

**UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
Joan C. Sergent Instructional Resource Center
14201 Canal Road
Sterling Heights, MI 48313
March 28, 2011**

Attending: C. Klenow, G. Klida, C. Territo, R. Ross, D. Meyers, M. Templeton

Absent: J. Prybys,

1.2. Meeting Call to Order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Klenow called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Minutes

Motion by Klida, supported by Meyers, to accept the March 14, 2011 Board of Education minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

4A. Stevenson Academic Scholars

Mr. Robert Monroe, Executive Administrator of Schools, presented the Academic Scholars at Stevenson High School. These seniors have distinguished themselves by electing a rigorous program of study and maintaining a high academic standing during the past seven semesters.

In addition to their commitment to academic excellence, the Stevenson Academic Scholars have participated in many curricular and extracurricular activities, including National Honor Society, Athletics, Student Council, Marching Band, Key Club, SkillsUSA, DECA, SADD and Foreign Language Clubs. As well, several of these scholars have been recognized for their work in Drama, Choir, Forensics and much more. All of these superb students plan to continue their education in the fall at the university level, and we wish them great success and happiness in their futures.

Mr. Steven Pfannes, principal of Stevenson High School, introduced the Stevenson Academic Scholars.

Comments from the Board of Education were entertained.

4B. Stevenson MIFA Division I State Title

Mr. Robert Monroe introduced the Stevenson MIFA Division I State Title recognition. He stated that the Stevenson High School Theatre Company and director Michelle Berg took the Division I State Title at the annual Michigan Interscholastic Forensics Association Theatre Festival with their production of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee." This was a one act musical comedy that centers around a fictional spelling bee. With more than two-and-a-half decades of festival experience behind them, Stevenson's theatre troupe proved that "Spelling Bee" was the perfect combo of humor, humanity, and music, by edging out 16-time state champ Holland High School and its production of "The Three Musketeers", to bring the championship home to Utica Community Schools.

Stevenson not only won the Division crown, but also the Audience Award for "Best Production", a very special award voted on by the festival participants. "Spelling Bee" is also being tapped as the one production from the month long tournament to represent the best in the state at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival at Western Michigan University in May. Combining districts, regional and state competitions, Stevenson also added to the number of individual honors earned by students taking part in the play, ensemble and technical crew. Among all levels of the tournaments, the musical earned "48 Total Excellent Awards"; and took home "83 Total Superior Honors," and the highest individual award MIFA bestows.

Comments from the Board of Education were entertained.

4C. Stevenson Cheer-State Championship MHSAA Division 1 State Runner-up

Mr. Robert Monroe introduced the Stevenson High School Varsity Competitive Cheer Team. The Titans finished the regular season by capturing their fifth consecutive MAC Red Division competitive cheer championship. Adopting the "Superman" symbol as their unofficial team logo four years ago, the "Super Blue" Stevenson girls also qualified for their fourth consecutive trip to the MHSAA Division 1 State Finals. Stevenson performed exceptionally well during

the tournament to finish with the highest placement in the school's history. The girls earned the MHSAA Division 1 Runner-up trophy, taking second place to Grandville High School by the slimmest of margins (0.4).

The team sponsored "Santino's Voice" and raised \$950 for autism awareness and research. The autism puzzle pieces were placed within the team's "Superman S" and helped the girls embrace the theme that "Every girl is a piece of the puzzle that makes up this great team".

Stevenson Head Coach Brianna Verdoodt introduced the Stevenson Varsity Competitive Cheer Team.

Comments from the Board of Education were entertained.

4D. Stevenson Instrumental Groups

Mr. Robert Monroe, Executive Administrator of Schools, introduced two groups of Stevenson High School musicians. The first group of musicians took part in the Solo & Ensemble Festival held at Rochester High School.

This Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association sponsored event was an opportunity for individual students to perform a selection of their choice for adjudication. Each student or group of students was then evaluated by one judge and rated on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the highest rating possible. Students or groups that earn a rating of 1 (or "Superior") are qualified for the State Solo & Ensemble Festival. All of the Stevenson High School Chamber Groups: Brass Chamber, String Orchestra, Woodwind Chamber and Flute Chamber, received all A's and first division ratings and will compete soon at the State Festival.

The second group recognized included the Concert Band, the Symphonic Band and the Wind Ensemble. These students performed on March 12th at Avondale High School and received straight 1's from all four judges. All of these groups also received 1st divisions in the sight reading category. This category challenges the students to publicly perform two pieces of music they have never seen before with only seven minutes to prepare prior to their performance for the judges and audience.

Mr. Mike Sekich, director, introduced the talented musicians.

Comments from the Board of Education were entertained.

