

**MILAN AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORKSHOP MEETING
Tuesday, December 7, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education was called to order in the Milan High School Theater located at 200 Big Red Drive, Milan MI, 48160, by President Cislo at 7:00 p.m. on December 7, 2021

Board Members Present: Cislo, Moccio Heikka, Landingham, Kiger, Faro, Frait

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Bryan Girbach, Ryan McMahon, Jennifer Barker, Yvette Kashmer, Clara Thiry

Guests Present: Allie Millina, Aubry Bokoski, Jill Tewsley, Rachel Hobbs, Dawn Walkowiak, Kirk DeMars, Melissa DeMars, Camden DeMars, Pat Humes, Renee` Humes, Annie Kruse, Beth Vandergrift, Shannon Dare Wayne, George Elder, Patrick Dunn, Holli Vallade

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comments:

- Shannon Dare Wayne thanked everyone and wished them Happy Holidays.
- Hollie Vallade spoke about the Superintendent evaluation process.
- Patrick Dunn shared great experiences, thanked Milan Area Schools, and wished everyone Happy Holidays.
- Rachel Hobbs spoke about the Oxford tragedy, made requests of the Board (improve school safety, Board work with community), and spoke about two way communication.
- Annie Kruse thanked Superintendent Girbach for his communication, requested the Board to evaluate Superintendent Girbach on connecting with the community, and requested town halls and community videos.
- Melissa DeMars stated her children do not see bullying or “clicks” in Milan. Thanked the District for supporting their family.
- Kirk DeMars thanked the Board for the moment of silence for Oxford Schools, spoke about the last Board meeting, public comments, and thanked Kim Russ from the Transportation Department.

Motion by Landingham supported by Kiger to approve the consent agenda that includes the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 1, 2021. Motion failed. 4-3 No votes by Kiger, Landingham, Faro, Heikka

Superintendent's Comments

School Safety

- Due to the recent school tragedy, the past week has been difficult for everyone involved in K-12 education. It is not surprising, that at this time, levels of concern and anxiety about school safety are elevated for students, parents, and school staff.

Our district has a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan. Our staff are trained in ALICE emergency response protocols and the district will be providing refresher ALICE courses starting with the teachers during this Friday's afternoon professional development. The district has physical safety measures in place. We employ a Milan Police Officer as a full time School Resource Officer who is a certified ALICE trainer. Each school also has counselors and/or social workers available to support students with mental health concerns.

Each school in the district conducts regular ALICE drills. These drills are age appropriate and cover many different emergency situations. Not every drill is an active shooter drill; and therefore, some drills do not require the use of all aspects of ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate).

We have a very close relationship with the Milan Police Department. Milan officers are ALICE trained and know our district protocols. The Washtenaw County Superintendents also meet with all of the law enforcement agencies at least once a year to review our safety protocols across the county.

Please know that every threat made against the district is fully investigated by the school system. We also involve the School Resource Police Officer in these investigations. If needed, the Milan Police can also work with the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office and the Michigan State Police.

While the administration wants students to report concerns to their building's office so that they can be properly investigated, we cannot have students posting unfounded rumors on social media. Therefore, consequences in line with the student code of conduct have been, and will continue to be, issued to students who make these posts on social media.

The Milan Administration treats every rumor as if it is an actual threat and every threat is fully investigated. Student's lockers and belongings are searched when there is probable cause for concern. While some incidents may lead to the expulsion of a student, that is not always the case. There are many factors involved in making the decision about the proper discipline for a specific student infraction. We will not allow a student to remain in school if we (and or the Milan PD) feel that the student is a threat to the safety of other students.

Board

- As most of you know, a few members of the Milan community raised concerns about whether board members complied with their legal duties in reporting, and abstaining from voting on, conflicts of interest. To address those concerns, I contacted the District's legal counsel and asked for a legal opinion on three specific scenarios:
 1. Whether a board member who is employed by Blue Cross/BSM may vote to approve a collective bargaining agreement in which Blue Cross/BSM is identified as the group health insurance provider?
 2. Whether the same board member may vote on wage increases for administrators who are covered by that same collective bargaining agreement?
 3. Whether board members who have family members who are employed by the District may approve a collective bargaining agreement that would cover the family member?

In response, legal counsel provided a comprehensive overview of the Michigan Revised School Code, the Contracts of Public Servants with Public Entities Act, and Board Policy. Based on that overview, I can report the following:

1. The Board member who is employed by Blue Cross/BSM does have a conflict of interest that would require that she abstain from voting on the collective bargaining agreement in which Blue Cross/BSM is identified as the employee health insurance provider. When the collective bargaining agreement was presented for approval, the Board member properly identified the conflict and abstained from voting on the agreement as required by law.
2. The Board member who is employed by Blue Cross/BSM does not have a conflict of interest that would require that she abstain from voting on administrator pay increases.
3. The Board members who have family members that are District employees have a conflict of interest that would require them to abstain from voting on the collective bargaining agreements covering their family members. When the collective bargaining agreements were presented for approval, those Board members properly identified the

conflict and abstained from voting on the agreements as required by law.

