

## 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, August 19, 2014

### Members Present:

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

### Others Present:

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

### Student Representatives:

Paul Manning  
Kobi Tremble

➤ Chair Miernicki called the regular school board meeting of August 19, 2014 to order at 6:30 p.m., and the pledge of allegiance to the American flag was given.

**M-Westholm, S-Loeffler-Kemp, to approve the agenda as presented.**

**M-Welty, S-Johnston, to add an agenda item as follows: Whereas the initial estimates of “soft costs” for the Long Range Facilities Plan were placed at about 16 percent of the overall cost and Whereas the recent abbreviated report by Minnesota’s auditor confirmed that 27 percent of the spending on the Long Range Facilities Plan went to pay for “soft costs” and Whereas there has not been any detailed documentation yet presented to the School Board for this public spending and Whereas the Duluth School Board has a fiduciary responsibility to its taxpayers to ascertain that these \$84 millions of dollars were spent for the benefit of the Duluth schools and Whereas the Duluth School community has been suffering decreases in programming such as music, increased class sizes, diminished transportation and increased student activity fees as a result of borrowing from the general fund to pay for LRFPP bonds and Whereas there have been calls for greater transparency by the community including, recently, the editors of the Duluth News Tribune, to insure good governance: Therefore be it resolved, that the Duluth School Board demand that all entities who helped complete the Long Range Facilities Plan and who made soft money expenditures towards its completion be directed to give the Duluth School Board full spread sheet documentation of these payments as soon as practicable.**

Discussion took place regarding the requested addition to the agenda.

**M-Harala, S-Seliga Punyko, to call the question. Upon a vote, the same passed 6-1 as follows:**

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

**Nay: Johnston**

2 – Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting  
August 19, 2014

**Upon a vote to add the agenda item, the same failed – 3-4 as follows:**

**Yea: Harala, Johnston, Welty**

**Nay: Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm**

**M-Welty, S-Johnston, to add an item to the Business Committee agenda by adding the following motion: That in the event of an investigation by the Duluth School Board of any member of the School Board which turns up no evidence of activity warranting removal from office the Duluth School District shall pay all legal costs incurred by the board member in his or her own defense.**

Discussion took place regarding the requested addition to the agenda.

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

**Yea: Johnston, Welty**

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

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

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

**Nay: Johnston, Welty**

Chair Miernicki asked school board members if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting of July 15, 2014.

**M-Harala, S-Loeffler-Kemp, to approve the minutes of the July 15, 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 July 22, 2014.

**M-Harala, S-Westholm, to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2014 Special School Board Meeting as presented. Upon a vote, the same was approved as presented – 6-1 as follows:**

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

**Nay: Johnston**

Chair Miernicki asked school board members if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of the Special School Board Meeting of July 29, 2014.

**M-Harala, S-Westholm, to approve the minutes of the July 29, 2014 Special School Board Meeting as presented. Upon a vote, the same was approved as presented – unanimously.**

**School and Community Recognition**  
**August 2014**

\*\*\*\*

Ed Crawford - Members of the Board, this month I'm pleased to present Tracie Clanaugh and representatives from True North AmeriCorps for recognition. The mission of True North AmeriCorps is to support on-time graduation, ensuring that youth are prepared for academic, civic, and economic success. A program of the Duluth Area Family YMCA, they partner with nonprofits, schools, and community agencies to serve Duluth and Proctor. The AmeriCorps grant process is highly competitive, due to the strong and growing demand by organizations seeking these resources. We're fortunate that True North AmeriCorps received grant funding to provide volunteers in our schools. This year True North AmeriCorps members will help support reading and math interventions during the school day and academic support and engagement activities after school in collaboration with community-based organizations. We're very pleased to have True North Americorps working in our schools, helping to support community goals associated with achievement and graduation. Many thanks to True North AmeriCorps for all they do to support education! Tracie Clanaugh, Executive Director of the Community Services YMCA - Kelly LaCore, Director of True North AmeriCorps - Rebecca Haavik, Coordinator of True North AmeriCorps – and Sara Hendrickson, Coordinator of True North Americorps attended the presentation.

