelines in place and the District had gone "mask-recommended". He said there had been a few incidents and situations between students following the change, but overall fewer than expected. All districts were currently considering removing other mitigation strategies in place, and the District 64 Board will discuss and vote on some changes at an upcoming special meeting planned for Monday.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Public comments were invited through a posted email address on the District's website and in the Board report. Members of the public who were present in person were also invited to submit comments, they were received as follows:

- Alla Bagryanskya: a D64 parent addressed the Board on the issue of quarantine and removing it.
- Elizabeth Juiris: thanked the Board for going mask optional, talked about the metrics going down, and the removal of more mitigation measures.
- Ariel Gurian: read the finding of a recent court decision

- Lucas Fuksa: discussed a recent case of quarantine and the Cook County Health Department order, offered his services to parents that were looking for legal representation

Public comments received via email will be included in the next regular meeting's packet.

## **APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

No changes were made to the agenda.

## **APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES**

Dr. Olson said he was excited to announce that Mrs. Alicia Schmeisser would be the new Director of Student Services, stressing she would be able to build on the solid foundation put in place by Dr. Frost over the last couple of years. Mrs. Schmeisser came from a D207 feeder district and would be familiar with that process as well.

### **ACTION ITEM 22-02-1**

It was moved by Board member Sales and seconded by Board member Kennedy that the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District 64, Park Ridge – Niles, Illinois, approve the appointment of Alicia Schmeisser as the Director of Student Services effective July 1, 2022.

The votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: Sotos, Lubinski, Pearl, Kennedy, Sales

Nays: None

Present: None

Absent: Woitowich

The motion carried.

## **PROPOSED CHANGE TO D64 INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL GUIDELINES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Member Sales asked why not change all the guidelines at the same time, but member Kennedy stated that this particular guidance was not part of the District's health and safety plan and stood separately.

### **ACTION ITEM 22-02-7**

It was moved by Board member Kennedy and seconded by Board member Sales that the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District 64, Park Ridge-Niles, Illinois direct the Superintendent to revise the school district's website to make the international Travel Guidance optional. This change would be effective Monday, February 28, 2022.

The votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: Lubinski, Sotos, Pearl, Kennedy, Sales

Nays: None

Present: None

Absent: Woitowich  
The motion carried.

## **APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION #1283 TO IMPLEMENT A FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

This was a formality in the process of implementing full-day kindergarten.

### **ACTION ITEM 22-02-8**

It was moved by Board member Sales and seconded by Board member Lubinski that the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District 64, Park Ridge –Niles, Illinois, approve the resolution to implement full-day kindergarten for the 2022-2023 school year.

The votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: Sotos, Sales, Kennedy, Lubinski, Pearl

Nays: None

Present: None

Absent: Woitowich

The motion carried.

## **PRELIMINARY ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS FOR 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR AND DISCUSSION OF 2022-23 STAFFING**

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Dr. Joel Martin, stated it was the time of year when the District started planning for next year. In the past, the administration had relied on projections prepared by Joel McKibben in a report shared with the Board previously, but the pandemic had changed everything. The District had used a straight rollover method last year to gauge enrollment and that had worked really well and rendered a more accurate prediction than the McKibben study. For full-day kindergarten, the District had no historic data and would not be able to use the rollover method, but will apply it for this year's predictions elsewhere. Using this straight rollover method, the prediction for a total enrollment of 4308 meant a loss of 148 students from the previous year. Dr. Martin noted that only 3 of those were attributed to middle schools, where the numbers mainly remained at status quo; the other 145 students were attributed to losses across elementary schools. He said COVID-19 had an impact but a decline in enrollment had been predicted by McKibben as well. Dr. Martin responded to a question by member Sotos to confirm that the District had contingency plans in place should there be a large number of students returning, who had gone to parochial schools during the pandemic. He said the Board would get regular updates on the enrollment numbers as the registration process began and summer got closer. Board member Kennedy inquired about contingency plans for construction delays and Dr. Martin stated that while plans were in place, he had confidence in Mr. Bersani and Mr. Parisi keeping construction on schedule. He then spoke about sections, noting that the middle schools would be at status quo, and with the 145 students decline at elementary schools, 9 sections would be lost across the district. However, with full-day kindergarten beginning in August and those additional sections, the prediction was that the District would be adding 1.5 sections or

more when all was said and done. He then addressed staffing consequences, noting that with 10 retirements and the additional staff needed for full-day kindergarten, no riffs were expected. Dr. Martin stated staff would be moved around to accommodate building needs across the District. The administration only planned to ask for the addition of 2.5 differentiation coaches for English Language Arts (ELA), 1.5 new teachers for kindergarten, and a .5 special education resource teacher. The Board would approve the staffing plan at a subsequent meeting.