4. Our District policy imposes additional requirements that are not mandated by law, including that board members refrain from participating in the discussion of contracts for which they have a conflict of interest. I am recommending that Board members review that Policy to ensure future compliance. In the alternative, the Board may wish to revisit whether the policy itself should be revised to more closely align with legal requirements.

To summarize: Board members have properly identified, and refrained from voting on, contracts in which they have a conflict of interest. The Board should, however, carefully review, and ensure compliance with, its conflicts of interest policy.

Students

- The district wants to remind our students and families that, throughout the 2021-2022 school year, full meal equivalent breakfasts and lunches will be free to all students on scheduled school days. Individual milks and other food items will NOT be free.
- The middle school and high school bands will be performing a holiday concert at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, December 8th.
- The middle school and high school choirs will be performing a holiday concert at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, December 15th.
- Students in kindergarten through 5th grade will be performing holiday music concerts in the MHS theater. Below is a schedule of the dates and time of each concert:
 - Dec 13 6:00 PM K Music Concert
 - Dec 13 7:00 PM 1 Music Concert
 - Dec 14 6:00 PM 2 Music Concert
 - Dec 14 7:00 PM 3 Music Concert
 - Dec 16 6:00 PM 4 Music Concert
 - Dec 16 7:00 PM 5 Music Concert

General

- Milan COVID data can be viewed by visiting milanareaschools.org and clicking on the COVID Case Data (24 Hour Notifications & Weekly Dashboard) link.

Assistant Superintendent Comments: None

Student Board Member Comments:

- Aubrey Bukosky shared that Friday varsity basketball has their first game and that the school store is opening soon.

- Allie Millina shared that Tuesday is the first boys home basketball game and a toy donation will be taking place at the game. She also reminded Seniors that the picture submission deadline is January 7th

Board Member Comments:

- Board Member Faro spoke about public participation at Board Meetings and Board Policy 0617.3, addressed a public comment regarding Board Members attending Superintendent Evaluation trainings, sending out evaluation surveys, and that the Superintendent evaluation is done during the closed session of the meeting (which is allowed). Faro also spoke about COVID in and around our district and asked parents for help. Lastly, he spoke about reading Safe is Not Enough and stated that it has been impactful.
- Board Member Kiger stated she has ordered books for kids with dyslexia and will be placing them in the Milan Reads cases around town and encouraged others to get books to herself and Mrs. Moccio for distribution. Kiger thanked the Administrators and all of our staff in Milan for taking good care of our students.
- Board Member Heikka thanked Kim Rhoney for inviting the Board to participate in the parade and thank our staff and our community. Heikka expressed her sympathy to the DeMars family and thanked them for sharing their experience and how staff handled the situation. Heikka congratulated the boys swim team for setting a record on their very first event of the season, and addressed public comments regarding two way communication. She also discussed Superintendent Girbach's and Assistant Superintendent McMahon's presence in the community and in the school buildings. Additionally Heikka spoke about a conflict of interest mistake and that she had apologized. She also suggested amending the conflict of interest policy to allow conversation but not a vote by members affected by a conflict.
- Board Member Frait apologized for not being able to attend the last meeting, thanked Superintendent Girbach for addressing the conflict of interest comments, and stated that the Board makes mistakes and needs to own up to them. She then suggested that the Board's bylaws should be reviewed. Frait also congratulated Mr. Fleming on his upcoming retirement.
- Board Member Cislo reminded the Board that the January meeting is an organizational meeting and the time to vote for officers. Cislo wished a Happy Holidays to all staff and expressed his appreciation to them. He also wished the community Happy Holidays. Cislo stated there is work to do and we can get there. He added that everyone has the best interest of kids at heart and asked people to remember the Oxford tragedy. He stated that no issue compares to the loss of a child.

Motion by Faro supported by Heikka to enter into closed session pursuant to Section 8(a) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, and upon the request of the employee, for the purpose of conducting a periodic personnel evaluation. All Ayes. Carried 7-0

Time entered closed session 7:49 p.m.

Time returned to open session 9:46 p.m..

Motion by Faro supported by Heikka to rate Superintendent Bryan Girbach as Effective for the 2021-2022 school year. All Ayes. Carried 7-0

Time of Adjournment: 9:48 p.m.