

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF STURGEON BAY
Board of Education Learning Session
Wednesday, December 5, 2018

5:00 P.M. Board of Education Meeting

High School Room 199

CALL TO ORDER:

1. Roll Call: Miller, Chisholm, Holland, Alger, Stephens, Hooker, Jennerjohn, Stephani & Hougaard. Also present was Superintendent Tjernagel
2. **Motion:** Hougaard/Chisholm to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA:

1. Draft of Open Enrollment Capacity-information provided
 - i. Informational item in December 19, 2018 Board meeting
 - ii. Approval needed in the January 16, 2019 Board meeting
2. Educational Programming Referendum Planning-Community Advisor Representative Caitlin Oleson and Steve Abrahamson were present.
 - i. Discussion of November 28 Community Advisory Session and Talking Points
 - ii. Discussion with Community Advisory Group Members about district and community priorities, as well as suggestions for the Board to consider
 - iii. Educational Programming Operational Referendum Resolution Approval would be needed in the January 2019 Board meeting in order to appear on the April 2019 ballot
3. Motion: Chisholm/Hougaard to adjourn at 6:57 PM. Motion carried unanimously.
Adjourn

Date: _____

President's Signature: _____

Referendum Advisory Group Talking Points

November 28, 2018 Session

5:15 – 7:00 P.M.

Special thanks to our community members willing to be involved in this addition to our community engagement and referendum planning efforts. We appreciate your time and your insight. Everyone from this group who can make it is invited to talk with the Board directly as part of the Wednesday, December 5 Board Learning Session beginning at 5:00 P.M. That meeting will be held in SBHS Room 199 (the same location as this meeting).

Community Members Present: Steve Abrahamson, Mark Forbes, Caitlin Oleson, Michelle Sternard, Doug Wilson, Roger Wood, Jess Holland (Board member), Mike Stephani (Board member), Jake Holtz (Business Manager), and Dan Tjernagel (Superintendent)

The session opened with a brief background about the presentation that Dan Tjernagel and Board member Amy Stephens had attended a few years ago at the annual education convention about the **referendum advisory group concept**.

Following **introductions** of each person present, Jake Holtz walked the group through a **presentation** he had prepared to give a school funding overview, review of our referendum history, how we find ourselves planning our next educational programming operational referendum, what the current projection information looks like in light of the November election results. Jake also explained the fact that we will not have any definitive state budget information prior to needing to lock in our request of the voters in January in order to be on the April ballot.

Some **additional background** about items ranging from our ongoing communication efforts to not publishing a “cut list” to what goes into projection assumptions and more was also covered. **Then we asked those present to share their perspectives on community/district priorities, suggestions for the Board to consider, and anything else they would like us to include, or not include, as we plan for this referendum and the future. Here is a summary of those talking points shared:**

- People expect schools to stay up to date on technology. This was an aspect of the Gibraltar referendum.
- There is a fear that schools today are losing some kids who want to go on to become electricians, mechanics, etc. *[Dan did touch on the concept of college for the vast majority of students today, but that college can look different ways and include 2-year, technical colleges, traditional 4-year, etc.]*
- Although from a Norther Door perspective, it is probably true throughout the county and elsewhere that people place a value on being supportive of education so kids have intangible skills and special experiences (like was FOG brings in or we are expanding through our community engagement coordinator efforts), but it is very hard to put a price tag on this. *[We went on to discuss briefly how people “buy value” when it comes to vehicles their local schools or many other things. Communication is important. People do want to feel good about what is happening and what their dollars are going toward.]*
- Agree that focusing on and communicating things that make our school system special is important. Rather than simply looking as a basic increase to the budget which is challenging just like when doing a church budget.
- Agree that publishing a cut list is not helpful since people can focus on certain things they are most interested in and/or point fingers at other programs, thereby fracturing the community rather than pulling

the community together. That being stated, it is important for the Board/Admin to have a clear picture of the real impact so that can be discussed with the community. For example, knowing during the last referendum that the equivalent of 25 teacher positions would have to be cut and how devastating that would be to the community so it was not a viable option is powerful.

- Discussed “fear” versus “positivity” if you will. Some people seem to respond better to one approach than the other. That being stated, when it comes to politics and elections, fear can be effective when a person hears about stopping what one candidate will do, what voting or not voting for someone/something can do, etc.
- Someone pointed out that as long as there is not a motivated and organized group AGAINST a particular referendum, more often than not it tends to pass. A cut list can come across like a threat and can also motivate individuals or a group against a referendum.
- Having a united and supportive school board is also critical.
- Facility challenge – To put it nicely, our facility (high school/middle school for example) looks tired. This needs to be part of future planning and efforts as well, especially in light of the other three mainland districts in the county having passed referenda questions that address facility needs as well as operational costs.
- Ask for what you need based on what we know right now can happen. If the additional dollars come through with the next state budget or the Blue Ribbon Commission efforts that would be great, but we won’t know that until well past the time we have to pass a resolution in January or have the election in April. *[The group had discussed earlier that there is likelihood we won’t have the next state budget until next fall—even though it is supposed to be set by July 1.]*
- The typical community person is confused about what school is best or what district is best. They see too many confusing ratings and report cards in the news media. *[Dan shared with the group that after the state school and district report cards just came out, he had just gotten an email this week about the federal reporting information that will start to come out next month. This seems to further underscore the point being made.]*
- While this conversation is about the future, and not the past, is there anything we can learn from the failed referenda years ago? Other members present mentioned that there was public backlash back then due to high taxes in general, etc. As that settled down and there were changes at the state level, communication improved at the local level. Our Board was also united and helped the community come together for the benefit of kids, families, and the community.

This summary was prepared by Dan Tjernagel, shared with the Advisory group, and then will be shared with the Board of Education.