

MINUTES
Regular Board Meeting
Almont Community Schools Board of Education
September 28, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

President Hoffa called the Regular Board Meeting of the Almont Community Schools Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m. in Media Center at Almont Middle School, 4624 Kidder, Almont, MI 48003

Present

Steve Hoffa, Jill O'Neil, John Miles, Jonathon Owens, Scott Kmetz, John Brzozowski, Stephan Manko and Superintendent Joseph Candela.

Visitors: 58

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: All Present

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Addition to Agenda – Communications – Student Council

COMMUNICATIONS

The student council vice president brought the Board up to date on current SC activities which include spirit week, getting ready for homecoming, the homecoming dance and the fill the bus food drive they have going on. Mr. Miles asked what the schedule looked like for Friday and she said that they are working with the teachers to fit the parade and pep assembly in.

Melissa Wheeler had concerns about the soccer program. She is concerned that changes that she thought they discussed last year have not been implemented this year. She stated that they have lost lots of boys to football and that seniors are playing on the JV team. Playing time is an issue.

Mr. Tim Lahr and a student on the team echoed Mrs. Wheeler's concerns.

Melissa Miller stated that she has a son on the varsity team and she feels that the team is divided and it has turned into family against family. She feels that the best players should be getting playing time and the coach puts the best team on the field.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS: AUDIENCE

Mr. Henry Schuchard feels that there has been inappropriateness with the coach in that he texts other coaches. His wife is upset as well.

Michelle Helfer is a volunteer trainer with the team who sits with the coach at the games. She does not see the negativity that the parents are eluding too. She feels that he is playing his best team and much of the negativity is from the parents.

Karen Schmalzel is concerned because the coach will tell the kids that they will play then he does not put them in. Many of the players are getting zero play time.

Amy Liblong stated that it's the coach's decision who plays because the board hires the coach, the coach picks the kids. If a player is not as good as the other players they don't play.

September 28, 2015

Gary Litchfield hopes that the board will support their coaches. He feels the coach is a good fair coach. A student from the team stated that the coach has told him many times he's a good player and will play but he does not get put in and it makes him feel terrible.

Another student said that the coach does not make the players play rec. He is a good coach who helps the player look for colleges as well.

Loretta Wright volunteered with the coach for 2 years and feels he is not a good coach and should not be coaching kids is we are here to protect kids. Many times she ran the practices when he was not there. She does not understand why the board took him off the girl's team but not the boy's team. A student stated that the kids that are not playing are just not as good as the others. He feels the only negative thing happening is the players frustration with playing time. He thinks the coach is a good coach.

Mr. Chris Cafuk wanted to know what the future of the JV team was because he has a son on JV. Is there or is there not a JV team.

Mr. Woelkers explained that others schools do not move seniors down to JV. He feels it's a liability having seniors on the JV team. The JV team will have a team without seniors. This means that they will have a reduced schedule of 4 games. No one will be cut.

Mr. Wheeler feels that there is a lot of talk about play time. He feels that his issues with another parent might be the reason for the issues with playtime for his son. He stated that because it's a 50/50 situation that definitely means there is an issue.

Andy Bartlett stated that the hardest thing a coach does is make the lineup. He would like the board to look close at what teams we should have. He feels the coach is doing a great job.

Tim Wright stated he was the JV coach for 3 years and this is not about playing time. He's not really sure if the coach is good. He would like the board to really take the time to look into this and be out there at the games because it's that important.

Karen Barton wanted to know what the status of the ball fields was with the village/township. Does the board know what is going on? She understands that the township asked for some clarification on a few items. She said she is willing to help wherever needed.

Darcy Litchfield stated that she feels being a senior is not entitlement to playing time. It is up to the players to discuss issues with the coach. If they feel comfortable they could have someone else with them when this discussion takes place but it really should not be the parents. She likes the coach.

Stephanie Revoldt feels that the drama is with the parents and that the kids seem to get along. When the meeting was called last year it was the parents that did not have issues that showed up the parents with the issues did not bother to attend.

Jerry Helfer hears a lot about the soccer drama. He feels that many of the kids are disrespectful to the coaches as well as the other players. He feels that Mr. Miller (parent volunteer) has taken a lot of time with the kids to help them become better players.

Thomas Lulgjuraj feels that the players just want to play.

Paulynn Bartlett stated the same thing. The players want to play. Her concern is that without a JV team 15 players sat on the bench today and did not play. By moving seniors back you create move of an opportunity for kids to not get playing time. This should be looked at during tryouts not mid season.

