

## **Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting**

Of the School Board of Independent School District No. 709 held at the Historic Old Central High School, 215 North First Avenue East, Duluth, Minnesota 55802, on

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

### **Members Present:**

Annie Harala  
Art Johnston  
Rosie Loeffler-Kemp  
Mike Miernicki  
Judy Seliga Punyko  
Harry Welty  
Bill Westholm

### **Others Present:**

Bill Gronseth, Superintendent  
Bill Hanson, Deputy Clerk  
Melinda Thibault, Secretary

### **Student Representatives:**

Kobi Tremble  
Paul Manning

➤ Chair Miernicki called the regular school board meeting of March 18, 2014 to order at 6:31 p.m., and the pledge of allegiance to the American flag was given.

There were musical performances by the East High School Sterling Strings and Choraliers. Teri Akervik, Music Specialist, spoke about the music in our schools month activities.

**M-Westholm, S-Welty, to approve the agenda as presented. Member Harala requested to add three extended field trip items to the Education Committee report. Upon a vote on the agenda as amended, the same was approved – unanimously.**

Chair Miernicki asked school board members if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting of February 25, 2014.

Member Welty suggested that the School and Community Recognition section note that Ed Crawford made the presentation.

**M-Westholm, S- Harala, to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2014 Regular School Board Meeting as presented. Upon a vote, the same was approved as presented – unanimously.**

Chair Miernicki asked school board members if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of the Special School Board Meeting of March 4, 2014.

**M-Loeffler-Kemp, S- Harala, to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2014 Special School Board Meeting as presented. Upon a vote, the same was approved as presented – unanimously.**

Chair Miernicki asked school board members if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of the Special School Board Meeting of March 10, 2014.

**M-Westholm, S-Loeffler-Kemp, to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2014 Special Meeting as presented. Upon a vote, the same was approved as presented – unanimously.**

**School and Community Recognition**

**March 2014**

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Assistant Superintendent Ed Crawford - Members of the Board, in honor of Music in Our Schools Month I'm pleased to present student musicians Alia Gribbon from Denfeld and Madeleine Monson Geerts from East High School for recognition. Alia took first place in the 2014 Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra's Young Artist Competition. The competition is open to high school students and college students up to age 19. Alia is a three-time winner of the Youth Orchestra Hester Scholarship competition and recently took second place in the solo competition in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Madeleine won the 2014 Youth Orchestra Hester Memorial Scholarship competition. She participated with many students from throughout Minnesota, performing a beautiful and expressive interpretation of the Haydn Concerto in C Major, movement 2, as her winning solo. Congratulations to two very talented young women.

**Public Comments**

**March 2014**

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Jamie Zak, of the Duluth Community Garden Program spoke to the school board to update them on the statewide gardening program to increase healthy eating in the schools.

Loren Martell, 623 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street, spoke to the school board regarding his concerns with the finances of the school district in general.

Janna Bloomquist, 23 Howard Gnesen Road, spoke to the school board regarding her concerns about the cuts to the music programs in the district.

**Communications, Petitions, Etc.**

**March 2014**

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There were no communications received.

**Superintendent's Report**

**March 2014**

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Superintendent Gronseth started out by thanking the sterling strings and choraliars for sharing their music with us this evening. I am always so impressed with your talents and skills! This being Music in the Schools Month, I know there have been many opportunities for families and community members to enjoy performances. There was also a choir competition held at Denfeld the other day and I understand our students did very well.

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Our students have been very busy in other areas as well and their efforts have been recognized across the state and across the nation.

- Duluth hosted a world record breaking double regional Robotics Competition. Teams from as far away as Hawaii came for the event. This has become an event that gets national attention and we are very proud of both of our robotics teams. Phil Norris, the program mentor received an award as well.
- Duluth East High Hockey took their sixth consecutive trip to state this year.
- Destination Imagination – Congdon Park, Lester Park, and Ordean East are competing in the state tournament in April.
- Knowledge Bowl – two teams from East found out today that they are going onto state competition.

We know that when students are engaged in activities, they are more likely to succeed in other areas. I am proud of the many opportunities our students have to be involved in so many ways.

**Education Committee Report**  
**March 2014**

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Member Harala presented the Education Committee report, a copy of same being in the hands of each school board member.

**M-Harala, S-Westholm, to approve the Education Committee Report:**

Member Miernicki withheld Item 1.A.4)

Member Welty withheld Items 1.A.1), 2), and 3).

Member Johnston withheld Item 2.A.1)

Member Welty withheld Item 2.A.1) – Annual Head Start Training to note that several years ago there were changes to the transportation for the program and asked how that affected the student enrollment in the program. Superintendent Gronseth clarified that the budget for the program is separate from the general budget.

Member Welty withheld Item 1.A.2) – Graduation Data to note that he had mistakenly thought the graduations rates had gone down and apologized for the error. He asked for clarification about the data presented. Tawynea Bolme Lake, Assessment Director, stated she would get back to him on the questions he had. Member Johnston noted concerns within the report and trends.

Member Welty withheld Item 1.A.3) – Curriculum Alignment Implementation Plan Presentation to make comments about the item and the need to be informed about such issues. Member Johnston also expressed concern about being informed. Superintendent Gronseth reminded them that he had informed them of the issue back in December, at the last board meeting, and along the way as Laura MacArthur's plan was put in place. Discussion continued regarding frustration with the MDE citations and other school districts having similar issues, and the usefulness of the tests themselves. Chair Miernicki congratulated all those involved for the strides that they have made at Laura MacArthur.

Chair Miernicki withheld Item 1.A.4) – Closed Campus Update

**M-Miernicki, S-Welty, to rescind the motion adopted at the June 18, 2013 regular board meeting “to make an amendment to the closed campus item that in the school year of 2014-15 that we begin a modified campus allowing seniors in good standing be allowed to go off campus for lunch and the rest of it would be closed”.**

Board discussion took place regarding the issue and the funding that would have to be put in place.

