

VASSAR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

Date: October 14, 2013

Time: 6:30 P.M.

Place: High School Auditorium

A. CALL TO ORDER:

1. The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Mike Kennard at 6:30 P.M.

B. ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Kennard , Kirk Van Wormer, Russ Hubbard, Ben Guile,
Jeff Fackler, Jill Baase

MEMBERS ABSENT: Roger Bacon

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Palmer, Al Hoard, Bill Haines, Phil Marcy, Paul Wojno, Chuck Fabbro, Deb Dewey, Jason Kiss

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: ADDITION OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

1. MOTION by Ben Guile, support by Russ Hubbard to approve agenda with the addition of K #1.
MOTION CARRIED (6 Yes, 0 No, Bacon absent)

E. BOARD RECOGNITION AND REMEMBRANCES:

1. The board of education sends its condolences to Mr. Bacon whose father passed away and to Mrs. Greenwood whose mother passed away.

F. SPOTLIGHT OF MONTH:

G. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND CORRECTIONS:

1. MOTION by Jeff Fackler, support by Jill Baase to approve the minutes from the September 9, 2013 Regular and September 12, 2013 Special Meetings as presented.

MOTION CARRIED (6 Yes, 0 No, Bacon absent)

H. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS AND/OR COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. General Ledger Summary Comparison Reports-General Fund and Food Service: No comments.
2. Internal Fund Balance Sheet- No comments.
3. RECOMMENDATION by Kirk Van Wormer, support by Russ Hubbard to approve the payroll in the amount of \$325,272.78.

MOTION CARRIED (6 Yes, 0 No, Bacon absent)

RECOMMENDATION by Kirk Van Wormer, support by Ben Guile to approve the General Fund expenses in the amount of \$563,375.12.

MOTION CARRIED (6 Yes, 0 No, Bacon absent)

4. Committee Reports – NA

I. FINANCIAL ISSUES:

1. Mr. Palmer described the Munetrix program to the board. It is a software program on the internet that simplifies the complicated transparency reporting so that non-financially inclined persons can understand the information. Pricing: If all districts in the ISD purchase the program, the cost will be \$1,284, otherwise it will be \$1,334. It will assist with fulfilling Best Practice standards of which funding is \$52 per pupil. It will also provide transparency reporting. Board members attending the All County School Board Dinner at the Technology Center will be trained how to use the program. Mr. Fackler: Is it an annual cost? Mr. Palmer: Yes, it is. Mr. Fackler: We achieved Best Practice without the program last year. Why do we need it this year? Mr. Palmer: This year there are different standards for getting the Best Practices funding than in the prior year. This year we need to achieve 7 of 8 standards. One of which, is budgeting 2 years into the future

MOTION by Jill Baase, support by Russ Hubbard to purchase the Munetrix program.

MOTION CARRIED (6 Yes, 0 No, Bacon absent)

J. CURRICULUM ISSUES:

K. BY-LAWS AND POLICY ISSUES:

1. Mr. Kennard discussed changing the location of the board of education meetings back to the High School Media Center. Reasons: the audience can not hear the board members talk when they are on the stage; it takes longer for the custodians to set up.

MOTION by Russ Hubbard, support by Jill Baase to move the board of education meetings back to the High School Media Center.

MOTION CARRIED (6 Yes, 0 No, Bacon absent)

