

**West Carroll Board of Education  
Public Hearing - Holiday Waiver for School Calendar  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, January 18, 2012**

The Board of Education of West Carroll Community Unit School District No. 314 held a public hearing at the West Carroll Intermediate School Library/Media Center, 801 South Street, Thomson, Illinois to Waive Legal School Holidays.

The public hearing was called to order by President Highland at 6:30 p.m.

Members present: Jerry Anderson; John Brigham; Mike Highland; Bev Kilpatrick; Mark Klein; Dawn Rath (arrived at 6:35 p.m.)

Members Absent: Tim Atherton

Administration: Superintendent Craig Mathers; Principals Robert Lamb; Julie Katzenberger; Jeanette Ashby; Special Education/Preschool Director Pam Delp

Others present: Christan Schrader (Northwest Special Education Cooperative Director), Brad Field, Denise Noordhoff, Media (Bill Gengenbach and Michael Miller)

**Public Hearing – Legal Holiday Waiver for School Calendar**

During the 2006-2007 school year West Carroll applied to the State for a mandated waiver of legal school holidays. That waiver will end June 30, 2012. The legislature has passed Public Act 96.640 that changes the process of waivers for school holidays. The district must make a public notice to inform the public, district staff, parents, and students of the waiving of the following legal school holidays: the third Monday in January (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday); February 12 (President Abraham Lincoln's birthday); the first Monday in March (Casimir Pulaski's birthday); the second Monday in October (Columbus Day); and November 11 (Veteran's Day). The waiver will allow the district to hold school, schedule teachers' institutes, parent-teacher conferences, staff development, or not attend school on these days. If there is no waiver in place, the district must not be in attendance on these days. If school is in attendance some form of learning activity must be included on the person or activity involved. Anderson asked how long this waiver will be in effect. Mathers responded that it will be in effect indefinitely until another Board revokes it or this Board may change it at any time. There were no other questions from Board members or the audience.

**Close Public Hearing - Convene Regular Meeting**

The Board closed the public hearing and convened the regular December meeting of the West Carroll Board of Education at 6:34 p.m.

**Amend Regular Meeting Agenda**

Board members amended the regular meeting agenda by moving the Northwest Special Education Cooperative presentation, under New Business, directly after Board Committee Reports.

**Consent Agenda**

- Minutes-December 14, 2011; Regular Meeting
- Minutes-December 14, 2011; Regular Meeting, closed session
- Financial Reports; Payment of Bills; Activity Accounts; FRIS Report
- Destruction of Closed Session Tapes – Regular Meeting, March 18, 2010 (1 tape)

Board of Education approved the items of the consent agenda as presented.

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**Comments** - None

**Correspondence**

Thank you notes were received from Aaron Blair, a student teacher at the Middle School and the family of Cleo McCoy, mother of Robyn Lamb.

**Administrative Reports**

Robert Lamb, High School principal, stated that registration for next year's classes has begun. Freshman Orientation will be held February 8. All high school staff will share information regarding their classes. High School students will have an assembly on February 6 where they will hear Miss Illinois talk about the dangers of texting while driving and other teen issues. Mr. Lamb spoke on behalf of Clint Cowman, assistant principal/athletic director, who was supervising a basketball game at Stockton. Regional play for both wrestling and girls' basketball is fast approaching. Manny's Shoot-out is scheduled for January 21 with several area teams, as well as, teams from Iowa, Wisconsin, and the Chicago area.

Jeanette Ashby, Primary principal, reported the first ever Reading Night is scheduled for January 19. A large crowd is expected to enjoy all the different activities that are planned. It is hoped there will be no snow days to interfere with the projected 100<sup>th</sup> day on January 27. Many activities are scheduled.

Julie Katzenberger, Middle School principal, reported the VFW recognized three winner's of the Patriot's Pen essay. The theme was "Are You Proud of Your Country?" The students did a wonderful job.

Pam Delp, Special Education/Preschool director, stated the district currently has 227 students with an IEP. Mrs. Delp has finished and submitted the Disproportionality Status Report. An action plan was highlighted and will be implemented to help district staff become more aware of the disproportionality of students and cultural difficulties within the district. The preschool program received a \$200 gift certificate for participating in the Erickson Institute study. The funds will be used to purchase books for the classrooms. Erickson Institute also provided the preschool with two video cameras they will be able to keep for use. The preschool screenings have been scheduled for Carroll County. This process will help to distinguish the number of students who will need the services provided by the program.