One of the players wanted to know if everyone thought he was given a fair shot.

Henry Schuchard stated that there is a reason that so many soccer players moved over to football this year.

Mr. Bartlett wanted to know how the board felt about seniors on JV.

Mr. Candela stated that it is not a common practice for seniors to play down. If we do this we need to let the opposing teams know ahead of time. When we move seniors down it takes away from the freshman and sophomores and the team building concept.

Gary Litchfield wanted to know if any of the teams complained about us having seniors on JV. Who is the liability that was mentioned for?

Mr. Woelkers said that the other teams did not necessarily know we had seniors on JV.

One of the students that moved to JV said that he enjoyed it. He got to play and there was less drama. He feels that if 50% of the kids are unhappy there must be an issue.

Another student feels that he has been bullied by some of the parents. He feels that people forget that the coach is human and might make mistakes.

Mr. Cafuk stated that his son has enjoyed having the seniors on the team. JV is having a great year. The kids give 100%. He would hate for the seniors to not be able to play JV, he would like to see them play.

Mr. Lahr feels that if you get rid of the JV team fewer kids will be playing. The school is here to develop kids.

Mr. Hoffa stated that Mr. Candela will set up a meeting with the principal, AD and coach to come up with a plan. They will then contact the parents so they can come up with a resolution.

Mr. John Camaj stated that he was a soccer coach for many years and it's about how a kid goes home, happy or sad. All the kids should go home happy. When you're winning 8-0 all the kids should be playing. Same with losing 5-0.

Kathy Wichman stated that you cannot be fair on varsity. The best players should be playing.

Mr. Camaj stated that the parents should not be talking about this in front of the kids.

Mr. Hoffa reiterated that a meeting will be set up to find common ground.

A parent stated that her 8th grader received an inappropriate email on her school iPad and this person is harassing here and threatening her. She has contacted the police and Mr. Bostian has been working to help her as well.

She also wanted to know if a homeschooled kid can play sports. Mr. Candela stated there are MHSAA rules. The student must attend 66% of their classes in the school district.

More discussion took place regarding the iPad incident and a meeting will take place to delve into it even further. One of the student soccer players stated that he is a player and he plays because he wants to win, not just about playing time.

Mrs. Wright wanted to know why the coach was let go then re-hired.

Mr. Hoffa stated that there is a hiring process and he was not aware he was fired. He offered that Mr. Candela would be happy to meet with her.

Mrs. Helfer stated that much of what was said may have been past practice but certainly did not go on now and that the BOE should visit the field. Don't be hasty without having a firsthand view.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS: BOARD

Mr. Miles requested the Board take a 5 minute recess before continuing the rest of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Miles, supported by Manko, the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of the Minutes Regular Meeting August 24, 2015
- B. Approval of the Minutes Special Meeting September 2, 2015
- C. Approval of the Minutes Special Meeting September 10, 2015
- D. Approval of the Minutes Special Meeting Work Session September 21, 2015

September 28, 2015

P, 140, 7-0-0

BILLS PAYABLE AND FINANCIAL REPORTS

Motion by Brzozowski, supported by Manko, the Board of Education approve the bills payable and the financial reports as proposed by the administration and reviewed by the Finance Committee.

September

General Fund Total	\$ 650,694.47
School Lunch Fund	\$ 2,288.04
2006 Refunding Bonds	\$ -
2012 Refunding Bonds	\$ -
2013 SBL Refinance	\$ -
2013 Refunding Bonds	\$ -
Sinking Funds	\$ -
QZAB Bond	\$ -
Subtotal	\$ 652,982.51
General Fund (transfer in for Payroll)	\$ 210,000.00
PESG	\$ -
Coach EZ	\$ 30,321.46
Participant Benefit Claims	\$ 50,000.00
TOTAL FUNDS SPENT	\$ 943,303.97
Check Numbers: 33581-33664	
Void Checks: none	

Approval of check numbers covering these invoices range from check number 33581 to 33664 and voided checks as presented: Voided check(s): None

P, 141, 6-0-1

Mr. Hoffa abstained because his son had a check in the run

ORCHARD PRIMARY, ALMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL, AND ALMONT HIGH SCHOOL TRUST AND AGENCY ACCOUNT REPORTS

The Trust and Agency Accounts were approved as presented.

Board of Education: Questions

Mr. Miles wanted to know why there is so much money in the football fund. Mr. Candela said that the money for the cards was in there and bills have not been paid yet. The balance should be going down.

