

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
OF
CLAY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

A Special Session of the Clay Community Schools Board of Trustees was held at the Central Administrative Office, 1013 S. Forest Avenue, Brazil, IN 47834, on Thursday, January 10, 2013. Tom Reberger, Kevin Kumpf, Fred Froderman, Jennifer Kaelber, Ron Scherb and Amy Burke Adams were present. Rob Miller was absent.

I. Call to Order

The special session meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Superintendent Kimberly Tucker.

II. Discussion of Balanced Calendar for 2013-2014

Dr. Timothy Rayle, Assistant Superintendent, presented survey results regarding the proposed balanced calendar for the 2013-2014 school year. He noted that 71% of the 2,075 respondents indicated that they were in favor of the balanced calendar. Of those respondents, 77% of students, 74% of teachers and staff, 63% of community members and 60% of parents indicated that they supported the balanced calendar.

At this point, Mr. Scherb asked what kind of survey this was. Dr. Rayle replied that the survey was on the school corporation web page and had been created by school corporation employees.

Dr. Rayle then continued to provide information regarding the balanced calendar. He compared the balanced calendar with the traditional calendar and shared information regarding research that was conducted prior to proposing the balanced calendar. Strengths and limitations of the proposed calendar were also presented.

Mrs. Cathy Smith spoke as a representative of 4-H. Her first point, as a 4-H Council representative, was that the 1% that Dr. Rayle had referred to as being affected due to 4-H involvement had been a little misleading. She noted that there are 539 individuals who take part in the 4-H program. Another point Mrs. Smith made was that students and teachers involved in the State Fair would miss the first day of school. Mrs. Smith stated that those involved in 4-H are not opposed to the balanced calendar; rather, they would like to see the school corporation move the days back to a later start date. Mrs. Smith's daughter Hayden also spoke regarding the importance of being in school on the first day.

Next was Ms. Lisa Lance who spoke as a 4-H leader and echoed Mrs. Smith's comments. Also, she noted that this year the Clay City Fair and Lion's Club had to combine due to the change in the State Fair schedule. The Clay City Fair will now start on June 4. Ms. Lance expressed her concern about a possible conflict with the Clay City fair due to the later ending to the school year and how the ending date of the school year could be impacted by snow days. Ms. Lance stated that she is also a pre-school teacher who teaches at Little Lambs, and as such she is concerned about the breaks for the pre-school students, especially the proposed two-week spring break.

Regarding snow days, Superintendent Tucker stated that there are more snow days in the proposed balanced calendar than there have been in past calendars. She noted that there had been a suggestion to use the second week of spring break as potential snow make-up days;

however, the reason the proposed balanced calendar leaves the second week of spring break as vacation time is due to the concern that parents might plan vacation time or out-of-state visits during that week which could cause students to miss the snow make-up days.

As for the week of break planned in the fall, Superintendent Tucker commented that the week would allow time for parent/teacher conferences and professional development. In addition, remediation plans could be built into the breaks.

Addressing the issue of teachers attending the State Fair, Superintendent Tucker stated that days missed would be considered professional conference days for agriculture teachers, and other teachers could ask for professional days if it was for something closely related to their coursework with students. As for students, she asserted that the 1% was based on exhibitors who would have the situation where they would have to stay at the fair long-term.

Mr. Scherb asked if a teacher would be expected to send his/her child to the State Fair alone or to take personal days. He believed that to be unacceptable. Superintendent Tucker replied that personal days would be granted if a parent wanted to go up and watch their child participate.

Mrs. Adams observed that the State Fair is a huge event for a family: They give up vacation weeks specifically for this, and the entire family stays an entire week. A concern of Mrs. Adams is that if a parent who is a teacher in this corporation is denied the opportunity to attend, then his/her child may be denied the opportunity to participate. She commented that she is very much interested in looking at a balanced calendar, but she wants to be assured that, if this board chooses to implement this calendar, it will be well thought-out and tailored to the needs of this community. Mrs. Adams would like to hear comments from teachers and parents as to how this impacts them.

Superintendent Tucker cautioned that balancing grading periods should be looked at when considering any revision in order to make sure there is no conflict with testing.

In reply to Mrs. Adams question as to whether there had been formal meetings with the teachers' representatives, Superintendent Tucker stated that the proposed calendar had been presented to the CCCTA representatives during corporation-wide discussions. She added that she had also talked to teachers when walking through the hallways of the schools. Cathy Smith shared her opinion that teachers were not at this meeting because of the RISE evaluation. She pointed out that there was an attendance issue with RISE and teachers are alarmed to take days off because attendance is part of their evaluation. Mrs. Smith added that another huge issue is child care for parents who would be trying to find care during those breaks. She also expressed concerns about the impact on the ISTEP testing.

Board member Kevin Kumpf stated that he had spoken with several teachers at the middle school and most of them were indifferent, but he had more negative reactions than support. He offered rebuttals to the following: 1) Students come to school eager after each break: He believes it is because they are bored; 2) Student attendance increases: He believes it is because they have so much time off; 3) Student assessment scores have increased: He asked why there weren't more breaks if that is true; 4) Positive teacher attitudes: He does not believe the teachers could be any less positive about anything; 5) Reduce teacher burnout: He theorized that teachers are burned out because of RISE; 6) Less faculty/staff absenteeism: He believes that is because they would have so many days off anyway; 7) Professional development opportunities without missing class time: He questioned asking teachers to do something during those two weeks to enrich their educational opportunities; 8) Continuity of

instruction: As he sees it, the breaks would break instruction, not increase continuity; 9) Increased planning and preparation time for faculty: He asked if this meant they had more time to grade papers during their two weeks off and prepare for the next nine weeks; 10) Extended breaks to allow access for maintenance: He is sure that probably would help; 11) Teachers report better quality instruction: He believes teachers give quality instruction all the time they are there; 12) Teachers report quality collaboration: He commented that teachers don't even like to talk to other teachers because they are stressed out; 13) Increased family opportunities: Maybe so. Mr. Kumpf agreed with the 4-H problem. He also mentioned conflicts with sporting events; however, he noted that Mr. Jackson, the athletic director at North Clay Middle School and Northview High School, is in favor of the balanced calendar. He has not spoken with any coaches to get their opinion. As for snow days, Mr. Kumpf's opinion is that if parents know the second week of spring break is going to be used for snow days, they wouldn't schedule vacations for that week.

Mrs. Adams noted that there had been staffing changes, major schedule changes, the RISE evaluation process had been implemented, the seven-period day had been approved, and the iPads had been purchased. She asked if the change to the balanced calendar had to be done right now. She doesn't think the school corporation is ready for it this year.

Mr. Scherb shared that he had received a call from a teacher today. The teacher had told Mr. Scherb that she could not afford to speak at the meeting because of RISE. He believes that teachers don't really like this and are not happy, which has affected morale. He agreed with Mrs. Adams that, for teachers, there have been many changes, and anything right now that is new might be a bit much for the upcoming school year.

Mrs. Cathy Smith expressed her concern that there are people who would be affected by the change to a balanced calendar who did not have access to the Internet survey. She considered 2,000 people to be a very minor number of the residents of Clay County voicing their opinion.

Ms. Lisa Lance asked if there was a way to regulate how many times someone took the Internet survey. Superintendent Tucker replied that it was not a scientific survey; rather, it was a website survey. Dr. Rayle stated that a future survey could be limited to one response.

III. Adjournment

Having exhausted all agenda items, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

The meeting was audio recorded and copies may be requested by contacting the Central Administration Office.