

West Carroll Board of Education
January 21, 2010

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, West Carroll Community Unit School District No. 314, was held in the WC Intermediate School Library/Media Center, 801 South Street, Thomson, Illinois. The meeting was called to order by President Boyd at 6:30 p.m.

Members present: David Boyd, John Brigham, Mike Highland, Bev Kilpatrick, Deb Klein, and Bill Sweeney

Member absent: Timothy Atherton

Administration present: Superintendent Craig Mathers, Principals Bob Lamb, Monica Burkholder, Julie Katzenberger, Pam Delp, and Jeanette Ashby

Others present: Don Benning, Don Beaston, Jaimie Strojohann, Denise Brotzman, Mr. and Mrs. Strojohann, Casey Gehant, Brad Field, Media (Bill Gengenbach, Michael Miller, and Samantha Pidde)

Board members approved all items of the consent agenda as presented.

- A. December 17, 2009 Truth in Taxation Public Hearing minutes
- B. December 17, 2009 Regular Meeting minutes
- C. December 17, 2009 Regular Meeting, Closed Session minutes
- D. Financial reports and activity account reports
- E. Payment of all bills as presented

Public Comment - None

Correspondence

Superintendent Mathers received a letter from Judy Beck, grandparent of West Carroll students, questioning locations of athletic events. Mr. Mathers responded to her concerns with a letter. The family of Robert Carlile sent a thank you card for the memorial to Highland Community College Foundation in his name.

Administrative Reports

Brad Field, technical director reported that in early December STI had data corruption at the Primary and Intermediate schools and the district network was attacked by an invasive virus. Mr. Field worked in cooperation with Computer Dynamics and AERO to try and contain the virus and get the district's network and computers up and running properly. Within the last week things are better and many security measures have been put into place. Over the holiday break AERO started work on installing network servers. The district e-mail server landed on a blacklist creating some problems with sending mail to certain domains. E-mail and STI are up and running and new software has been installed to help with security measures. Mr. Field is working to get remote access to technology working. Superintendent Mathers stated that Brad has put in a lot of time and hard hours to get everything up and running and to allow staff access to programs from home. Boyd questioned if Brad is confident that we have found a way to block the virus. MacAfee, security software, is very good and has already found some problems. Brad is not exactly sure how the virus got into the district but it probably came from a removable media source. Brigham asked if the new software has updates available. The software is currently updating twice a day within the system.

Jeanette Ashby, WC Primary School principal, reported that February 2nd will be the 100th day of school and the Primary will hold its celebration. Mid-Year AIMSweb testing has been completed and the data will be studied to determine student progress. The joint in-service with Eastland is scheduled

for Friday, January 22. This is an excellent opportunity to work with another district and allow the top names in education to present workshops for our staff. Progress reports will go home February 5. Three textbook representatives will be presenting their reading series. This is an important decision and will help with moving forward with Rtl and differentiated instruction. Mr. Mathers stated that the timeline for textbook adoption has been put together by Ashby and Monica Burkholder. They will have a proposal in the near future for board decision.

Pam Delp, WC Intermediate principal, said that report cards were sent home on January 8. The Intermediate School has 40 students with perfect attendance and 77 students were on the honor roll for the second nine weeks. Fifth grade students went on their annual ski trip to Chestnut Mountain on January 15. She thanked the Education Foundation and PTO for the financial support to this program. Mrs. Delp also thanked Jeanette Ashby and Darcie Feltmeyer for chairing the joint in-service opportunity. The Intermediate School Spelling Bee will be held on January 27 and the top spellers will join the district Spelling Bee at the Middle School on February 1. The regional Spelling Bee is scheduled for February 22.

Mrs. Delp reported that the special education child count is currently in progress. Mrs. Delp has completed the revision to the district's Special Education Disproportionality Self Assessment Report. The writing of the report has helped to clarify the district's policies and procedures in identifying students with needs. There are new federal requirements for writing transition plans for students 14 ½ years or older. The deadline is March 1. Special education staff and administrators at the Middle and High Schools are busy completing the necessary paperwork for these new requirements. Release time will be provided to help the teachers meet the timeline.

