

SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES
Monday, July 19, 2021, 5:45 p.m.
Delano High School Tiger Den
Delano Public Schools
Independent School District #879, Delano, Minnesota

1. Call to order at 5:46 p.m.

A. Record of members present or absent

Members present: L. Seguin, C. Black, J. Rosenow, J. Gierke, A. Johnson and S. Roeser. R. Depa arrived at 5:50 p.m.

Members absent: None

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Upon motion by C. Black, seconded by S. Roeser, the Board of Education approved the meeting agenda. Motion passed 6-0.

3. Work Session

Activities Administrator Ryan Tool introduced a proposed Nordic ski team cooperative arrangement with Orono, which has an established program. Four Delano students had expressed interest in joining the team. Official board action to allow the co-op may be requested next month.

Superintendent Matt Schoen, at the board's request, explained that Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theory, not a curriculum. M. Schoen said CRT is not a part of any Minnesota state standards, and is something that might be discussed in graduate level college courses. M. Schoen also read a definition of CRT, and said different people have different understandings of what is meant by the term. Delano High School Principal Barry Voight said a recent survey about schedules, and associated curriculum, raised some questions about general terms that were used in the survey and whether there was a connection to CRT implied by those terms. He told the board that there was no connection intended between survey terms like "well-rounded" and CRT. Questions from the board followed about schedule adjustments and potential opportunities. Additional discussion continued about the polarization caused by the pandemic, and a moment of silence held by the schools last spring. Discussion followed on the curriculum adoption process, and L. Seguin noted that parents are welcome to join the curriculum advisory group. M. Schoen said school districts are not looking to add items that aren't in the state standards.

M. Schoen reviewed updates to Policy 707, regarding transportation, and Policy 708 – Transportation of Nonpublic School Students, in regard to students with disabilities.

Board members discussed current communication efforts around the operating levy referendum, and potential options to expand those efforts. Public information sessions, videos and more were discussed, along with practices board members could use to direct people to factual sources of information.

L. Seguin reported on a recent city-school committee meeting, which focused on the potential for a second sheet of ice at the Delano ice arena and land implications for the school district. The city was given the go-ahead to do a feasibility study. The school district will not be paying for the feasibility study. More information will follow when the study is complete.

Discussion followed on public health recommendations regarding COVID. M. Schoen shared recent CDC recommendations regarding in-person learning and mask recommendations, and said the state departments of health and education are reviewing those guidelines in preparation for putting out their own guidance to school districts. M. Schoen clarified that students will still need to wear masks on school buses.

Upon motion by A. Johnson, seconded by J. Gierke, the Board of Education called the meeting to recess at 6:27 p.m. Motion passed 7-0.

Board Chair L. Seguin called the meeting out of recess and to order at 7 p.m.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

5. Consent Agenda

Upon motion by J. Rosenow, seconded by C. Black, the Board of Education approved the Consent Agenda. Motion passed 7-0.

A. School Board Minutes

1. June 28, 2021
2. June 29, 2021
3. July 14, 2021

B. Financial Affairs

1. Current Budget Status with Year-to-Date Adjustments
2. Investment Transactions
3. CARES Act Budgets
4. Wire Transfers
5. Minnesota Liquid Asset Fund
6. Cash Report
7. Revenue Report by Fund
8. Expense Report by Fund
9. Expense Report by Program
10. Expense Report by Object
11. List of Bills Presented for Payment

6. Resolution for Acceptance of Gifts

Upon motion by R. Depa, seconded by J. Rosenow, the Board of Education approved the Resolution for Acceptance of Gifts. Motion passed 7-0.

7. Personnel Matters

Upon motion by A. Johnson, seconded by J. Gierke, the Board of Education approved the Personnel Matters. Motion passed 7-0.

8. Public Comment

School patrons are given the opportunity to address the school board regarding items that are not on the agenda. All patrons will be asked to state their name and address for the record.

Theresa Champeau
5528 SE 44th St
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about CRT, politics in the classroom, and the importance of respect for all viewpoints.

Chris Brazelton
1154 Willowbrook Circle
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Past racial incident in the community, formation of the Delano United Diversity Task Force, the importance of diversity, and how textbooks teach a limited view of history.

Stephanie Cappelleri

643 SW 3rd St.

Delano, MN 55328

RE: Necessity that the school stay neutral, that teachers not attempt to sway students toward their political view, the importance of respecting differences, and concerns about comprehensive sex education and vaccines.

Jake Torola

6003 SE Fenning Ave.

Delano, MN 55328

RE: Schools should teach the basics: reading, writing and arithmetic. Families are responsible for making students well-rounded. Concerns about the schedule survey and connections to CRT, and about the school's use of taxpayer funding.

