

PRAIRIE CENTRAL COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 8
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING MINUTES
OPEN SESSION

July 20, 2015

A special meeting of the Board of Education of Prairie Central Community Unit School District No. 8, Ford, Livingston, and McLean Counties, was held on July 20, 2015, and was called to order by President Patricia Haberkorn at 7:02 PM in the Chatsworth Elementary School gymnasium.

Board members present: Jeffrey Austman, Jason Dotterer, Patricia Haberkorn, Timothy McGreal, Mark Slagel, Corey Steffen, and Ann Steidinger

Board members absent: None

Administrators/coordinators present: Amber Buss, Director of Special Education; Dr. John Capasso, Superintendent; Paula Crane, Westview Principal; Karen Hazelrigg, Chatsworth Principal; Pamela Weeks, Transportation Coordinator

Employees or PCEA representatives present: Becky Hansen, Michelle Harms, Shannon McGuckin, Teresa Palen, Missi Scherr, Kay Shols, Anna Steidinger, Gina Weber

Students present: None

Guests present: John Dassow, Joy Dassow, Megan Dassow, Ashley Haab, Brad Haab, Brian Helmers, Cindy Helmers, Marcia Knauer, Steve Knauer, Mary Beth Steidinger, Shay Stork

Press present: None

Public Comment
Following presentation

Visitors Arranged in Advance
None

Program
Information

Superintendent Capasso shared a Power Point presentation about the potential closure of Meadowbrook Elementary following the 2015-16 school term and the reorganization of ECSE/PK-4 students into attendance centers for the 2016-17 school term

Audience response The following reactions were expressed by audience members:

- Alternative plans.
 - *List of options.* Questions were again raised about alternatives the Board considered before declaring its leading plan. Response: A summary of options will be made available in the *Hawk Herald*.
 - *Plans offered.* Suggestions were made to
 - Place PK/ECSE-5 in each community, and grades 6-8 at PCJHS. Response: Insufficient space at PCJHS.
 - Place 7th & 8th grade at PCHS. Response: Insufficient space & awkward age combination.

- Place ECSE/PK-2 at Westview, split 3-4 to Chenoa & Chatsworth (with resident ECSE/PK children in each building), then merge them again at PCUE. Response: Insufficient space at Westview to keep its PK & ECSE; the merger, separation, then second merger of children would be awkward.
- Questions
 - *Long-term solution, or short-term.* A citizen asked if the Board saw this plan as a temporary solution, or a long-term one. Response: The Board expressed its hope to make this solution endure at least 8-10 years.
 - *Uprooting the entire District.* A citizen asked why the Board must uproot the entire District (move children to different buildings, away from families) to address curriculum issues and enable collaboration. Response: Administrators and several teachers explained the need for collaboration to generate ideas and best practices for all teachers at a grade level and, ultimately, to create better learning opportunities.
 - *Plan for ECSE/PK/K/1 teachers to collaborate.* An audience member asked, if collaboration is important, why divide the early grades, K, & 1? Response: This was a compromise to spare the small children excessive travel. Further, a partial attendance center is better than our present arrangement.
- Concerns.
 - *Environment.* An audience member asked the Board to consider the environment it makes for children, and observed that a child's socialization is important.
 - *Homeschooling.* An audience member predicted that some parents will opt to home-school, rather than send children to other buildings.
 - *Busing/distance.* An audience member expressed a concern about the legalities and expense of transporting small children, the need for car seats, harnesses, and monitors. Response: The District has been transporting children this age safely and appropriately since there have been programs for them. The District has not been cited for non-compliance in transporting 3-4 year olds.
 - *Busing time.* A citizen asked how long a bus ride will typically be. Response: There are no laws determining bus time limits, but the District strives to keep routes around an hour.
 - *How the decision is to be made.* An audience member asked a procedural question about the motion or motions to close a building and re-arranging kids. Response: There is no correct or incorrect way to approach the matter. The Board can make separate motions, or one motion to include both items.
 - *Day care.* An audience member asked if the decision would impact day care facilities. Response: The Board can't be certain which, if any, day care facilities will be affected by the decision.
 - *PCHS block schedule.* An audience member asked if the Board, if it is in a cost-saving mode, will consider making changes to the High

School block schedule. Response: The District will take nothing off the table in its pursuit of budget reduction, but it is likely that any change to the block schedule will affect vital programs, which it is taking this action to delay or avoid.

General Action

To adjourn

Moved by Austman and seconded by Slagel that we adjourn at 9:30 PM.
Voting: Austman, yea; Dotterer, yea; Haberkorn, yea; McGreal, yea; Slagel, yea; Steffen, yea; and Steidinger, yea. Motion carried.

President

Secretary