NEW BUSINESS

Superintendents Report

Orchard Primary

THANK YOU FOR THE ADDITIONAL FOURTH-GRADE SECTION!

We are thrilled to welcome Mrs. Steinhaus to the fourth-grade team, and we would like to express our sincere appreciation for the addition of the new classroom section. Class sizes in fourth grade now range from 24-25 students. The transition went very smoothly, and we were able to accommodate all parent requests that were made in the spring. On behalf of teachers, students, and parents, thank you very much!

Also, because we added the new section of fourth grade, our schedule had to be revised. In order to build in more specials time slots for those students to attend PE, Art, Music, and STEAM, Mrs. Weigand had to restructure the timing of specials. Teacher prep times were reduced from 45 minutes to 41 minutes.

KINDERGARTEN CLASS SIZES

In that same vein, we are concerned about class sizes at the kindergarten level. Currently, we have one classroom with 27 students, one with 28, and one with 29. We have been able to provide each teacher with a paraeducator full time, which is very helpful, and we are grateful for the additional support, but it is not an optimal solution when we think about how to best meet the needs of our youngest students. Mrs. Weigand is communicating with the kindergarten teachers frequently to monitor the situation, and Mr. Candela has been meeting with us. Ideally, we would like to see a fourth section of kindergarten added. That would bring numbers down to an average of 21-22 students in each class. We do understand that across the board in our district, the budget is very tight. However, we believe the need is strong, and we appreciate your consideration.

MATH AND READING INTERVENTIONS

Mike Hinkley and the Literacy and Beyond Foundation have once again granted 100 Lexia Core5 licenses to be used as an intervention tool for reading! Mr. Hinkley's generosity continues to be a terrific help to us in meeting our literacy needs at Orchard Primary.

In addition, we have added the STAR Math screener to our intervention toolbox. This will allow us to quickly assess all students for strengths and weaknesses at the individual skill level in math. This way, we can tailor instruction accordingly. Teachers and paraeducators spent a portion of our August PD day receiving webinar training on how to best use this program with our students.

ADDITIONAL iPADS

At this time, we're not sure if we will be receiving any more iPads at Orchard Primary--at least for this year. Teachers already have four iPads to use with students in stations or individually. Ideally, the majority of teachers have shared that they would like to have at least eight iPads in their classrooms. This would allow for two iPad stations to be operating at one time. It would also allow for cooperative teams of 3-4 students to work on digital projects together. Again, we absolutely understand the district budget is limited.

As part of our School Improvement Plan for the 2015-2016 school year, we agreed to adopt an app each marking period. All teachers will use the chosen app to develop at least 2-3 activities during that time frame, and 15-20 minutes will be set aside once a month during staff meetings to share ideas.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Twenty-one teachers attended summer P.D. with Peter McCreedy and Mark Fleming at Camp Lael in late June/early July. We spent three days and two nights developing hands-on activities and project-based curriculum units. Many of these will include work in the outdoor garden/orchard classroom.

We continued our planning on the August P.D. day. It was a terrific day with lots of creative ideas flowing. We have been able to gather several resource books, including a couple of well-developed curriculum guides, to help us design curriculum-based lessons that connect to the outdoors. Grade-level teams met with specials teachers, Mr. Fleming, and Mrs. Weigand to plan the first two activities to launch our use of the outdoor classroom.

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM UPDATE

The outdoor learning areas are a work in progress. The orchard has been cleared in five places. Our vision is for each of those spaces to have a unique purpose. The large maple tree in the orchard will be a canopy for a general classroom. The Weidner family has very generously donated wood chips and 35 tree stumps for seating in this

area. We will also have an area with a mud oven. We're looking forward to connecting the mud oven to our curriculum and then enjoying cookies that we bake in it. Our other zones are designed to include an art/music space, a reading/writing space, and a performance space--complete with a stage constructed from wood pallets as the base and stumps for audience seating

GRANTS

We owe a big thank you to the Four County Community Foundation! Orchard Primary was awarded a grant in the amount of \$1000 from the Foundation's 21st Century Education Fund in support of our outdoor classroom project. With the money, we will purchase pond-dipping nets, a cider press, and orienteering materials.

Mrs. Weigand is also in the midst of writing a grant to Lowe's. Each October, Lowe's accepts applications from schools, offering grants of \$5000 for projects just like our outdoor classroom. If we are lucky enough to be a recipient, we would love to purchase picnic tables for some of our spaces, as well as tools, and the materials for a student-friendly weather station.