L. PERSONNEL ISSUES:

1. Mr. Palmer : The VEA is grieving class size especially in Grades K-3. Mrs. Auernhamer gave a handout to the board members and had them review textbooks noting the differences over the 25 year period she has been teaching. Last year the board of education agreed to spend \$45,000 on a new Grade K-2 reading curriculum. Teachers feel the district has the students set up for failure. Students who qualify under Title I and At Risk should be able to have help. Two weeks before school started a Title I classroom was created for the fifth grade at the cost of \$50,000 in Title I funds. One week before school started, the district was told by the State Federal Programs Auditor that such a room could only be created for Grades K-3, so the funds were denied. These \$50,000 in Title I funds along with 40,000 in unbudgeted At Risk funds means that \$90,000 was unbudgeted and undecided on how to spend when school started. Administration new that classroom size was at its maximum. Administration chose not to spend the money on the classroom problem. This is putting kids in an unfair situation. The teachers need help. The students need help, one on one help. This can be done by adding 150 minutes of instructional help in the classrooms about 2.5 hours per day in reading and math. Give the paraprofessionals 1 hour extra per day. The salary cost would be \$25,542 for the 150 days remaining in the school year. Get these kids the help to meet the new curriculum requirements. Mr. Palmer: The administration and VEA met to see what could be done. The Federal Programs Auditor is very hands on and will not let us do some of our plans. Last year in June, finally we got approval for 2013 funding! With the government shutdown she will not speak with us. We cannot place a paraprofessional in a classroom all day. She will not allow it. It is not in compliance with federal rules/regulations which state that paraprofessionals paid using At Risk and Title I funds can only instruct At risk and Title I students. They can have no involvement with regular education students. How the district spends the At Risk and Title I funds is watched very closely by her, as with all other schools in the county. What we need to know is this? Is the board of education ok with covering the cost of the paraprofessionals in the event the Federal Programs Auditor denies the request? If the request is denied, the General Fund will have to cover the expense. Mrs. Baase: I happen to think they need help. We don't know about students in the preschool rooms. If we can help them how can we not help students in our school? Mrs. Auernhamer: Cuts made to paraprofessionals this year were made to the classroom paraprofessionals. Mr. Palmer: What exactly is the VEA asking for? The VEA is asking for paraprofessional support of 2.5 hours per day for Grades 1-3 which is 7 classrooms. The paraprofessionals will still be under the 30 hour limit. The paraprofessionals are part of the Intervention Program the district has run the past 7 years. Mr. Fackler: I haven't heard anybody say how we are going to address the recent 64 student loss. Mrs. Auernhamer: We are not using General Funds only Title funds. These are the kids that are already here. Mr. Guile: What are our chances of pulling \$25,000 from At Risk funds? Mr. Palmer: The Federal Programs Auditor is driving us to a more teacher oriented program with less paraprofessionals. At this time we can't predict what she will say. We'd love to give more help. I agree with Mr. Fackler. Where's the money going to come from? Mr. Guile: What if we go half way, half the loss? Mr. Palmer: The last part of this meeting will be about cutting next year's budget by \$1,000,000 come January. We will have to start

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cutting programs. We will be carrying over a loss of \$500,000 plus 50 less students in the incoming Kindergarten Class plus 20 less students between losses at Pioneer Work & Learn and transient students. Mrs. Auernhamer: This is the core curriculum. If they can't learn the basics now how are they going to be able to do any higher learning classes? Mrs. Piazza: Can we create a team to look at these At Risk kids? Mr. Palmer: The Federal Programs Auditor is a federal employee who can't speak with us until the federal government is no longer shut down. Mrs. Moore: We have sheets on At Risk students. Mrs. Auernhamer agreed that anyone can speak about the grievance between VEA and Board of Education. Mrs. Atkins: How much money can be saved if we started Pay to Play, coaches volunteered and through cutting sports? Is it more important to play a sport than to be taught? Mrs. Brightman: If kids can't be taught here they will pull them. Mrs. Atkins: Her grandchildren attended Bridgeport Schools. When her son discovered they weren't learning, he pulled them and they are now attending Birch Run Schools. Mr. Wojno: The State has been changing the way we do business. It is the federal government has decided how they want us to do business. For years all Title funds were given to the elementary schools. The State wanted to see growth in individual students. Now they want to narrow the gap between high and low. If you have a gap and you help the lower students, then enrich the upper students the gap remains. Now they are saying we need to change. We need to get the elementary teachers out looking at other programs. Mr. Marcy: It can be done logistically but I won't take responsibility for how it will be paid. Mr. Palmer: You could do it as a program add. The estimated salary is \$25,542 with benefits estimated cost would be \$34,890.

MOTION by Jill Baase, support by Ben Guile to accept the VEA class size grievance by adding parapro hours.

MOTION CARRIED (5 Yes, 1 No, Bacon absent)

2. MOTION by Russ Hubbard, support by Jill Baase to hire Elaine Germain as the Half Time Preschool teacher.

MOTION CARRIED (5 Yes, 0 No, Bacon absent, Kennard abstained)

3. MOTION by Jeff Fackler, support by Kirk Van Wormer to accept VESPA union contract.

Roll Call:

Fackler – yes	Van Wormer – yes	Kennard – yes	Hubbard – yes	Guile – yes
Baase – yes	Bacon – absent			

MOTION CARRIED (6 Yes, 0 No, Bacon absent)

M. STUDENT ISSUES:

1. Mrs. Piazza and Mrs. Gokey presented a Fine Arts trip to New York City from May 7 -10, 2014 for Spanish and Art Club students. General Funds will not be used to pay for the trip. There is a 30 student minimum and they have already started fundraising.

MOTION by Jeff Fackler, support by Ben Guile to allow the Fine Arts trip to New York City, May 7-10. 2014.

MOTION CARRIED (6 Yes, 0 No, Bacon absent)

N. OPERATIONAL ISSUES:

1. Mr. Palmer: The electronic parent notification system is loading and we hope to have it up and running by next week.

O. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: 41 attendees.