Brad Field, district Technology director, reported that required restructuring of the district network for CIPA filter purposes created some email issues and resulted in the district being "blacklisted" by Microsoft. After a lot of telephone calls the issues have been resolved. Staff and students at the High School are excited about the wireless carts that are available. The donated laptops have been added to the two mobile carts and are being used extensively. Mr. Lamb stated a problem not anticipated from the use of the mobile carts is students needing to print their information. They were printing to the teacher's workroom copier which bogged down the copier making it hard for the teachers to be able to use the machine. It will be necessary to make available or purchase printers for the students to use.

Craig Mathers, superintendent, congratulated the Middle School for having 95.94% attendance for the month of December. Mr. Mathers compiled a comparison of substitution rates for this year and last

from area school districts. The information was gathered from the IASA Northwest Division School Survey. The rates are almost the same as last year. Iowa pay rates for substitutes are higher. Anderson asked if most of our subs were going to Iowa schools. Mr. Mathers stated he did not think that was the case. The district is just having a harder time getting substitutes because there are not

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as many available. Highland stated the fees to register as a substitute have risen significantly. Mr. Mathers stated it is easier for an individual with just a college degree to become a substitute than someone who is certified and retired to be a substitute. If a retired teacher would let their certification lapse they are required to take an additional nine credit hours to be recertified. Carroll County is in the initial planning stages of putting together a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. The first meeting is scheduled for February 2, 2012. By participating the school district will be eligible to receive grants. Mr. Mathers will share information with the Board as it becomes available.

### **Board Committee Reports**

No Board committees have met but several district committees have met or will meet as follows: Parent-student Handbook Committee met January 11 and is scheduled to meet again on February 8, 2012; Quality Circle met January 9, 2012; and the Technology Committee will meet January 26, 2012.

### **Presentation – Northwest Special Education Cooperative**

Director Christan Schrader informed Board members the Northwest Special Education Cooperative is comprised of twelve member school districts that cover an expansive area ranging from Dakota to the east, East Dubuque to the north, and West Carroll to the southwest. The cooperative provides to the districts necessary special education services that are not as frequently needed by the students such as hearing, vision, occupational and physical therapy, psychological services, and social worker. The cooperative oversees the STEP program which is a transition program for students 16 years and older by allowing them to participate in employment opportunities. West Carroll allows students participating in STEP to receive high school credit for working. Another service of the cooperative is the Northwest Academy for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. The Academy currently has 23 or 24 students enrolled but can house as many as 30. West Carroll has seven students at the Academy. The Academy is for students who are not able to perform in the normal education environment but the Academy staff works with the students to get them back to their home schools if at all possible. 16.8 percent of West Carroll's students have an IEP, including preschool and speech only students. This is about average for school districts our size. Ms. Schrader's vision or goal for the Cooperative is to start an autism program. She hopes to realize this goal within the next year. Mr. Mathers stated kudos to the district's special education staff and administration for being able to lower the special education percentage. A couple of years ago the average was 21.3 percent. Rtl has helped to put more students back into the regular classroom setting. Ms. Schrader said lowering the percentage is a good thing. A higher percentage of special education students will make the State more cognizant of what is going on in the district. Highland thanked Ms. Schrader for her time in making the presentation and what the Cooperative does for the district.

### **Old Business**

#### **Holiday Waiver**

The resolution was prepared by the district's legal counsel. Mr. Mather's reminded Board members that passing the resolution to waive the legal holidays does not guarantee that school will be in attendance on these days. The decision will be made by the Board of Education each year as they vote to approve the proposed school calendars.

The Board approved the resolution to waive legal school holidays; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (January), President Abraham Lincoln (February), Casimir Pulaski (March), Columbus Day (October), and Veteran's Day (November).

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### **Board Policy Updates**

PRESS, Issue 77, October 2011 recommends policy changes to FOIA, accounting and audits, personnel, curriculum content, and new procedures for concussion and parent notification. The Board is revising policies 8.30 and 8.30 E-2 regarding sexual offender notification to be allowed on school grounds. A 72 hour notice must be provided, supervision must be available, and the specific dates must be supplied.

Members of the Board approved the second reading and adopt PRESS policies, Issue 77, October 2011 and policy changes to 8.30 and 8.30 E-2 as presented.