Middle School principal, Julie Katzenberger thanked Mrs. Delp for meeting with the special education staff to help with the new federal regulations. January 8 the Middle School recognized 154 students who made the honor roll for the second quarter. Liesl Meador, Karlee Wurster, and Tom Watson were congratulated for being winners in the VFW Patriot's Pen Essay. The Annual Spelling Bee is scheduled for February 1 and third quarter Progress Reports will be mailed on February 5. Literature books are being reviewed for possible textbook adoption. Preparations are beginning for ISAT during the first week of March. Final round of the Battle of the Books was held January 19. The 8th grade won. Students received \$225.00 in gift cards. Mrs. Katzenberger thanked the Education Foundation for backing this program. The annual wrestling invitational was held on January 16 with nine schools from the area participating. Champions in their weight classes were Jeff Casey and Devin Saunders and the following students placed in their weight classes: Shawn Magill, Ethan Mangler, Trevor Jones, Dustin Mussman, and Jakob Rodisel. Girl's basketball has started with their first win and the next four games will be played at home.

High School principal, Bob Lamb reported first semester testing finished on January 4 and the second semester classes began on January 5. Incomplete grades were due by January 15. Manny's Shootout is scheduled on Saturday, January 23 with twelve different schools from three states participating. Registration of classes for next year will begin next week. Teachers are currently working with students giving their recommendations on what choices they should be making. Counselors will begin talking with students the week of February 1. Freshman pre-registration is scheduled for February 16 at 6:00 p.m. This will allow parents and students to listen to high school staff discuss class offerings and class expectations. Eighth grade (freshman) students will have a school refresher night just before school starts next fall. This is part of the new Freshman Transition Plan. Fall golf and volleyball teams were recognized for outstanding cumulative grade point averages. The golf team had a grade point average of 3.44 and the volleyball team had a grade point

average of 3.53. The student servant leadership team researched the subject of abuse and is giving informative assemblies to fellow students. A seventh student, Ethan Baisden, has received the honor of an invitation to participate at the IMEA state festival.

Monica Burkholder, assistant principal at WC High School, thanked Manny Castro for the money and time that he donates to the district sports programs and non-sports activities (Shootout sponsor). He definitely goes above and beyond for the kids of the district. It is handbook time. She will be working on the parent-student and athletic handbooks and hopes to have them available for the board to have the first reading in March. She asked if any board member would be interested in working on the committee and if so please let her know, the meetings will be worked around their schedules.

Superintendent Mathers shared with board members a letter he wrote to Representative Jim Sacia and his response. Mathers stated that Sacia says it takes 22 people to change a vote in Springfield. The Board needs to stay proactive. Writing to your legislators helps. Mr. Mathers has addresses if board members are interested. The schedule for Manny's Shootout was made available for board members. The December Monthly Attendance Report was discussed. All attendance is up over last year and December is the third month in a row that WC High School has had the highest average. Highlights from the Quality Circle Exit Notes were discussed. Electrical updates are needed at WC Intermediate School to allow better computer and smart board usage. Mr. Mathers has a rough quote for the electrical work but will get a final estimate to bring to the Board for review. Quality Circle brought forward staff wishes for the school calendar. Mr. Mathers will begin working on the calendar for next year very soon. The governor gave his State of the State address recently and some legislative changes have occurred. SB315 reverses some items of the FOIA bill. Staff evaluations have been taken out of the FOIA bill. Race to the Top changes have student achievement linked to teacher and principal evaluations. Mr. Boyd thanked board members, the administration and the general public for all the efforts and participation being put forth to bring the prison to Thomson. Highland stated there is a preparedness meeting on February 25 presented by the Tri-County Economic Development Alliance in partnership with Blackhawk Hills RC&D and the USDA Rural Development. He feels that either a board member or the superintendent should attend. Mr. Mathers asked board members to let him know if anyone would be interested in attending. He will e-mail the date and information to each member.

Board Committee Reports

The Transportation Committee met on January 5, 2010. Exit Notes were presented.

Old Business

Board members approved the destruction of the closed session tapes (2 tapes) of April 17, 2008, regular meeting.

A revision has been made to the science curriculum proposal. The Forensics class has been renamed to Bio-Forensics. The Regional Office has given approval for this change which aligns better with the instructor's qualifications. WC High School science instructors have talked with Mrs. Katzenberger who will in turn talk with her science department and when the curriculum is approved high school and middle school teachers will meet to work towards aligning science classes within the district.