Kevin Kangas

235 2nd St. SW

Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about CRT and discussion of white privilege at the elementary level, and concern that regardless of the overall district position, elements of CRT are present in the classroom.

Tammy Molitor

1248 Woods Creek Drive

Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about CRT, indoctrination with a far-left radical agenda, and gender issues and confusion among students.

Gina Paeth

1055 3rd St. SW

Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about social division, sex education, and the staff incorporation of personal beliefs into education rather than focusing on basic academic skills.

Sierra Ingle

823 Vista Circle

Delano, MN 55328

RE: Student perspective on predominantly white school, racism experienced by local minorities, claims of political bias in the classroom, the value of sex education, and division resulting from home environments rather than school environment.

Patrick Narlock

106 6th St. SW

Delano, MN 55328

RE: Thanks to Barry for clarification about survey, and discussion about the meaning of "holistic" education and associated concerns.

AJ Toews

1453 SW 5th St.

Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about politics in school and how students were asked to vote for president. Expressed a desire for the teaching of basic academic skills and caution about the ambiguous nature of CRT, which is contrary to the values voiced by Martin Luther King Jr.

Lucius Lafromboise

853 Goldenrod Ct.

Delano, MN 55328

RE: Former student perspective on the importance of learning outside of school because school can't teach every viewpoint, and the importance of challenges in establishing firmly held beliefs. Voiced belief that schools should not push particular ideologies.

Leif Borg
1015 3rd St. SW
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Explained that he moved to the area because of the schools, but has now switched to homeschooling due to concerns that have developed over the last 1.5 years.

Sandy Jucha
424 St. Peter St.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Voiced agreement with most speakers and encouraged others in the audience to speak so their names and opinions would go on record.

Steve Rodgers
196 Raymond Ave.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns with CRT, importance of basic academic skills and the connection between CRT in the schools and his support of the school referendum.

Mark Kangas
1264 Charles Court
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Importance of teaching critical thinking skills and basic academic skills vs. family instruction in values.

Wendy Towne
278 Lori Lane
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about political/social agendas in school and the role of parents vs. teachers. Shared about the value of family engagement and the need to preserve Delano's strong schools.

Angie Vlaminck
2553 102nd St. SE
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Voiced agreement with most speakers and concerns with masks, CRT, mandatory vaccines and comprehensive sex education.

Laura Peterson
1214 Charles Court
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Voiced agreement with most speakers and the importance of respect on the side of both students and teachers.

Chad Arvola and Katie Arvola
1009 Maplewood Drive
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Voiced agreement with Mr. Rodgers' comments and the importance of schools remaining a strong representation of their community.

Kris Kangas
235 2nd St. SW
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about political/social agendas in school and the importance of teaching basic academic skills.

Rory Canniff
723 Elm Ave.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Thanks to board for service, importance of financial education and relationships, and the need for healing.

Kara Scheck
11851 Eaken Ave. SE
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Voiced agreement with most speakers, importance of teaching point and counterpoint in social/political matters.

Mike Tormanen
588 Woods Creek Drive
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concern about child's teacher asking for preferred gender pronouns, and concern about masks. Support for district in not operating on recommendations.

Chris Keller
444 Meadow Rose Court
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Crowd drawing a line in the sand regarding CRT.

Teresa McNamee
225 4th St. S
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Importance of recognizing that not all students in school come from safe, loving homes, and that schools are often the safest place for them.

Kevin Treptau
997 Woods Creek Drive
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about education reforms discussed from federal to local level. Concerns about assignment given to daughter asking how what is taught at home undermines what is taught in school.

Jennifer Watkins
6639 Brighton Ave. SE
Montrose, MN 55363

RE: Concerns with masks and quarantines, and lack of learning due to those conditions.

Lindsay Doerr
1067 SW 3rd St.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about masks and CRT.

Jodi Jackola
3553 SE 33rd St.
Buffalo, MN 55313

RE: Voiced support for most previous speakers.

Emily Huotari
10702 SE County Road 17
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Unsure whether or not to send students to school due to masks and other issues being discussed.

Eric Barta
320 S 3rd St.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Agreement with most previous speakers, surprise at teachers sharing political affiliations and the importance of keeping politics out of the classroom.

Melissa Noreen
300 S 3rd St.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Supporter of public schools, but now considering other options. Concerned about how the sharing of personal beliefs by adults shapes their opinions. Importance of focusing on basic academic skills.

Carol Halonen
5931 SE 65th St.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Agreement with most other speakers. Importance of focusing on basic academic skills and leaving out political/social issues.

Carol Kruse
4435 SE Farmington Ave.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about CRT and resulting enrollment decision.

Diana Halonen
9345 County Road 11
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about CRT and comprehensive sex education. Importance of basic academic skills.