**Public Comments**  
**August 2014**

\*\*\*\*

Cassandra Danuke, 15605 Singapore, spoke to the School board to thank them for their service and the willingness to adopt the civility code.

Loren Martell, 623 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street, spoke to the School Board to regarding his concern with board members and issues with the sound system.

**Communications, Petitions, Etc.**  
**August 2014**

\*\*\*\*

Chair Miernicki stated the communications received.

**Superintendent's Report**  
**August 2014**

Superintendent Gronseth - Just two weeks from today the 2014-2015 school year will be under way. That is a bit of a change from our usual start date. So again, we are starting on Tuesday, September 2. This is an exciting time of the year, filled with hope and new pencils and crayons, and just like a brand new notebook, the year is a blank slate - a chance for a fresh beginning. Our principals, teachers, and students will have quite a few changes to look forward to this year. We have a newly aligned curriculum, new materials, and new opportunities for growth. The training and planning that staff has done over the course of the summer will help us to focus on the individual needs of every student. To help them to master the standards of each content area at each grade level. With the District-wide Continuous Improvement plan goals being worked on everyday throughout the district, we are making progress towards our goals. We are seeing growth

in many areas, but there is still much work to be done before we meet our goals. This year’s focus on improving instruction and meeting the needs of every student in every classroom through the use of PLCs (professional learning communities) will help us to make more progress on our goals to raise student achievement, reduce the achievement/opportunity gap, and increase graduation rates. There are also a few changes parents should keep in mind. One of those changes are the new immunization requirements for K and Grade 7 - Families should make sure their students are up to date on all of their immunizations before school starts. Families can feel free to contact any of our school nurses should they have any questions or concerns or if they need some assistance in getting access to immunizations for their children. Another change involves winter weather - we have added two hour late starts as a possibility. If the weather conditions are right, we will start school two hours later than usual instead of missing an entire day. Families have received information on this and we will continue to remind people of the possibility as we get closer to winter - which we don’t want to think too much about just yet! Over the next two weeks we will continue to prepare for the coming school year. Next week we will be holding orientation for new teachers to the district. We are thrilled to be welcoming about 50 new teachers! It is going to be a great year and we look forward to welcoming students back to school, until then, enjoy the last days of summer!

**Education Committee Report**  
**August 2014**  
\*\*\*\*

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

Member Harala presented the resolution:

**RESOLUTION**  
**Acceptance of Grant Awards to Duluth Public Schools**

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 465.03 requires a school district to accept grants by resolution expressed in the terms prescribed by the donor in full; and,

WHEREAS, acceptance of the grant in accordance with the donor’s terms is in the best interest of the Duluth Public Schools:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Duluth Public Schools does accept the below-described grants from said organizations in accordance with the terms set forth herein.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Duluth Public Schools wishes to extend its grateful appreciation to these various organizations.

	Organization	Author/Contact	Project Title	Award Amount	Terms
1	Northland Foundation	Martha Lippitt	Positive Intervention Training for Educational Staff Dealing with Disruptive Behaviors	\$4,978	Funds from this grant award will be used to train Duluth Public Schools educational staff who deal with disruptive behaviors.

5 – Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting  
August 19, 2014

**M-Harala, S-Welty, to approve Resolution E-8-14-3202 – Acceptance of Grant Awards to Duluth Public Schools. Upon a vote, the same was approved – unanimously.**

**M-Harala, S-Westholm, to approve the remainder of the Education Committee Report.**

Member Welty withheld Item 1.A.3) Denfeld and East High School Robotics Team Presentations to discuss the presentation and note how well the two teams work together.