OTHER NEW FACES

We are privileged to welcome a student teacher to Orchard Primary for the fall semester. Nick Bara is working with Sarah Savage this year and could not be in better hands.

Also, Mr. Johnson has joined the OP staff. All students have twenty minutes of technology instruction with Mr. Johnson each week. His focus is tech readiness in preparation for the M-STEP.

CURRICULUM NIGHT

Teachers welcomed families to their classrooms on Thursday, September 17, from 5:30-8:00 p.m. to share important information about their classrooms and the learning that will take place throughout the school year. Over the past few years, we have asked that parents attend this event without their children. This way, teachers can deliver the information they have and answer any parent questions with minimal disruption, especially since the time intervals are brief. Mrs. Ulmer was extremely helpful in enlisting the assistance of several AHS Student Council members to help with supervision in the cafeteria. In addition, Mr. Kline, Mrs. Tencza, Mrs. Royster, and Mr. Feys helped monitor.

UPCOMING EVENTS & DATES TO REMEMBER...

- Morley Candy fundraiser, hosted by the PTA.....Fri., September 18
- District Curriculum Council meeting.....Wed., September 23, 4:15-6:15 p.m. @ OP
- Homecoming.....Fri., October 2
- Fire Prevention Week.....October 5-9 (Thank you to Ms. Ferzacca and the fire department for organizing this important event for our students.)
- New student welcome lunch and scavenger hunt.....Fri., October 9

Middle School

Achievement Series

OP, AMS & AHS

Strengthen School Improvement Process

Bring Information Back to Staff

AMS-Goal Success Period and "Test Talks"

PLTW Update

Mr. Beneson received training this past summer through Eastern Michigan University for students in 8th grade to take a PLTW class on Design and Modeling. In 2016-17 students will have the opportunity to learn about Automation and Robotics. Throughout the school year the PLTW class will receive feedback from teacher, students and parents on the class.

Pre-School Programs Welcome at the Middle School

September 28, 2015

Both of Almont's Pre-School programs are now located at the Middle School. Mrs. VonHiltmayer has been working with both teachers in setup and protocol for the Middle School.

Pilot Programs at the Middle School

This year four new pilot classes will be offered to students at the Middle School.

Mr. Andrades will be offering advanced skills in basketball.

Mrs. Murphy will be offering e-magazine and also having students work with Pre-K and Kindergartens.

Mrs. Malloy will be offering Fitness

Grading Practices

For the 2015-16 school year the Middle School staff will be study the and reviewing grading practices: The staff will be conducting a book study: A Repair Kit for Grading by Ken O'Connor. Discussions and workshop will take place through PD days and staff meetings. The goal for the Middle School will be considering an extended format on report cards.

Homecoming Events

Homecoming	October 2 nd
3 rd Annual Fun Run	October 16 th
Fall Choir Concert	October 28 th

High School

New for 15-16

Two semester format

Two marking periods followed by an Exam each semester.

Seven Period Day

Each period consisting of 52 minutes with a four minute passing time.

Enrollment

Total Enrollment (as of 9/14) 504

9 th grade	105
10 th grade	129
11 th grade	127
12 th grade	143

College/High School Dual Enrollment

St. Clair Community College (in-house)	40
Macomb community College	19
UM Flint (LISD Ed Tech)	5
On Line course work	17
AP Courses (six subjects) at High School	146
Band	85
Choir	37
Art	159
Digital Photo	31

Robotics	29
Band	85
Choir	37
Art	159
Digital Photo	31
Robotics	29

Cyber Café

Donation by Buffalo Wild Wings

Furnishings

Large Screen Monitors

Up Coming Events

Homecoming	October 2 nd & 3 rd
BWAC Band Festival	October 6 th
NHS Blood Drive	October 28 th
Fall Choir Concert	October 28 th
Fall Conferences	November 4 th & 5 th

Board of Education: Questions

None

NEW BUSINESS

Business

Approval of School of Choice Students

Moved by Miles supported by Manko the Board of Education accept the students on the attached list for the 2015/2016 school year through the 105 and 105C Schools of Choice Programs.

P, 142, 7-0-0

Approval of Release of Students

Moved by Miles supported by Manko, the Board of Education APPROVE the request for student #13628 to be released to the Lapeer ISD adult education program and for student #13175 to be released to Venture High School.

P, 143, 7-0-0

Finance

Approval of Computer Lease

Moved by Brzozowski, supported by Manko, the Board of Education approve the attached lease agreement for the purchase of laptops for our Project Lead the Way project from Covenant Financial Service, Inc. Copy of lease to be attached to official minutes and marked VIII C (1).

