

**SWITZERLAND COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION**  
**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 09, 2012**  
**EXECUTIVE SESSION BOARD MEETING     4:00 P.M.**  
**REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING     5:00 P.M.**

The School Board of Trustees met before the regular public meeting for an Executive Session beginning at 4:00 at the Switzerland County School Corporation's Administration Office to discuss I.C.5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(9).

The board members present were Mr. Phipps, Mr. Roberts, Mrs. Moore, Mr. Daugherty, Mrs. Peters, Mr. Truitt and Mr. Waltz. Superintendent, Dr. Elizabeth T. Jones; School Board Attorney, Ron Hocker; Matthew Hocker and Lisa Arnoldy were also in attendance.

The board discussed no subject matter in the Executive Session other than the subject matter specified in the public notice.

The Executive Session adjourned and the meeting was opened to the public.

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:**

Mr. Phipps called the regular meeting to order and led those in attendance in the pledge to the flag.

**ATTENDANCE:**

The board members present were Mr. Phipps, Mr. Roberts, Mrs. Moore, Mr. Daugherty, Mrs. Peters, Mr. Truitt and Mr. Waltz.

Others in attendance were Dr. Elizabeth T. Jones, Wilma Swango, Mona Crabtree, Ronald Hocker, Matthew Hocker, Michael Jones, John Sieglitz, Jill Cord, Matt Levell and Greg Curlin.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:**

Mr. Daugherty made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Waltz seconded. The Board's vote was unanimous.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Dr. Jones said the first topic of discussion was the future placement of sixth grade students. She said the discussion actually began in 2009 because the Middle School had failed their AYP and scores were not good. She said the dropout rate that year was 83% and there was concern about the rigor of the classes and whether students were being graduated for quality college and career situations. Dr. Jones said the Board challenged the Administrative Team at that time to think out of the box in order to come up with some innovative ideas to help the situation and improve Middle school test scores. She

said with that notion, they began to work on the placement of the sixth grade at a different location. She said she met with different parent groups and held committee meetings. She said one meeting was held in March of that year at Switzerland County Elementary School at which some of the parents expressed concerns about their boys and asked Dr. Jones why the kids couldn't stay in the elementary for their sixth grade. She said the process was started with that possibility in mind. She said the sixth grade was moved out of the Middle School into Jefferson-Craig Elementary School as a group with the notion that keeping them in a self-contained classroom situation would help to improve test scores. Dr. Jones said they never disqualified the idea of moving some of the students back to East Enterprise, but the main concept was that self-contained classrooms would improve scores. She said the Middle School's scores did improve, so that goal was accomplished and now the Board needed to decide what the best situation for sixth grade will be: put them back at the Middle School; keep them at Jefferson-Craig Elementary School; or let the fifth grade students remain at the same building for their sixth grade year. She said the discussion tonight would involve those three options.

Mr. Daugherty said the data shows that moving the sixth grade students from the Middle School has improved their position and moving them all into Jefferson-Craig hasn't produced the scores they were hoping for, but still felt sixth graders should be under the umbrella of the elementary setting. He said he was in favor of fifth graders staying at the school in their own home districts since this would alleviate any space issues at Jefferson-Craig and something was going to be done at Switzerland County Elementary based on what was decided at this meeting. He said it was his understanding that the construction of the wing at East Enterprise would be completed so that kids could attend school by 2013. He said that would give them this summer and next summer to complete the construction.

Mr. Waltz agreed with Mr. Daugherty. He said the Board had originally agreed to move the sixth graders to JC for one year to see the results and by the time it happens, four or five years will have passed.

Mr. Roberts said he was supportive of the move.

Mrs. Peters said she was not in disagreement with those members of the Board who had already voiced their opinions, but she remembered a seminar she had attended where she learned in order to be a good school board member, decisions should be based on sufficient data. She said as an ex-educator and parent, she could say that the self-contained classroom is the way to go, but on the other hand she is not convinced that the Board has the data to prove that this is the best thing for sixth graders. She said the Board still doesn't know if the scores haven't improved. She said since the Board did not have the information for this year, she did not see why a decision had to be made this evening. She said she personally felt the school at East Enterprise needed to be updated yesterday and this could be done without making the decision to build on extra classrooms in order to put sixth graders in self-contained classrooms when the data was not available.

