

From the EAWRCHS Board ...

Regular Board Meeting

November 8, 2016

What follows is an unofficial summary of the East Alton - Wood River Community High School District #14 Board of Education Regular Meeting of November 8, 2016.

Adopt Levy - 2016

As was the case at the December 6th Regular Meeting, as well as the November meetings, the superintendent recommended that the restricted rate levies be increased so that they can capture the full minimum tax rates, levying the restricted rate funds/levies with a 9% EAV increase assumption, while keeping the aggregate levy increase under 5% (4.53%, specifically). Further, the levy for Tort was set \$60,000 lower than 2015 (at \$320,000), which significantly counter-balanced the aggregate levy to keep it under the 5% increase threshold.

The Board unanimously adopted the 2016 Levy, as recommended.

Policy Revisions - 2nd Reading and Subsequent Adoption

Dr. Pearson recommended the adoption of all of the policy revisions on their 2nd Reading, with a recommendation to adopt the GSA travel caps (mileage, lodging, and meals) for Board members and employees - specifically for Policies 2.125 (Board Member Expenses) and 5.60 (Employee Expenses). This latter recommendation is a result of the new legislative mandates for all public bodies to place dollar caps on these travel expenses. The Board was reminded that it is not enough under the new statute for the policy to simply approve reimbursement and/or expenses that are "reasonable and appropriate" for the particular locale or function.

The Board approved a motion to adopt the policies on their second reading, including the GSA limits for Policies 2.125 and 5.60.

Principal's Report

Mrs. Robinson reported on the following:

Upcoming dates to remember

Dec	16	Morp Dance
	20	Finals Hours 1-4
	21	Finals Hours EB, 5-6
	22	Students' Break Begins
Jan	4	Teacher Institute
	5	Start of 2 nd Semester

Committees

- Focus groups continue to meet throughout the 16-17 school year.

Miscellaneous

Social/Emotional Staff Training - November 23rd and January 4th:

Mrs. Robinson discussed the increased need for staff development in this area. She reported that the Guidance Department began this program, with a Nov. 23rd showing of "Paper Tigers," followed by a great discussion with the teachers. The film was a documentary that filmed staff and students interacting in classes at Lincoln Alternative High School in Walla Walla, Washington. The film producers also took their cameras and reporter into some individual students' homes and workplaces in the community, in order to gain better understanding of their individual social/emotional issues that - in the regular school - kept them from succeeding. Graduation and a "Where are They Today?" segments were also included.

On January 4th - during the Teacher Institute - the faculty will hear a live presentation from Dr. Jesse Jackson, Jr., who speaks to schools all over the country about troubled teens and finding ways to connect with them, in turn increasing classroom engagement and ultimately, academic improvement.

Student Outreach - Mrs. Robinson also reported the overall status of seniors regarding the meeting of their community service hours' requirement and her attempts to continue to find them opportunities for earning those hours and encourage them to meet that graduation requirement.

Superintendent's Report

Joint Superintendents / Board Members Meeting: Dr. Pearson reported that he and President Aguinaga meet with the superintendents and board presidents from the two feeder districts last week. The result of the meeting was a unified calendar, as

well as the beginning of the process to align grade school Math and English /Language Arts curricula and to articulate that with the high school.

The unified calendar for 2017-18 will ultimately feature common holidays, school improvement half-days, and starting and ending of school (presuming all three districts take the same number of snow days).

The three districts will have its curriculum leaders meet prior to the end of January to begin this work. The superintendents and board presidents agreed to come together on March 13th to review progress and to determine the “next steps.”

President Aguinaga agreed with the superintendent in the sense that the meeting was productive. But, he also reminded the Board that EAWR

County School Facilities Sales Tax (CSFT): The Board heard a report regarding the intention of most of the superintendents in the county to ask their Boards to adopt a resolution to place the issue of the CSFT on the April 2017 ballot. Placing the issue on the ballot requires school district adoption of the resolution by January 17, 2017 and that approval must be generated by school districts that represent 50% or more of the students in Madison County. Then, in April, it would take simple majority of the voters countywide, to approve the CSFT.