### **PRESENTATION OF PROPOSAL FOR ESSER III FUNDS**

Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning, Dr. Lori Lopez, said the funds were supplemental to the annual budget and this was the third implementation. The proposed allocations were aligned with survey results and the District's strategic plan. The focus remained on supporting student learning and bridging gaps in learning losses during the pandemic with Math interventionists, summer school programs reinforcing growth, and a program at the middle school level to target students at risk. The District would also like to expand the phonics program for kindergarten and first grade. The funds allocated towards the increase of lunch supervisors was for this year only; the District would be reimbursing itself for the current school year.

### **DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF QUEST FOOD MANAGEMENT SERVICES CONTRACT RENEWAL**

Director of Business Services, Valerie Varhalla, noted that the District was satisfied with the service and quality of food provided by Quest over the last few years. The current contract extension did not include a cost increase.

#### **ACTION ITEM 22-02-9**

It was moved by Board member Sales and seconded by Board member Lubinski that the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District 64, Park Ridge –Niles, Illinois, approve the extension of the Quest Food Services Contract for the 2022-2023 school year.

The votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: Pearl, Lubinski, Sotos, Kennedy, Sales

Nays: None

Present: None

Absent: Woitowich

The motion carried.

### **PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED AMENDED 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR**

Dr. Olson explained that the Board had approved the calendar back in December but District 207 had subsequently amended its calendar and adjusted the dates of the spring and winter recesses. District 64 was looking to once again align its breaks with D207 and was bringing an amended calendar to the Board for consideration. The calendar committee had also met recently and approved the proposed changes. If the

Board had no objections, the amended proposed calendar would be brought back for adoption at the March 17 regular meeting.

## **FIRST READING OF POLICIES FROM PRESS ISSUE 108 & BOARD POLICY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Committee member Kennedy said the policy committee had spent the February 10 meeting reviewing the policies and recommended adoption without changes, with the exception of the new sexual education curriculum that required legal counsel review and guidance. The policy committee will revisit policy 6:60 once it had a chance to discuss with legal counsel. Revisions were also proposed to policy 2:230 with regards to public comments via email at board meetings. The committee will review related policy 2:140 at an upcoming meeting as well, as suggested by Board member Sales. The committee planned to meet again before the March 17 regular board meeting.

## **APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED PERSONNEL REPORT**

It was noted that the Board is relying upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and administration in their professional judgment as to the hiring of these individuals per Policy 2:130.

Kimberly Ellsworth - Employ as Level III Office Associate at Roosevelt School effective February 15, 2022 - \$17.06 hourly.

Bernadette Hoffman - Employ as Nurse at Roosevelt School effective January 31, 2022 - \$33.00 hourly.

Tanya Morrison - Employ as Level IV Secretary at Emerson Middle School effective February 7, 2022 - \$18.65 hourly.

Alicia Schmeisser - Employ as Director of Student Services effective July 1, 2022 - \$130,000.

Catherine Biller - Resign as Teacher Assistant at Franklin School effective February 28, 2022.

Christopher Csongradi - Resign as Night Custodian at Washington School effective February 22, 2022.

Jennifer Fragale - Resign as 2nd Grade Teacher at Field Schoool effective June 3, 2022.

Michael Weber - Resign as Grounds/Maintenance Worker for the District effective March 3, 2022.

Helene Zukas - Resign as EL Teacher at Emerson Middle School effective June 3, 2022.

Ann Marie Bartee - Retire as Teacher Assistant at Jefferson School effective June 3, 2022.

Karen Collins - Retire as Teacher Assistant at Franklin School effective June 3, 2022.

Mary Condon - Retire as Social Worker at Lincoln Middle School effective at the end of the 2022-23 school year.

Cettina DeCicco - Retire as Channel of Challenge Teacher at Carpenter and Washington effective June 3, 2022.

Jane Hobart - Retire as 1st Grade Teacher at Field School effective June 3, 2022.

Chris LoPresti - Retire as 4th Grade Teacher at Franklin School effective at the end of the 2023-24 school year.

Judith McCarthy - Retire as Physical Education Teacher at Franklin School effective June 3, 2022

Bridget Nagai - Retire as Channels of Challenge and Intervention Teacher at Field School effective June 3, 2022.

Catherine Olson - Retire as Teacher Assistant at Carpenter School effective June 3, 2022.

Noreen Peters - Retire as Teacher Assistant at Washington School effective June 3, 2022.

Jane Richards - Retire as 3rd Grade Teacher at Washington School effective June 3, 2022.

Cristie Rubeo - Retire as 1st Grade Teacher at Washington School effective at the end of the 2022-23 school year.

Christy Schumacher - Retire as Health Teacher at Emerson Middle School effective June 3, 2022.

#### ACTION ITEM 22-02-10

It was moved by Board member Lubinski and seconded by Board member Pearl that the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District 64, Park Ridge – Niles, Illinois, approve the Personnel Report dated February 24, 2022, noting that the Personnel Report is based on the recommendation of the Superintendent and not upon the Board's direct knowledge regarding any of the specific individuals selected for employment.

The votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: Sales, Lubinski, Kennedy, Sotos, Pearl

Nays: None

Present: None

Absent: Woitowich

The motion carried.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- Bills, Payroll, and Benefits

Bills

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Fund Total</u>
10 - Education Fund	\$ 1,183,422.81
20 - Operations and Maintenance Fund	\$ 221,522.45
30 - Debt Services	\$ 12,859.05
40 - Transportation Fund	\$ 588,584.16
50 - Retirement (IMRF/SS/MEDICARE)	\$ -
60 - Capital Projects	\$ 752,525.65
61 - Capital Projects-2017 Debt Certificates	\$ 67,432.67
80 - Tort Immunity Fund	\$ 500.00
90 - Fire Prevention and Safety Fund	\$ -
<u>Total:</u> \$ 2,074,321.14	

Payroll & Benefits

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Fund Total</u>
10 - Education Fund	\$33,866,592.57

20 - Operations and Maintenance Fund	\$ 3,679,425.30
30 - Debt Services Fund	\$ 852,615.33
40 - Transportation Fund	\$ 2,647,958.90
50 - IMRF/FICA Fund	\$ 581,180.71
51 - SS/Medicare	\$ 670,174.80
60 - Capital Projects Fund	\$ 2,518,327.47
61 - Cap Projects Fund - 2017 Debt Certs	\$ 0.00
70 - Working Cash Fund	\$ 0.00
80 - Tort Immunity Fund	\$ 570,746.25

Total: \$45,387,021.33

The Accounts Payable detailed list can be viewed on the District 64 website's business services page at [www.d64.org](http://www.d64.org).

- Bills, Payroll & Benefits
- Approval of Financial Update for the Period Ending December 31, 2022
- Resolution #1284 Abating Working Cash Fund
- Approval of Semi-Annual Review of Closed Minutes
- Destruction of Audio Closed Recordings (none)

#### ACTION ITEM 22-02-11

It was moved by Board member Kennedy and seconded by Board member Lubinski that the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District 64, Park Ridge – Niles, Illinois, approve the Consent Agenda for February 24, 2022, which includes: Bills, Payroll, and Benefits; Approval of Financial Update for the Period Ending December 31, 2021; Resolution #1284 Abating Working Cash Fund; Approval of Semi-Annual Review of Closed Minutes; and Destruction of Audio Closed Recordings (none).

The votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: Sotos, Lubinski, Kennedy, Pearl, Sales

Nays: None

Present: None

Absent: Woitowich

The motion carried.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

#### ACTION ITEM 22-02-12

It was moved by Board member Kennedy and seconded by Board member Pearl that the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District 64, Park Ridge – Niles, Illinois, approve the minutes from the Closed Meeting on January 20, 2022; the Regular Meeting on January 20, 2022; and the Special Meeting on February 3, 2022.

The votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: Kennedy, Pearl, Sotos, Sales, Lubinski

Nays: None

Present: None

Absent: Woitowich

The motion carried.

## **DISCUSSION REGARDING APPLICATIONS FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION VACANCY & APPOINTMENT PROCESS NEXT STEPS**

President Pearl said the Board had received nine applications and needed to agree on how they would conduct the interviews and the selection process to appoint the interim Board member. Member Sales read policy 2:70 which dictates the process for filling a vacancy. The particular policy calls for the interview process to be conducted in a closed meeting, something members Kennedy and Sotos opposed. President Pearl said she had consulted with the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) and was told no other district did this in open session. Member Kennedy stressed that it had been the tradition in Park Ridge in the past to do this in an open meeting. The members then discussed how the process should unfold and agreed to submit the same set of questions to all candidates ahead of time. The interview process would take place in an open session; the Board would deliberate in closed session if the votes to go into closed allowed it; all 9 participants would be invited; the Board would vote on the appointment in open session. This meeting was to take place on Monday, February 28. The Board would also remove mitigation layers in place at the same meeting and vote on the changes. The members discussed the order of the agenda for Monday's special meeting. The interim Board member would be sworn in at the March 17 meeting. President Pearl noted that Board member Rebecca Little who had resigned on February 8 would be present at the March 17 meeting.

## **OTHER DISCUSSION & ITEMS OF INFORMATION**

Dr. Olson said the District planned to have a dedicated board meeting room for next year once the Jefferson School renovation was completed. He asked members to weigh in on the need to continue rotating meetings at all the school buildings. The dedicated location would be less time-consuming for meeting setups and allow for better technical equipment. Members came to a consensus that this was the best way to proceed, with future plans to be made for other events at school buildings involving Board members' visits.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:57 p.m. it was moved by Board member Kennedy and seconded by Board member Sotos to adjourn the regular meeting. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Signed Date: March 17, 2022.

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President

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Secretary