Mr. Daugherty said maybe the Board doesn't have enough data to support self-contained classrooms, but the scores from last year tell him that the setup at Jefferson-Craig isn't working. He said the data for the ratings from the schools is available. He said since the Middle School's scores were so low, the good scores at Jefferson-Craig were sacrificed when the whole sixth grade was moved there, so he could not see sacrificing them more when the kids could be put back at their own home schools.

Mrs. Peters asked how long the sixth grade students had been away from Switzerland County Elementary School. Mr. Jones said they had been gone several years. He said he did not know if the fact had to be established that if they are moved back, they will be in self-contained classrooms. He said presently the fifth graders are together, but they have three teachers that are teaching different subjects. He said the distinction should be made for elementary versus self-contained classroom. Mr. Waltz said he believed that research has shown that scores for students in self-contained classrooms compared to departmentalization in the elementary setting has been pretty much even. He felt the matter was whether or not the student was closer to home, closer to parent involvement, closer to their community activities and the nurturing environment of the elementary setting.

Mr. Phipps said the Corporation has seen some benefits of moving the whole sixth grade together and now he felt it was time to go back to the community concept and have the two elementary schools be K-6. He said the East Enterprise kids are moving twice by coming down to a new school as sixth graders and then moving to another new school the following year, which is the problem he has always had with it. He said he was basing his opinion on all of the information that was available at this time and felt this was the right move for the kids. Mr. Jones mentioned that his school also had Pre-Kindergarten students.

Mr. Daugherty said he has had only one person tell him they hoped the Board would not make the decision to move the sixth grade back to both elementary schools and that was based purely on personal reasons.

Mrs. Peters said when the agenda was sent to the newspaper this week, the Indiana Code did not cite that the Board would be discussing moving the sixth grade students. Mr. Hocker said the Board need only cite Indiana Code for what was being discussed during an Executive Session and not what is discussed during an open session. Mrs. Peters said the public only came when there was something that really grabbed their attention. Mr. Hocker said the Board could promote the agenda if it wanted, but it was not required by law. Mr. Phipps said he was disappointed with the agenda when he saw it in the paper. Mr. Daugherty said this discussion was advertised for the meeting held at East Enterprise and only teachers and support staff had attended. Mrs. Peters said that was true.

Mr. Daugherty made a motion to approve the sixth grade students to remain in the elementary school of their home district effective August, 2013, pending the completion of any renovations to Switzerland County Elementary School. Mr. Waltz seconded the motion. Mrs. Peters asked if the closing of Highway 56 would have any bearing on the completion of the renovation. Mrs. Moore said Mr. Lancer was asked that question at the

meeting held at East Enterprise and he had answered that it would not. The vote to approve the change was as follows: AYES: Daugherty, Phipps, Roberts, Waltz, Peters, Moore. NAY: Truitt.