**Member Harala called the question. Upon a vote to call the question, the same passed unanimously.**

**Upon a vote to rescind the previous decision to have a modified closed campus, the same failed 2-5 as follows:**

**Yay: Miernicki, Welty**

**Nay: Harala, Johnston, Loeffler-Kemp, Seliga Punyko, Westholm**

Member Johnston withheld Item 2.A.1) – Recommended Changes to the 2013-14 School Year to comment on the issue. Discussion took place among board members regarding the proposed calendar changes.

**Upon a vote on the remainder of the Education Committee, the same was approved – unanimously.**

### **Human Resources Committee Report**

**March 2014**

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Member Welty presented the Human Resources Committee report, a copy of same being in the hands of each school board member.

**M-Welty, S-Westholm, to approve the Human Resource Committee report.**

Member Johnston requested that the Superintendent contract item be withheld.

Discussion took place regarding the contract, yearly evaluation, and how the contract is presented and discussed.

**Upon a vote to accept the superintendents contract the same passed 6-1 as follows:**

**Yay: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Welty, Westholm**

**Abstain: Johnston**

**Upon a vote on the remainder of the Human Resources Committee Report, the same was approved – unanimously.**

**Business Committee Report**

**March 2014**

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Member Loeffler-Kemp presented the Business Committee report, a copy of same being in the hands of each school board member.

Member Loeffler-Kemp presented the resolution:

**R E S O L U T I O N**

Adoption of the Considerations and Investments for the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget

BE IT RESOLVED, by the School Board of Independent School District No. 709, St. Louis County, State of Minnesota, that the attached considerations and investments for the fiscal year 2015 budget as presented to the School Board, be adopted.

B-3-14-3167

March 18, 2014

FY 15 Budget Considerations & Investments  
3/18/2014

	Amount
DRAFT FY 15 Savings:	
Telephone Line Savings	\$25,000
Preliminary DW Consideration Plan	\$250,000
 Sub-Total - Considerations	 \$275,000
 DRAFT FY 15 Investments:	
Add Teachers to Reduce Class Size	\$1,450,000
Additional Investment for Curriculum Materials	150,000
Additional Investment for Student Achievement	200,000
Curriculum Alignment Work (One-time)	275,000
Pension Cost Increase (DTRFA)	85,000
 Sub-Total Investments	 \$2,160,000
 NET-TOTAL DRAFT Items	 (\$1,885,000)

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Informational: Items From Previous Budget Discussions

District Administration Reductions:

Review Non-labor Budgets for HOCHS Departments	\$	TBD
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Learning Services:

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Revise Intervention Plan	TBD	
Modify Allocation of Data Coaches		90,000
Review Teacher Development Stipends	TBD	
Curriculum Modifications	TBD	
Special Service Modifications	TBD	
Review Program Expenses for:	TBD	
Co-Curricular/Extra-Curricular Activities		
ELL		
Gifted & Talented		
Homeless		
Business Services:		
Facilities Modifications		
Finance Modifications		
Human Resources Modifications		
Transportation Modifications		
Increase Walking Distance - Elementary		400,000
Increase Walking Distance - Middle School		20,000
Technology:		
One-time spending reduction		150,000
Instruction:		
Site Administration Reductions	TBD	
Reduce Special Services Expenses	TBD	
Reduce Middle School Staffing Allocation		315,000
Limit HS schedule to six classes		90,000
Reduce Zero Hour Staffing Allocation		180,000
Review all Non-Intervention Classes < 25/1	TBD	
Furniture/Labor for closed campus		200,000
District Wide Other:		
Revenues		
Increase Chargeback to Food Service and Community Education	TBD	
Seek Contributions in Exchange for Naming Rights	TBD	

**M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Welty, to approve Resolution B-3-14-3167 – Adoption of the Considerations and Investments for the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget.**

Discussion took place regarding the proposed budget considerations.

**M-Harala, S-Loeffler-Kemp, to add the \$200,000 funding for the closed campus into the investment section of the budget considerations.**

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Discussion took place regarding the funding for the closed campus program.

**Upon a vote, the same was approved – 5-2 as follows:**

**Yay: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm**

**Nay: Johnston, Welty**

Discussion took place regarding the budget resolution as a whole.

**Upon a vote on the resolution as amended, the same passed 6-1 as follows:**

**Yay: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Welty, Westholm**

**Nay: Johnston**

**M-Loeffler-Kemp, S- Harala, to approve the remainder of the Business Committee Report:**

Member Welty withheld Item 6.C.

Member Welty withheld Item 6.C. Other Contracts to ask about the cost for the use of the church field at the Piedmont site. Kerry Leider, Facilities Management Supervisor, explained the maintenance the district does to the property.

**Upon a vote on the remainder of the Business Committee, the same was approved – unanimously.**

**Other**  
**March 2014**

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Superintendent Gronseth stated that he is grateful for being offered a new contract. He said that he is proud of our schools and that working for the Duluth Schools is a privilege.

Member Harala attended the Education Equity Advisory Committee and stated that there are many community members serving on our committees and noted that Beulia Sayers was honored for her service at the last meeting.

Student Representative Manning noted his concern with the loss of music programs and the time to take those programs in the schools.

Member Johnston noted that he abstained on the vote to rescind the closed campus item.

Member Loeffler-Kemp stated that she is proud to serve on board and that there are a lot of great things going on in our schools.

Members Seliga Punyko, Johnston, and Welty also voiced their concerns over the loss of music programs in the schools

- Chair Miernicki adjourned the Regular School Board Meeting of March 18, 2014 at 9:12 p.m.