- o David Atkins, 5702 Waterman Rd, Vassar. MI: At the August meeting I asked if the Superintendent was certified. The Treasurer said if he wasn't we wouldn't have hired him. The State says it is not necessary for the Superintendent to be certified. According to MASB, the Superintendent is not certified. In 2008 we had a fund balance of \$4,000,000.

P. SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS:

1. Drivers' Education: Ahead of the Curve is a local drivers education program that other districts in the area use. We have our own in-house program. They would like to use our facilities. Can they use our facilities? Mr. Guile: Not now maybe later down the road. The other members agreed.
2. Latchkey: Currently the program is down in income after 2 weeks, but the amount is less each week. Mr. Fackler: Just to restate what was decided last month. The board is to receive monthly updates and a quarterly review. If things go downhill, parents don't be surprised if things go downhill.
3. Enrollment is down 64 students. Across the state the birth rate is declining and people are leaving the state. For 2014-2015 we are planning on a 70 student decrease, 20 transient plus 50 different between Senior & Kindergarten classes. Current projected fund balance for 2014 is \$223,000. money follows kids. We lose 20-30 students between Fall & Spring count due to drop outs, families leaving the state, etc. Transient families bounce between area schools. Only follow once. The district is looking a loss of about \$500,000 or \$1,000,000 in the hole for FY2015. We need to start now looking at how to do it. We could put in stipulations as to class size vs affordability. The state is expecting 150 school districts to be in deficit next year until the state solidifies the retirement program. Phil Marcy is looking at programs in other districts. We will be moving Kindergarten to Central and make it a Grades K-5 building. Preschool will be in the front of Townsend North building so that we can shut down the rest of the building. Millington Community Schools is interested in sharing services. Money to cover loss will come from the pay of personnel. The board will meet and discuss on the issues. Mr. Van Wormer: What happens if we can't borrow to meet payroll? Mr. Palmer: In the past the state has stepped in and assisted the bigger schools. We don't know. Bailout means we will have an Emergency Manager who replaces the board of education. Union contracts become null and void. There are hard cuts to make and we will not be popular people.

Q. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:

- o Mr. Marcy: 5th grade is finishing MEAP. Halloween parade will be at the track at 11:15am.
- o Mrs. Dewey: Reviewed MME/ACT data.
- o Mr. Wojno: Homecoming was a victory. Hats off to Ann Zwerk, the Police Department and Bill Heffelfinger. We matched numbers to the prior year when Travis Mills was with us. MEAP testing in the Middle and High Schools. NHS members, Varsity Football players and others stained the Townsend North playscape. Academic pins to be distributed during 1st hour tomorrow. Blood drive on October 23rd generates a \$500 scholarship. One also held in the spring.
- o Mr. Hoard: Reese will buy 1 of our busses. Now have 12 routes. There were 23 when he started at the school district.
- o Mr. Fabbro: They are participating in Operation Christmas Child. It distributes boxes for children around the world. Doing MEAP. They had 3 GED graduates and 1 regular education graduate. They are up 6 kids with 2.5 less staff from the prior year.
- o Mr. Haines: The special education monitor from the state wants kids educated in class which is different from Title where the prefer pull outs. 73% of special education students are educated in regular education classes. They are participating in "chunking" which is giving special ed kids more time for testing. It shortens the length of the time testing giving the student a break. When the student is ready, s/he will continue testing. Mrs. Chelekis: 5th grade is responding well. Mr. Haines: The same for the 3rd and 4th grades. We will be addressing it in the HS in the spring.
- o Mr. Kiss: Mr. Boros, fresh from surgery, jumped in and did well with the MEAP. There will be a costume dance.

R. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

- o Mr. Van Wormer: It is sad to see what is happening to all school districts. When I started there was a \$3,000,000 budget. We had our good times and a \$5,000,000 fund balance and now nothing. It is not fun trying to do what we're doing now. Mr. Palmer to the audience: Voice your concerns to Lansing. Don't take your anger out on the board members and administration. It was the state who

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funneled \$6, 000,000 to roads and millions to higher education all on back of K-12 education. We are receiving less money per pupil than 7 years ago and the price of everything has gone up.

S. CLOSED SESSION:

T. DATES TO REMEMBER:

October 22 – All County School Board Meeting, 6-8:00pm at Tuscola Technology Center

October 31 – Halloween and Half day for students/Teachers afternoon PD

U. NEXT REGULAR OR SPECIAL MEETING:

November 11 – Regular Meeting in the High School Media Center @ 6:30pm

V. ADJOURNMENT:

1. MOTION by Russ Hubbard, support by Jeff Fackler to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm.

MOTION CARRIED

DATED: _____ SIGNED: _____
(Secretary)