Dr. Jones said the next topic of discussion was redistricting. She presented the Board with a map that had two lines, one showing the current district lines (yellow) and the other, (blue), showing proposed lines. She said the notion was to pick up the students between the two lines as the zone to be redistricted to Jefferson-Craig. Mr. Sieglitz showed the Board how he could find on the map where actual families lived using Google and Microsoft. Dr. Jones said the blue line could be adjusted as they saw fit if the decision to redistrict was made. About 50 students were pinpointed to be between the current and proposed lines. She said if the decision to redistrict was made, she would hold parent meetings to explain the decision and to let them know what to expect. She said those families and their unique situations would need to be considered. For example, she said if a family lived in the redistricted area that would now be considered Jefferson-Craig's and a sixth grader wished to stay at East Enterprise his last year, then this would need to be considered the first year in order for it to be effective for the long haul. Dr. Jones said by redistricting, the number of students at each school would be more equalized when the sixth grade is once again housed at both schools. She said if redistricting is approved, it would be best for it to happen in tandem with the sixth grade move in 2013. Mr. Phipps said the only problem he saw with this was handing the project off to another Superintendent. Mr. Waltz stated he thought a new law allowed students to attend the school of their choice. Dr. Jones said that was true if a parent petitioned the Superintendent before the correct deadline and there was enough space in that grade level, but transportation did not have to be provided. Mr. Waltz said if the size of the East Enterprise school increases to 485 students, then the Board needed to look at additional staff there. When Mrs. Peters asked Mr. Jones how many students were currently attending his school, he said the last student count was 408. She said with the additional sixth graders, there would be roughly 475 students. She figured the Jefferson-Craig numbers would decrease to about 300 students, but with redistricting that number would be bumped up to around 350. Mr. Daugherty asked if a decision needed to be made tonight or if it could be put off until a later date. Mr. Phipps felt it had direct relevance to the renovation project at Switzerland County Elementary School and how many classrooms needed to be added. Mr. Daugherty said he felt redistricting could be done later if need be. Mr. Phipps then asked if anyone wished to make a motion on redistricting. Mr. Waltz made a motion to leave the school district lines as they presently are. Mr. Roberts seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The subject of the construction project was discussed at previous meetings and Mr. Phipps wanted the Board to make a decision as to what items the Board might want to consider. He said nothing would be set in stone, but Mr. Lancer from RQAW needed an idea from the Board as to what they wanted done. Some items previously on the list have already been eliminated and the list under discussion for this meeting includes a new wing with 5 classrooms and a reworking of the site; replacing kitchen rooftop exhaust fans/make-up air handling units; replacement of electric thermal storage unit; adding wood fiber, border at playground area per insurance carrier; renovations of the main office and nursing area, and the security entry; replacement of 650 light fixtures and

ceiling grid/tiles; replacement of drain down sump/heat pump piping system insulation; renovation of restrooms with the addition of drinking fountains; interior finishes including new doors/terrazzo wall base/paint, etc.; and built-in classroom storage cabinets and adding a serving line to the kitchen area with other kitchen modifications. Mr. Daugherty said he felt portable bleachers would be beneficial in the gym so that all students would have a place to sit during convocations. He said he felt some of the items should be done in stages in order to keep the disruption to the students at a minimum. Discussion then went to opinions of members of the Endowment voiced at the meeting held on March 7 at East Enterprise. It was derived by the Board that the consensus of the Endowment's opinion was that their contribution would be mostly to Debt Service in order to keep from increasing anyone's property taxes. It was also noted that opinions were given regarding specific items on the list, but that it was ultimately up to the School Board to decide which items they wished to see included in the project. Mr. Waltz mentioned that he wasn't happy with the way renovations were done at the High School when he was Principal because there was no money allocated for things that needed to be done while things were already torn up since they weren't initially included in the project. He said things end up costing twice as much when you go back and try to fix things later. Mrs. Peters brought up the subject of adding wood fiber at the playground area. Mrs. Swango said whether it is a part of this project or not, the Corporation has agreed with the insurance company that over the next three years, it would be done. When asked for his opinion on the subject, Mr. Jones said he really didn't think the second serving line was needed. He said the lunch schedule with additional students was workable and the dishwasher was fairly new. Mr. Roberts moved to approve the scope of the Switzerland County Elementary School construction with the omission of adding a serving line and other kitchen modifications. Mrs. Moore seconded the motion. The vote was as follows: AYES: Phipps, Roberts, Moore, Waltz, Peters, Daugherty. NAYS: Truitt.

**NEW BUSINESS:** (None)

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mrs. Cord said the RISE model for evaluations was presented for consideration at a meeting held in March, 2012. She said even though great effort is being given to train Principals on the implementation of the program, she felt the new system is doomed to failure if the political realities in the schools are not addressed very soon. Mrs. Cord said the overall process of the evaluation process must be to determine the value, worth and merit of teaching, not to assess how much political support a teacher is willing to give a building principal. She said a teacher evaluation cannot continue to be something that is done to teachers, but a timely, systematic and fair practice with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. Mrs. Cord said Switzerland County teachers, as all other individuals, possess First Amendment Freedom of Speech rights. She said this was proven in 2008 court proceedings that specifically involved Switzerland County School Corporation. She said no teacher should have to fear retaliatory actions which manifest themselves in unsatisfactory written evaluations; when teachers express opinions different from those of principals; when they make public statements as professional educators, tax payers or school patrons at public school board meetings; or when they

