

WYOMISSING AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Board Work Session Minutes
October 15, 2007

The Wyomissing Area School District Board of School Directors' work session convened at 6:12 p.m. with President Snyder presiding.

PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE

Following the pledge, the secretary called the roll of board members.

Board Members Present: Mrs. Barnett, Mr. Hinsey, Dr. Shuttlesworth, Mrs. McCready, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Deem, Mr. Larkin, Mrs. Sakmann, and Mr. Snyder.

Administrators Present: Mr. Ashton, Mr. Babb, Mrs. Simyak, Mrs. Whye, Dr. Speace, Mr. Dawson, Ms. Garman, Mrs. Mason, and Dr. Larson.

Others Present: Diane Schaeffer, recording secretary. List of audience included as part of these official minutes.

Mr. Snyder welcomed everyone and Mrs. Mason took the roll call. Mr. Snyder announced that the Board met in executive session just prior to the meeting to discuss real estate matters and no action was taken.

Dr. Cyndi Speace addressed the group about staff development activities in the district. Mr. Babb, Mr. Ashton, Mrs. Bansner, Mrs. Fecho, and Mrs. Mangold provided a brief presentation highlighting the activities that took place on the recent in-service days that were held on October 5 and 8.

Mr. Snyder asked for audience comments.

Mark Yourkavitch, 1304 Parkside Drive South, Wyomissing, asked for information on the costs, location, and need for the proposed multi-media room.

Dr. Larson said she would provide an update on the multi-media room after the superintendent's report later in the agenda.

Bill Murray, 320 S. Park Rd., Wyomissing, wanted clarification on the e-news information indicating that there has been no discussion on the media room in conjunction with the wrestling practice facility.

Mr. Snyder confirmed that the Board has not discussed nor taken action related to the wrestling room facilities or the TV studio other than noting the TV studio as part of the Superintendent's goals.

Mike Mitchell, Sr., 37 Cheltenham Drive, Wyomissing, questioned an item on the personnel report, specifically how contract terms for administrators are determined.

Dr. Larson responded that each position is treated on an individual basis and the term may vary, when a person's experience and all the facts are considered.

Kurt Althouse, 1217 Van Steffy Ave., Wyomissing, asked when would the public be permitted to address the board.

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Mr. Snyder stated that at the conclusion of the board agenda items, the public would be invited to address the board.

Liaison Reports – None.

Personnel –

Mrs. Barnett asked about the stipends being paid and questioned if the individuals are being paid hourly.

Dr. Larson replied that Michelle Davis will be working an average of 6 hours per week at the contracted rate, to a \$5,000 maximum, to assist with the strategic plan process; and Lucinda Schaeffer will be paid a one-time stipend of \$200 to assist in the production of the fall newsletter.

There were no other changes to the personnel items that will be recommended for approval.

Curriculum –

The approval of the digital photography curriculum will be recommended for approval, and is one of three remaining courses to be completed.

Finance –

Mr. Fitzgerald and Mrs. Barnett asked how many Wyomissing Area students attend Wilson special education classes and why the district can't offer these services.

Because Dr. Zerr, Director of Special Education, was not in attendance, Dr. Larson indicated she would provide further information before any action is taken on the Wilson contract.

Mr. Snyder explained the contracts for Karen Iby and Michael Paston and the services they will provide to the District in relation to the West Reading Elementary Center project.

Mr. Fitzgerald requested that the contract for Karen Iby be listed separately for approval at the next board meeting.

Facilities – No agenda items. Mr. Deem reported that the energy savings program is in full swing and a full report will be provided at next month's meeting with specific numbers. He also noted that the fields are in great condition.

School Activities & Athletics – No agenda items. Mrs. McCready reported there are two vacancies currently on the winter athletics coaching list which will be recommended for approval next week as part of the personnel report.

Technology – No agenda items. Dr. Larson provided information about the new website and reported that by December, grades and homework will be accessible on the website www.wyoarea.org.

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Superintendent's Office –

Dr. Larson explained that she met with Albright College's Associate Professor of Communications, Dr. Jon Bekken, and Dr. Joe Yarworth, who were enthusiastic about the proposal to utilize a college intern to assist with news articles for the website, newsletters, and press releases. After interviewing a sophomore, who happens to be a Wyomissing Area graduate, she will recommend that the Board approve the position and a student to assume the position at next Monday's board meeting.

Dr. Larson also noted with regret that Dr. Melissa Brewer, who was assisting the district during the search for a new assistant superintendent, is no longer able to provide services after October 10.

Mr. Snyder reported that the District is actively looking for a qualified candidate to fill the position, and Dr. Larson stated that she is currently checking references on the candidates.

Dr. Larson provided an update on the TV studio.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if the District has people on staff that would be handling the responsibilities of the studio.

