

From the EAWRCHS Board ...

1st Regular Board Meeting February 3, 2015

What follows is an unofficial summary of the East Alton - Wood River Community High School District #14 Board of Education 1st Regular Meeting of December 3, 2013.

Review of Agenda Items for the February 10, 2015 Regular Meeting

Draft 2015 Strategic Plan - Dr. Pearson displayed the draft version of the 2015 Strategic Plan, in which were incorporated the goals approved by the Board at its January 24th Special Meeting. The Board reviewed the goals and activities of those goals in the draft plan. The Board is scheduled to adopt the draft as its 2015 Strategic Plan at the February 10th Regular Meeting.

Calendar Revisions - The superintendent reviewed a draft of the amended school calendar for 2014-15. He observed that the draft calendar included two “buy-back days” of April 1, 2015 and April 6, 2015, which were originally scheduled as non-student-attendance days. Since the District used two snow days in January, the Board could compress the calendar by using those two former non-attendance days as regular school days.

He also reminded the Board that, last fall, the Board already had decided to hold school on March 2nd (Pulaski Day), after conducting a public hearing for that purpose. This also helped to compress the school calendar, with the end result being that the last day of school - even if the remaining three snow / emergency days were used - would be May 27, 2015. If no additional snow days were used (and the board used these two “buy-back days”), then the last day of school would be May 21st - before Memorial Day!

The Board will be asked to approve the amended calendar, as per the superintendent’s recommendation, at the February 10th meeting.

Graduation Date - The Board looked at the recommended date for Graduation and will make that determination at the February 10th Meeting.

RevTrak - The Board discussed the proposal of RevTrak to handle the on-line payment of District fees and lunch payments. Currently, the District accepts on-line payments through the free “Illinois Funds” account with the State Treasurer’s

office. The concern with the current system is that the Illinois Funds account does not take VISA, which is the most popular credit card. It also is more cumbersome for our bookkeeper to use, especially in the proper booking of funds received into district accounts.

RevTrak, on the other hand, takes VISA (and Discover and MasterCard); coordinates with our student and fiscal management software (Skyward) in designation of monies to pre-programmed district accounts, and deposits funds automatically into the main District accounts. The cost is 3.99% per transaction. And, perhaps the best advantage of RevTrak is that it could tie into our Skyward on-line registration module, which could eliminate or seriously reduce parent time and inconvenience involved in on-site registration and lower district costs in proving on-site registration.

The superintendent noted some pros and cons of who would pick up that cost. The Board discussed some of the possibilities of passing along those costs, just as other companies charge “convenience fees” to their credit card customers. There may be advantages and disadvantages along the lines of parent participation in such a program, too.

The Board would be asked to approve the agreement with RevTrak at the February 10th meeting and to subsequently decide some of the other issues, perhaps.

Vision 20/20- Dr. Pearson reviewed the tenets of the Vision 20/20 initiative with the Board. The associations that make up the School Management Alliance (IASA, IASB, IPA, IASBO, the ROE’s, etc.) are behind this movement. The goal is for these associations to be more pro-active in the political conversation of public school funding and public elementary and secondary education, rather than the more reactive stance that has been taken for these many years. In other words, it makes more sense for public education advocates to frame the discussion and lobby for those ideas than react to legislative decisions, which many times are perceived as a detriment to public schools. These issues relate to not just funding, but also other education policy issues (such as legislative mandates that dictate certain instructional, curricular, and assessment ideas).

All school boards are being asked to review the philosophy of Vision 20/20 and to sign-on to its vision for Illinois schools. The superintendent reviewed the sample board resolution and recommended that the Board adopt that at the February 10th meeting. Further, the associations are also recommending a renewed vigor in board members and administrators contact with policymakers in Springfield, using the Vision 20/20 ideals to frame those discussions.

Bullying Policy (7.180) and Wellness Policy (6.50) Revisions - Dr. Pearson noted that there were some legislative changes to the anti-bullying statute, with a requirement that Boards adopt a policy revision that more clearly specifies “cyber-bullying” and that makes it clear that the District can address those offenses with its discipline policies - even if the offense did not necessarily occur at school.

The Wellness policy is now revised to add some legislative and rule changes regarding nutrition. For example, schools will be allowed to “phase-out” the practice of having non-appropriate food-based fund-raisers that sell candy or other foodstuffs that do not meeting Federal “smart snacks” guidelines. Schools are now being allowed to have 36 such food-based fund-raisers in 2014-15 and nine such sales in 2015-16, with none allowed after June 30, 2016. Originally, the “smart snacks” rule was to be in effect for 2014-15, with a ban on all such food on selling food to students that did not meet the low-fat, low sugar, and low sodium requirements of “smart snacks” rules.

The superintendent also noted that the District is also in the process of revising its Wellness Plan, to bring that up to the new Federal school lunch and nutrition guidelines. Even though the cafeteria is now serving food that meets those guidelines, the new Plan must address other elements of Wellness, which were not necessarily addressed in the current Wellness Plan, adopted four-five years ago.

Other Business

Mr. St. Peters inquired as to whether a new net was ordered for the softball team’s batting cage, noting that the old one was damaged by school mowing equipment inadvertently last fall. Mr. Miller responded that the net was ordered and that he would double-check with Coach Emerick about the net.