Board members approved the second reading of the West Carroll High School Science Curriculum for initiation in 2010-2011.

Mr. Highland, Mr. Lamb, and Dave Baisden met regarding the WC High School Curriculum Handbook, language was cleaned up and prerequisites prepared. Highland stated it was a good meeting. Everything is ready to go and the handbook was nicely done.

Board members approved the second reading of the West Carroll High School Curriculum Handbook as presented.

Sweeney stated he thought the athletic handbook had been changed to an extra-curricular handbook. Burkholder said yes that is correct. She had called it by the wrong name.

On January 11, 2010 Mr. Mathers submitted a signed Memo of Understanding to the Illinois State Board of Education demonstrating the district's intention to participate in Race to the Top. The document included the signatures of the board president and superintendent but not the teacher's association. Only 40% of the state's school districts responded and with the explanation from the state on how the funds will be distributed we will most likely not receive any funds. The states of Texas and New York chose not to participate. If West Carroll does receive the grant, we have 90 days to put plans together. Boyd felt with the intent from last board meeting it was necessary to keep all options open.

Don Benning from Benning Group LLC gave highlights of the FY2009 district audit. He thanked the Board for allowing his company to work with the district. He purchased the business from Robert Carlile a year ago and all of the former employees stayed with him. The financial statement report is just a standard auditing opinion stating that the district is not in conformity with general accounting principals because the district uses a cash basis instead of an accrual accounting balance. Mr. Benning explained the difference between the two procedures and that there is nothing wrong with the way the district does its bookkeeping (the majority of all districts in the area use a cash basis). Mr. Boyd asked for the explanation. Mr. Benning said it is one of the required statements of an audit. The audit also noted an internal control deficiency. The meaning behind this is that the district has a lack of expertise in preparing their financial statements because the district has decided not to go to the expense of hiring someone with a proper degree in business. Other areas highlighted were the balance sheet, fund balances, and the excess revenue over expenditures report. Included in the audit was a four year comparison of fund balances showing that the district has gravitated from negative balances to positive. A single audit is required when a district receives over \$500,000 of federal funds. There were no additional questions from board members. Superintendent Mathers discussed the districts state financial rating "in review" which is a 3.25. This is the second highest rating a district can receive. He asked Mr. Benning if the district would be able to get to the highest rating or if the rating would not change until the district's long term debt (bonds) was paid down. Mr. Benning agreed that until more of the bonds were paid off the district would not be able to receive the higher rating of recognition but 3.25 is a good score. A couple of the funds have "red" balances, auditors do not like to see deficit balances. To correct, funds can be transferred in and out to "balance the funds". Mathers questioned if general state aid funds can be used in operations and maintenance and transportation funds. Benning stated this can be done and would be a good thing to work toward black balances. Boyd stated that the Board has been working hard to bring up the district's fund balances and still lower the tax rate. Benning said that is the main focus and yet, maintain enough operating cash. The balancing act is a tough job. The Board thanked Mr. Benning for coming and explaining the audit.

Board members approved the West Carroll C.U.S.D. #314 audit for 2008-2009.

Superintendent Mathers gave a brief update to the Board on the district finances. Through the second quarter, 50% of the fiscal year, the district has spent 51.68% of the budget. Benning asked where the district was with State of Illinois funding. The state is currently behind \$1,000,000. The district is receiving state aid but nothing else is coming through. Mr. Mathers stated that the federal money that the state has been using will not be there again. Boyd stated that it is good that the administration is staying on track with the budget.

The Transportation Committee has been meeting to determine a way to continue safe and economical transportation for the district's students. The committee wanted to bring the entire Board up to date on the information received from Midstate Transit and Central States Bus Sales. Multiple options are being investigated and the desire is to bring a final recommendation to the Board in February so busses can be secured by the beginning of next school year. The district will lose depreciation on 12 busses at the end of this fiscal year. Central States Bus Sales will be meeting with ISBE to discuss whether they will allow the continuation of the bus trusts. The district would like to get on a three year cycle of changing busses. This will reduce maintenance and fuel costs and additional labor may not be needed during the summers.