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

**Human Resources Committee Report**

**August 2014**

\*\*\*\*

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

**M-Welty, S-Harala, to approve the Human Resource Committee report. Upon a vote, the same was approved – unanimously.**

**Business Committee Report**

**August 2014**

\*\*\*\*

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:

**RESOLUTION**

**Approving the Partial Settlement Agreement for Confession of Judgment Related to the Timber Systems Truss Repairs at Lincoln Park Middle School**

WHEREAS, on June 15, 2010, the School Board approved Bid #1184, Work Scope #9 authorizing Administration to enter into an agreement between Independent School District #709 and Timber Systems, LLC for structural glue-laminated construction at Western Middle School, now known as Lincoln Park Middle School; and

WHEREAS, after construction was completed and following a heavy snow load during the 2013-2014 winter season, the trusses provided by Timber Systems, LLC were determined to be under-designed, and emergency snow removal efforts and truss bracket reinforcements were required; and

WHEREAS, Timber Systems, LLC has stipulated and agreed in a Confession of Judgment to reimburse the district for the costs incurred related to the emergency snow removal and defective truss repairs and will pay the cost of the permanent repairs; and

WHEREAS, ISD #709 has agreed that if Timber Systems, LLC pays the sum of \$40,667.00 by January 15, 2016, the District will not pursue collection proceedings against Timber Systems, LLC for said sum;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of Independent School District No. 709, St. Louis County, State of Minnesota that the Partial Settlement Agreement for Confession of Judgment between Independent School District #709 and Timber Systems, LLC, is approved.

B-8-14-3201

August 19, 2014

**M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Harala, to approve Resolution B-8-14-3201 – Approving the Partial Settlement Agreement for Confession of Judgment Related to the Timber Systems Truss Repairs at Lincoln Park Middle School. Upon a vote, the same was approved - unanimously.**

Member Loeffler-Kemp presented the resolution:

RESOLUTION  
Acceptance of Donations to Duluth Public Schools

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 465.03 requires a school district to accept donations by resolution expressed in the terms prescribed by the donor in full; and,

WHEREAS, acceptance of the donations in accordance with the donor's terms is in the best interest of the Duluth Public Schools:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Duluth Public Schools does accept the below-described donations from said organizations in accordance with the terms set forth herein.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Duluth Public Schools wishes to extend its grateful appreciation to these various organizations.

SCHOOL	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME/ORG.	RESTRICTION	AMOUNT
District Wide	Ed	Slonen	1000 copies of the book "The Constitution of the United States & Amendments, The constitution of the State of Minnesota	In Kind

B-8-14-3203

August 19, 2014

**M-Loeffler-Kemp, S-Seliga Punyko, to approve Resolution B-8-14-3203 – Acceptance of Donations to Duluth Public Schools. Upon a vote, the same was approved - unanimously.**

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

Member Harala withheld Item 6.A.

Member Johnston requested a separate vote on Items 3.A.1) and 4.A., and discussion on 6.D., E., and 7.A.

Member Harala withheld Item 6.A. – The SOAR Contract to note that it is supports the Adult Basic Education program and she is grateful for the program.

**Upon a separate vote on 3.A.1) –Policy 3040, the same was approved – unanimously.**

**Upon a separate vote on 4.A. – Contracts, the same was approved – unanimously.**

7 – Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting  
August 19, 2014

Member Johnston withheld Item 6.D. Facilities Management & Capital Project Status Report to ask questions about the report and certificates of participation. Jody LeBlanc, Finance Manager explained the items.

Member Johnston withheld Item 6.E. – Contracts Signed in Relation to the LRFP – to ask about the contract and where the costs were paid from. Kerry Leider, Facilities Management Supervisor, explained that some of the costs were reimbursed by Timber Systems and one outside expert would be paid from the LRFP funds.

Member Johnston withheld Item 7.A. – Financial Audit to note his concerns with the audit documents not being signed last year.

**Upon a vote on the remainder of the Business Committee, the same was approved – 6-1 as follows:**

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

**Other**  
**August 2014**  
\*\*\*\*

Superintendent Gronseth stated that he would be flying with the Blue Angels the following day.

Member Welty stated that he gave board members a proposed change to a policy.

Member Loeffler-Kemp invited community members to go out and volunteer in the schools.

Member Harala wished the students good luck this fall and thanked administration for their hard work over the summer.

Student Advisor Manning stated that East High will have a debate team for the first time in many years and that the newspaper will be putting out a digital version.

➤ Chair Miernicki adjourned the Regular School Board Meeting of August 19, 2014 at 8:06 p.m.