Dr. Larson replied that we would certainly turn to Mike Farrara and other staff who have experience and interest in this endeavor.

The board discussed the use of committee liaisons and the most productive way to have all board members made aware of future discussions.

New Business – None.

Old Business – None.

Public Participation –

Dawn Zabrecchi, 117 Logan Ave., Wyomissing, asked why youth football practice is moved from field to field with insufficient notice to coaches.

Dr. Larson said she will contact Jen Motze, Athletic Director, and respond to Mrs. Zabrecchi's question.

Rick Johnston, 615 Wyoming Ave., Wyomissing, asked if Dr. Larson obtained information on TV studios from school districts similar in size to Wyomissing, not just Wilson School District.

Donald McCarthy, 429 Oak Terrace, West Reading, asked if he understood correctly and that if funding is available, the superintendent will work on a plan for a TV studio.

Dr. Larson responded there are a number of issues that need to be dealt with. The facilities for technology education and family and consumer science currently include use of the hallway.

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Mark Yourkavitch, 1304 Parkside Drive South, Wyomissing, asked how many kids are involved in the media room.

Dr. Larson responded that the curriculum could be integrated so that more than just a small number of students will benefit, similar to computer education. Mr. Farrara, technology education teacher, said there would be 70+ students in grades 8-12.

Donald McCarthy, 429 Oak Terrace, West Reading, asked if the district was going to look for grants to fund the project.

Dr. Larson indicated they would be looking for grants and she knows there is interest in the program among the staff, and there is the need to provide the facilities.

Bill Murray, 320 S. Park Rd., Wyomissing, asked if thought was given to where else the studio could be located in the high school.

Dr. Larson said she has had conversations with Dr. Space and they did look at an area near the technology area but it also needs to be expanded in its space.

Arthur Walsh, 57 Wellington Blvd., Wyomissing, said he has not heard anyone say that the plan is to use the wrestling practice room. Is that the case?

Dr. Larson said that the District must make all things work within existing space.

Arthur Walsh, 57 Wellington Blvd., Wyomissing, asked where do you anticipate having the wrestling team practice considering the work involved with rolling of the mats?

Dr. Larson indicated she needs to come back with definitive facts. The program appeals to a broad range of students and the goal would include applying for \$150,000 in grant money to outfit the facility. She has done research with a number of staff members and after much more research, hopes to present information to the Board by spring. She also noted that the resident's suggestion to share TV studio facilities with a neighboring school would not be an option because of the travel involved.

Kim Ranks, 72 Cheltenham Drive, Wyomissing reminded the Board that a large amount of money was spent to refurbish the showers in the currently used area.

Dr. Larson responded that the family and consumer science program does not have the space it needs.

Mr. Mitchell, Jr., asked if students are being turned away because of lack of space.

Mr. Babb said students are turned away in all areas because of scheduling conflicts, not necessarily because they are capped out.

Mike Mitchell, Jr. stated that the woodshop area is not in compliance and asked if the district is planning to expand that area?

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Tom Bausher, 1542 Dauphin Ave., Wyomissing, asked if the space problem was considered when doing recent construction. He noted he believes a partnership with Wilson is a good idea, but asked if it would affect the PSSA scores?

Dr. Larsen explained that the PSSA tests assess reading and math and having the students travel to another school would not be an option.

President Snyder noted that the TV studio is a goal, but the district has other high priorities to consider.

Mr. Bausher noted there are some safety issues with the mats because they are not easily moved.

Mr. Murray commented there is currently .5 million dollars invested in the wrestling room and someone who really understands the needs should be brought into the discussions. The lacrosse people were told it was too late in the budget process to consider adding the sport this year. Unless you can tell everyone there is no money coming from the district budget, this should not be done.

Dave Causa, 1215 Old Mill Road, who is a Wyomissing graduate, stated that Mr. Farrara is a great teacher and involvement in sports, including wrestling, is saving kids by keeping them out of trouble.

Mike Mitchell, Sr. asked if the Board is going to address the situation of having boys on field hockey teams.

Mrs. McCready indicated she would meet as the athletics liaison in early November and it will be discussed.

Mr. McCarthy asked the Board to consider getting the students out of the trailers at West Reading Elementary.

Mr. Snyder said a plan is in place for West Reading and currently plans are being made to form a community group to work on the options.

Ron Snow, 1613 Dauphin Ave., thanked the Board for the cardio machines in the weight room. He also voiced his concern about the move of the wrestling room ultimately affecting the number of wrestlers that become involved in the program. He urged the Board to find a way to add the needed program without a negative impact on the wrestling program.

Stephanie Smith, 1782 Reading Blvd., reminded the board that by taking away the practice facility, it will adversely affect other programs.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Corinne D. Mason
School Board Secretary