Dr. Pearson reminded the Board that this issue was last placed before Madison County voters in 2011, with it being soundly defeated. However, the financial condition of school districts is so desperate today that it might not be a better time than to try the referendum, again. He also noted that the voters in 47 different Illinois counties have already been approved the CSFT (including surrounding counties of Jersey, Calhoun, Macoupin, and Bond).

Simply put, the CSFT is a 1% additional sales tax that taxes most everything already taxed by regular sales tax. Several major exceptions to this are:

- 1) This is the only sales tax that can legally be collected by school districts - normal sales tax is not distributed to schools, at all.
- 2) The CSFT does not tax some things, on which normal sales tax is collected, such as automobiles, boats, RV's, mobile homes, farm equipment, et al. It also excludes (like normal sales tax) unprepared groceries and prescription drugs.
- 3) The sales tax dollars that flow into school districts from this CSFT cannot legally be used for salaries & benefits; operations; supplies; textbooks; buses; furniture; computers; etc. It has to be spent on building renovation (includes ADA access), construction, life safety and building security, parking lots, roofs, et al.

The proceeds from the CSFT are collected and sent directly to the Illinois Dept. of Revenue, where it, by law, takes 2% of those proceeds for its operation (Regular

state appropriations are not made to this particular agency.) and then sends the remainder to the Regional Superintendent, who then disburses it to school districts based on student enrollment. County-wide proceeds from this CSFT would bring in over \$22 Million dollars for schools annually (based upon trend data of regular sales tax minus the lack of collection from auto, boat, and other sales exempt from the CSFT. Since the distribution of these funds is done on a per-student basis, naturally the bigger the student enrollment, the higher the receipts. According to a projection from Stifel, Co., EAWR #14's share would come to approximately \$302,000.

Dr. Pearson noted that a possible use of such proceeds were to accomplish major construction and renovation, such as a possible new high school or, certainly, the installation of central air throughout the campus (including the Gym and Courtyard). Since those costs would exceed the annual projected receipts, the district would sell bonds and use those proceeds to make annual bond payments - without going to property taxpayers through a referendum (which is usually the case). That would accomplish the end of the community enjoying the benefit of these large projects without having the property owners foot the bill.

Another advantage of adopting the CSFT would be - like normal sales tax - that not only county residents are contributing that extra 1% of retail sales, but non-Madison County citizens would also be charged. He observed that there are thousands of non-Madison County residents from out of state that travel or work in Madison County, that also stop to shop, eat, or stay in a hotel in the county. Therefore, the tax burden is spread beyond not just property taxpayers, but also beyond our own county residents.

He asked the Board to review the Stifel presentation that was in their Board packets as well as to contact him if they had any questions between now and January 3rd (the next Board meeting). He intended to put this resolution as an action item on the January agendas, just in case the Board would be inclined to support the CSFT issue and to adopt a resolution to place it on the ballot.

Board Terms - 2017: The superintendent updated the Board on an email sent to prospective Board candidates for the April 2017 election, which noted that, of the five seats up in that election, only three of those would be for 4-year terms. The other two seats would be for 2-year terms, so that the election cycle of alternating "three seats - four seats" up for election would be maintained. He also noted that the filing deadline was Monday, Dec. 19, 5:00 p.m. at the County Clerk.

Lab Tests - Water Testing Results: Mr. Foxall had a water-testing service (Teklab of Collinsville) visit EAWR recently for the purpose of ascertaining if there was any lead in our drinking or food prep water. Of the eight different faucets and/or sinks

tested, no discernible (or unsafe) lead levels were detected. Those taps that were tested were the highest volume and/or use in which potable water is used. They also were drawn from all three of our campus buildings. This is very good news for the safety and health of our students, staff, and guests.

Following Executive Session

The Board appointed Mrs. Missy Bell-Yates to the Board. She replaces Amy Harding, who resigned in November. Mrs. Bell-Yates resides in Wood River, and is also a parent of a District #14 student.