### **WCHS Curriculum Handbook - Second Reading**

The Board of Education approved the second reading and adopt the 2012-2013 West Carroll High School Curriculum Handbook as presented.

### **Strategic Action Plan**

Mr. Mathers informed the Board it was his understanding they wanted to focus on four main topic areas for this year's Strategic Action Plan. They are as follows: curriculum, transitioning to common core curriculum; technology, where will the district be a year from now; trying to maintain a balanced budget while trying to offer the best education possible; and the evaluation process. These are broad areas and will encompass a lot. Highland stated this is a comprehensive list and covers areas that need to be looked at. There is nothing else they wish to add at this time.

### **New Business**

#### **Second Quarter Financial Report**

Mr. Mathers provided the Board with second quarter financial reports. The state owes West Carroll over \$1,000,000. There have been no payments for early childhood. The State is running behind 104 business days. Payment should be expected around the first of March. This is earlier than payments were received the previous year. Other money owed from the State is mandated categorical funds like transportation and special education transportation. With 50 percent of the school year gone the district has spent 45.28 percent of the budgeted expenditures. Operations and maintenance is doing well. There have been no heavy winter expenditures. Other areas that are under budget are some salaries, health insurance, and TRS. A speech and language pathologist had not been hired for the first half of the year. Cafeteria expenses are down because they are using commodities first before ordering other food supplies. Garbage expenses are down due to reducing the number of pick-ups during the summer months. Highland stated the administration, teachers, and staff should be complimented for working to keep expenditures down. Mr. Mathers said everyone is tracking purchase orders and being more cognizant of what they can order. Everyone is working together to keep costs under control.

### **Review Closed Session Minutes: July 2011-December 2011**

The Board of Education is required to review closed session minutes every six months to determine if the minutes should remain closed. Due to privacy issues of employees and students and items related to collective bargaining, Mr. Mathers suggests the Board not open these minutes to the public.

Board members approved to keep the closed session minutes from July 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011 closed.

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### **District Investments – The National Bank**

THE National Bank has informed the district they will no longer be pledging securities to cover district investments effective February 1, 2012. Due to economic conditions and market performance THE National is losing money on interest gained and securities pledged. The bank is recommending the district move all of its funds into non-interest bearing accounts. The Dodd Frank Wall Street Reform Act will extend FDIC coverage beyond the \$250,000 limit to ensure all district funds are protected. Mr. Mathers has contacted ten area banks to see if they are interested in taking district funds to place in interest bearing accounts. In 2005 the Board approved only five banking institutions for district funds. The Board needs to expand this number to allow the district to make money on their investments and make the liquidity of funds more feasible. The Savanna Thomson Bank is a good choice because there is a branch in all three towns. The district operating accounts need to be local. The Savanna Thomson Bank is working with district attorneys to get the needed security pledges. Brigham stated he is all in favor of working with local businesses and banks but the district needs to be able to make interest on its funds. The district must be able to diversify. THE National Bank has offered to help the district set up trust accounts. This would cost the district money because of the management fees THE National would charge.

The Board of Education approved the Superintendent to diversify funds to local banks to maximize investment interest and fund protection (Policy 4:30).

### **Closed Session for any lawful purpose including, but not limited to:**

The Board moved to go into closed session at 7:20 p.m. for the discussion of items A. appointment, employment, discipline, performance or dismissal or removal of specific employees; B. collective bargaining matters or consideration of salary schedules for one or more classes of employees; and E. student discipline cases.

The Board of Education returned the regular meeting to open session at 9:00 p.m.

### **Action on Closed Session Items**

The Board of Education approved the following items:

To uphold the administrative decisions for out of school suspensions, transportation suspensions, and extra-curricular violations at West Carroll High School, Middle School, and Primary School as presented.

To accept, with regret, the resignation of Jerry Kingery, evening custodian at the West Carroll High School.

To accept, with regret, the resignation of Kristie Byrnes as Bus #27 transportation aide at West Carroll CUSD #314.

To accept, with regret, the resignation of Bill Gengenbach as a substitute bus driver for West Carroll CUSD #314.

To approve the administrative recommendation to employ Robert LaShelle as a regular route bus driver.

To approve the administrative recommendation to employ Sharon Pelzer as a speech and language pathologist for the district.

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To approve giving Pam Delp 250 additional sick days allowing her to retire with full benefits through TRS June 30, 2013.

**Adjournment**

The Board of Education adjourned the regular January meeting of the Board of Education at 9:20 p.m.