Kari Bekkala
120 Meadow Drive
Loretto, MN 55357

RE: Agreement with majority of speakers, concerns about mental health and difficult learning conditions.

Jana Richardson
4554 SE Farmington Ave.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Agreement with majority of speakers, concerns about masks.

Laura Robinson
5015 Fern Drive
Loretto, MN 55357

RE: Agreement with majority of speakers, concerns about CRT.

Cheryl VonBerge
1225 Northwood Drive
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about divisive issues and the emphasis on differences, and on a teacher sharing their opinion about a student walkout.

Lyle Olberding
724 Savannah Trail
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Agreement with majority of speakers and an emphasis on basic academic skills and in-person learning.

Angela Fegers
280 Greenway Drive
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about the fear COVID is instilling in students and masks, vaccines, CRT and comprehensive sex education.

Glen Ylitalo
530 Ironwood Drive
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Agreement with majority of speakers, and concerns with masks and CRT.

Pete Pietila
5683 SE Fenning Ave.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Focus on basic academic skills.

Robert Pinoniemi
9691 SE Fenning Ave.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Agreement with majority of speakers. Questions about alternatives to following CDC rules.

Troy LaFromboise
853 Goldenrod Court
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns with increasing racism due to CRT ideas.

Scott and Annette Streachek
1156 SE Deegan Ave.
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Fear of students to voice their opinions because of possible effects on class standing, grades, etc. Concerns about assignment asking students to share opinions on the president and his faults, and about teacher use of profanity in the classroom.

Paul Arens
115 Willow Drive
Delano, MN 55328

RE: Concerns about how CRT is encouraging racism.

9. Administrative Reports

A. Superintendent

M. Schoen said that plans are being developed to return to school as normally as possible, and said the district did not intend to require adherence to public health recommendations that are not mandates. The objective is to return students to in-person learning in 2021-22.

B. Business Manager

M. Reeder reported that a preliminary audit was scheduled to start later the same week on Friday.

C. Community Education Director

Eric Erlandson reported that summer programming was underway and planning was taking place for the fall. There was guarded optimism among staff that things could return to conditions approximating normal for the fall. As the new director, Erlandson said he was focused on meeting his team and familiarizing himself with current programs.

10. Board Reports

A. MAWSECO

A. Johnson reported that an extensive search was conducted for a new executive director, and an offer was extended after five candidates were interviewed. The finalist had verbally accepted the offer and contract negotiations were underway.

11. Old Business

A. Approve second read of Policy 510.1 – School Activity Fees, a new policy

Upon motion by C. Black, seconded by L. Seguin, the Board of Education approved the second read of Policy 510.1. Motion passed 7-0.

12. New Business

A. Approve FY22 - FY23 transportation contract

Upon motion by J. Rosenow, seconded by J. Gierke, the Board of Education approved the the FY22-FY23 transportation contract. Motion passed 7-0.

B. Approve MOU with Wright County Health & Human Services for the transportation of children and youth in foster care placement

Upon motion by A. Johnson seconded by S. Roeser, the Board of Education approved the MOU with Wright County Health & Human Services. Motion passed 7-0.

C. Approve disposal/sale of surplus property - DES playground equipment and 9 SMART Boards from DES (projectors not included)

Upon motion by A. Johnson, seconded by R. Depa, the Board of Education approved the disposal/sale of surplus property. Motion passed 7-0.

D. Approve hockey fees

Upon motion by R. Depa, seconded by J. Rosenow, the Board of Education approved the hockey fees. Motion passed 7-0.

E. Approve the first and only read of the following policies due to non-substantive and/or legal reference changes: Policy 707.1 - Transportation of Students Placed in Day Treatment Programs; Policy 710 - Extracurricular Transportation; and Policy 711 - Video Recording on School Buses

Upon motion by C. Black, seconded by S. Roeser, the Board of Education approved the first and only read of Policy 707.1, 710 and 711. Motion passed 7-0.

F. Approve the first read of Policy 707 - Transportation of Public School Students, due to substantive and legal reference changes

Upon motion by R. Depa, seconded by S. Roeser, the Board of Education approved the first read of Policy 707. Motion passed 7-0.

G. Approve the first read of Policy 708 - Transportation of Nonpublic School Students, due to substantive and legal reference changes

Upon motion by J. Rosenow, seconded by J. Gierke, the Board of Education approved the first read of Policy 708. Motion passed 7-0.

13. Closed session to discuss annual superintendent evaluation

Upon motion by L. Seguin, seconded by A. Johnson, the Board of Education approved closing the meeting to discuss the annual superintendent evaluation at 9:14 p.m. Motion passed 7-0.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 p.m.

CLERK

RECORDER