Jaimie Storjohann, a senior at WC High School, is proposing to offer Special Olympics to WC High School EXCEL students. Jaimie is planning on a career in special education and is using this experience as her senior service project for Upward Bound. She is asking to use the West Carroll logo on the athlete's uniforms. She is asking for no funding for the 8 – 12 students who will be participating in track and field events. Hopefully, basketball will be added at a later date. Uniforms and transportation are the only things that money will be needed for and fund raisers are being planned to help defray those costs. Parent volunteers will act as coaches and Denise Brotzman, EXCEL instructor will be the link between this project and the school district. Boyd thanked Jaimie for being well organized and prepared for her presentation and for thinking of others. Klein asked that Jaimie let the Board know if any help of any kind is needed with the breakfast fund raiser or anything else. Mrs. Delp stated she is very excited and that it is an awesome program for the kids. The breakfast fund raiser is scheduled for March 14 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Moose in Savanna. Mrs. Brotzman thanked the Board for their time and said that Jaimie is excellent with working with the EXCEL students. She is a great plus to the program.

Board members approved the Special Olympics program at West Carroll High School as presented.

Superintendent Mathers stated a "wish list" was delivered to Senator Durbin on January 6th on items desired to not financially impact the West Carroll School District long term. January 14th, Mr. Mathers met with teachers, community members, and Bev Kilpatrick to discuss "sell West Carroll". Many good ideas were discussed: update the website, links to other local sites, highlighting specific programs, pictures of students working on class projects, format to send items to Mrs. Fink, uploading the newsletters, school closing information, put in current information, and a project manager to get this initiated. He feels the Board needs to discuss how the district will work forward to organize and "sell" West Carroll to potential residents brought to the district because of the prison. Kilpatrick feels a project manager is important to get the project started properly and move forward. Mrs. Fink works very hard on the district web site but she is also a teacher. Kilpatrick feels the district needs to put some money towards the project and some additional ideas are needed, a fresh perspective, or a professional person. Someone with marketing experience, as well as, a web site liaison is needed. If anyone is coming to the area the first place they will look for information is on the computer. Sweeney stated he would hate to see the district get lost in the dust. Boyd asked for a job description or for what the expectations of this person would be? Kilpatrick feels the person needs to be more than a web designer. They should know the principles of marketing, public relations communications, and

advertising. The web site needs to be up with pictures of students, activities, etc. Something needs to be done now. Highland stated that a web site is very important. What amount of money would need to be allotted? Superintendent Mathers reminded the Board that previously they worked with Laurie Gungel in preparing a brochure for the district. The district needs to be competitive in the market for the Thomson prison.

Board members authorized the superintendent to provide funds to move forward with the district brochure project and to investigate and procure someone to provide the district with marketing and advertising strategies and an updated web site. Cost of the project is not to exceed the legal public bidding limit.

WC High School music instructors Scott Mattison and Emily Bressler request permission to take 7 students to the 2010 IMEA All-State Music Festival. This is a large honor for these students to participate. This is an over night trip needing board approval.

Board members approved the IMEA All-State Music Festival field trip.

Closed Session

Board members approved the regular meeting going into closed session at 8:10 p.m. for the discussion of the appointment, employment, discipline, performance or dismissal or removal of specific employees; collective bargaining matters or consideration of salary schedules for one or more classes of employees; and student discipline cases.

The regular meeting returned to open session at 9:02 p.m.

Action on Closed Session Items

The Board accepted, with regret, the resignation of Wade McIntyre as WC High School evening custodian.

Board members approved the request of Deb Manninen, WC Middle School instructor, to purchase a 4th personal day per the collective bargaining agreement.

The Board approved the request of Kathy Holmes, WC High School instructor, to purchase a 4th personal day per the collective bargaining agreement.

Board members approved the request of Scott Mattison, WC High School instructor, to purchase a 4th personal day per the collective bargaining agreement.

The Board approved the employment of Dan Hartman as an assistant wrestling coach at WC Middle School for the 2009-2010 season.

Board members approved posting an opening for the fields and grounds position (part time – 6 months).

The Board approved reimbursing Scott Mattison for the deductible of his personal automobile insurance in the amount of \$500.00.

January 21, 2010
Page 7

Board members approved Bill Timm, WC Middle School instructor, using professional leave (5 days) to go on a Mission Trip to Haiti.

Adjournment

Board members adjourned the regular meeting at 9:05 p.m.