ask pertinent school related questions which deserve timely and professional responses. The consequences of those who retaliate against teachers for practicing their First Amendment Rights via unfair, unsatisfactory written evaluations can be quite severe. She said this is the case when a legal judgment has already been judicially ordered that prevents such retaliatory measures by any building principal, Superintendent, or School Board member. Mrs. Cord said she was there to ask what assurances the Board could give her to guarantee her that she would not be retaliated against via the evaluation process next year, and to ask what could be done to right the wrong that was done this year when she was presented with an unfair, unsatisfactory evaluation approximately fifty days after she was formally observed in her classroom for only forty minutes during the last school year. She said she was very troubled with how this evaluation was handled and had no doubt others had similar concerns but were probably too fearful to let this be known for the same reasons she had just expressed. Mrs. Cord said she would be happy to speak to the Board in Executive or Public Session whenever such a meeting can be scheduled to discuss the matter in detail and thanked the Board for allowing her to speak. Mr. Phipps thanked Mrs. Cord for her comments and said the Board would take them under advisement.

Mr. Jones mentioned that his school was having Family Fun Night on Tuesday and welcomed everyone's presence.

#### **PERSONNEL:**

The Board unanimously approved the retirement of Middle School Head Cook, Amber Reed, effective May 22, 2012 in a motion made by Mrs. Moore and seconded by Mr. Waltz.

Mrs. Moore made a motion to approve the resignation of High School Principal, Dan Noel, effective June 30, 2012. Mr. Truitt seconded the motion. Mr. Phipps abstained from the vote while all other Board members present voted to approve.

The resignation of Theresa Darling as a part-time nurse was unanimously approved by the Board in a motion by Mr. Daugherty, seconded by Mr. Truitt.

#### **PROFESSIONAL LEAVE / FIELD TRIPS:**

The Board voted unanimously to approve the following field trip request in a motion by Mr. Truitt and seconded by Mrs. Moore:

- Seaver – BPA students to Competition/Leadership Academy in Chicago, 4/24 through 4/29

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS: (SUPERINTENDENT)**

Dr. Jones made the following announcements:

- Next Endowment meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 24, 2012 at 5:00pm
- Next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Monday, April 16, 2012 at 5:30pm
- Special Executive Session on Monday, April 23, 2012 at 4:00pm

**BOARD REPORT AND COMMENTS:**

Mr. Waltz said he wanted to wish Mr. Noel every success in his new job. He said Mr. Noel was a good man and he was personally going to miss him.

Mrs. Peters asked if the work being done in the back was the practice soccer field. Dr. Jones said that was correct and that Mr. Christman was doing the work.

Mrs. Peters said she had volunteered to update the policy manual and was working with a liaison in Indianapolis but she had not heard from her in a while and figured they were very busy. She said she thought she needed to ask the Board to look at some issues where some policies are put in place, with all of the statutes that are coming out, to safeguard themselves from things down the road. She said after attending some seminars on this, she has learned that other school corporations are doing that. She said she and Mr. Phipps had attended the High School’s North Central Evaluation group meeting that had been attended by members of the community which they found exciting and exhilarating, but at that meeting had heard the comment from one of those community members that the Board was having way too many Executive meetings. She said this had alerted her to where she was going to hold the Board to spending their time on whatever was in the paper and tonight this needed to be worked on.

Mr. Phipps addressed Mrs. Peters and said he was not sure he understood her last comment. He said he thought the Board had been aboveboard about everything and as long as he has been President, he has tried to do that so he resented her comments.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Waltz moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Phipps seconded and the meeting was so adjourned. (6:30 p.m.)

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James Phipps, President

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William Roberts, Vice President

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Tonya Moore, Secretary

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Wayne Daugherty, Member

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Nancy Peters, Member

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Andy Truitt, Member

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Vernon Waltz, Member