P, 144, 7-0-0

Approval of 2006 Refunding Bonds

Moved by Brzozowski, supported by Kmetz, Board of Education adopt the resolution authorizing the issuance and delegating the sale of Almont Community Schools 2006 Refunding Bonds as presented, a copy of which to be mark VIII(C)2 and attached to the Official Minutes of this meeting.
P, 145, 7-0-0

Roll Call: Ayes-Owens, Manko, Kmetz, Brzozowski, Miles, O'Neil, Hoffa

Nays-None

Policy

Approval of High School Leadership Trip

Moved by Manko, supported by Miles, the Board of Education approve leadership trip to Center Lake Camp and Retreat in Tustin, MI from October 18th – 20th.

P, 146, 7-0-0

Personnel

Approval of Resignation

Moved by O'Neil, supported by Miles, the Board of Education accept the resignation of Mrs. Jamie Weigand as Orchard Primary Principal effective September 25, 2015.

P, 147, 7-0-0

Approval of New Teacher

Moved by O'Neil, supported by Miles, the Board of Education employ Jamie Weigand as Kindergarten Teacher beginning October 1, 2015.

P, 148, 7-0-0

Discussion:

Mr. Brzozowski is wondering if count is not what we expect do we have a plan?

Mr. Candela said he feels confident about count but if for some reason we were off we would have to reevaluate mid -year.

COMMENTS: AUDIENCE

Heather Murphy wanted to thank the Kindergarten teachers for the last few weeks. They have done a great job with the large classes.

Comments: BOE

Mr. Miles wanted to know more about the computer issue that the parent mentioned earlier.

Mr. Bostian stated that they are looking into it but it will be hard for us as a district to find the owner of a generic email address.

Mr. Hoffa asked if we were successful in blocking the account.

Mr. Bostian – we did change her id, Mr. Kline interviewed a couple of people that may have been involved but nothing came of it.

Mr. Miles – is this a security issue?

Mr. Bostian – this has only come to his attention maybe 3 times in 3 years.

Mr. Cafuk asked if the students are educated about what to do with scam emails?

Mr. Bostian – in handbook, trained at the lower elementary levels.

Mr. Hoffa – when one child is threatened do we tell all the parents.

Mr. Bostian – depends on exact nature

Mr. Bartlett – he stated he has an issue with kids using the iPads for twitter and snapchat

September 28, 2015

Mr. Candela – most of those sites cannot be gotten on when on the school network

Mr. Bostian – Twitter is not blocked and snap chat changes their IP address constantly so it is very hard to block them all the time. The various grades have different levels of security. Once you block one 5 other show up. We do not get lots of complaints. 5-8 is blocked 24/7.

Mr. Bartlett – this should be an educational device. Filter should be on 9-12 as well. Does not agree with all the apps the kids are allowed to get.

Mr. Bostian – apps are restricted by age. The HS cannot get R rated apps but they can get twitter etc. Most kids that go around the filter are just looking for the games that we block. When caught they are disciplined.

Mr. Candela – we do have a committee that looks at the policies and procedures each year.

Scott Kmetz – wanted to know if we have deadlines for the building and field decisions. He is does not want to see another 12 months go by.

Mr. Candela – appraisal done. We have a price on the fields , building with and without the fields. Sent info to village/township they had questions and they are meeting on the 12th of October to discuss. He did meet with Twp. Supervisor to go over the appraisal. The BOE will need to make a decision as to whether we will post for bids in the paper and on the website and what date we should do this. If the village/twp does not want the property we can keep just the property and sell the building or sell both. He has had community members express that they would like the school to keep the fields.

Mr. Kmetz – then after Oct 12 we will have a better idea on what we need to do.

Mr. Candela – Yes then we can better decide on our options.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

CLOSED SESSION: Superintendent’s Quarterly Review

Motion by Miles, supported by Owens, the Board of Education go into closed session for the purpose of Superintendent’s Quarterly Review as permissible under the Open Meeting Act.

Roll Call Vote: Aye’s –Manko, Miles, Kmetz, O’Neil, Brzozowski, Owens, Hoffa

Nays - None

P, 149, 7-0-0

Meeting into Closed Session: 9:20p.m.

Meeting into Open Session: 11:29 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 pm

Approved _____
Date

Signed: _____
John Miles, Secretary

Signed: _____
Steve Hoffa, President