5. Superintendent's Report

In her report to the Board, Dr. Christine Johns, Superintendent of Schools, stated that the district has a severe financial challenge. She stressed that unless the adults in the community begin to advocate for our children, the quality educational program that the school district is known for – and that all who have worked so hard to build - is in danger of being dismantled. She stated that state lawmakers are considering making the biggest school funding cut in Michigan's history and it is up to everyone to work to protect the financial future of our schools and the educational future of our students.

Dr. Johns said district students are worth whatever it takes to convince the governor and legislators not to dismantle their educational future, and with it – the future of Michigan. The governor's budget cuts will mean a loss of funding to UCS that exceeds \$700 per-pupil and equates to a loss of more than \$36 million dollars. Dr. Johns said that reductions this severe will undercut the progress our students are making as they challenge themselves to reach higher.

She continued by stating that students have been asked to choose more rigorous courses to better prepare themselves for post-secondary study and said how pleased she is with students successfully responding to the challenge.

As an example, Dr. Johns reported that earlier this month, Utica Community Schools was honored by the College Board with an Advanced Placement Achievement Award for success in preparing college-ready students. The award from the national organization demonstrates significant growth in student participation and success on college-level Advanced Placement exams.

This is even more impressive considering Utica Community Schools is one of only 388 districts nationwide to earn this designation. To further put this in perspective, there are more than 15,000 school districts in the United States. The College Board achievement award reflects the efforts of UCS teachers, students and parents to make sure our students have the tools to reach higher and become college-ready.

Dr. Johns next reported on the impressive student achievement shown by the success of the district's FIRST Robotics teams. The UCS ThunderChickens high school team has this year earned first place in two significant competitions – one at Rochester, New York and the other at Wayne State University. She was also pleased to announce that – for the twelfth consecutive year – the ThunderChickens will again compete in the FIRST Robotics National Championship.

She continued that in just their second year, the UCS Crevolution, another FIRST Robotics team comprised of students from the four high schools, also experienced great success. Crevolution did well in regional competition and anticipates strong showings at upcoming state and national competitions.

Dr. Johns reported that in addition to earning honors for student achievement, Utica Community Schools continues to be recognized for its exemplary financial management practices. Recently, UCS was selected for a comprehensive audit as a result of receiving federal stimulus funds. Dr. Johns proudly announced that the audit presented yet another opportunity for the district to demonstrate its exemplary financial management practices. She congratulated Stephanie Eagen, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance and Budget Director Jill Tomyn who oversaw the audit.

It was the latest in a long line of positive financial reviews from independent sources this year. Among these is the recent double AA rating from Standard and Poor's, the A grade the district received from Plante & Moran for the annual audit; and most notably, national recognition assuring that our residents receive the highest return on their dollars invested in terms of student achievement.

She stated that unfortunately, the only reward Utica Community Schools is receiving is for its high level of student achievement and fiscal responsibility is the State of Michigan's continued DIS-investment in our schools.

The state of Michigan K-12 school aid dollars will be used for higher education and fiscal responsibility if the State of Michigan continues the DIS-investment in our schools.

While no one disputes that community colleges and universities are important to the overall educational landscape and economic development of our state, she pointed out that these institutions can increase their budgets through additional taxpayer millage or tuition increases. These options are not available to Utica Community Schools because as a public school district, we are totally dependent on state funding since Proposal A was passed in 1994. State law does not allow the district to ask voters for more money to operate and we certainly cannot raise tuition. She added that additionally, UCS will experience deeper cuts due to the mandated costs for retirement.

She went on to report that with the governor's proposal that \$900 million in K-12 school aid dollars be used for higher education it would mean a loss of \$700 per-pupil – or a total loss of \$20 million dollars to UCS from this one proposal.

Dr. Johns reminded everyone that UCS has already made many of the cuts legislators are now proposing. Over the past five years, district cuts total more than \$67 million dollars from the budget and gave these examples:

- Closure of four elementary schools
- Eliminated staff at all levels – a total of 492 positions eliminated, including 11 administrative positions
- Eliminated elementary foreign language
- Reduced secondary course elective offerings
- Reduced band and athletic offerings
- Implemented pay to participate for athletics
- Implemented employee furlough days and a salary step freeze
- Increased fees for facility usage, preschool and school-age child care
- Contracted out 55 custodial and 30 technology support positions
- Reduced transportation
- Expanded Schools of Choice enrollment
- Moved to a 20 percent health care premium co-pay for non-teachers

She stated that a fair question would be: what is Utica Community Schools doing to prevent further dismantling of our programs due to the governor's latest budget cuts?

Her answer is that the district is working closely with state lawmakers. The Board of Education and administrative team have regular conversations with state representatives Lund, Goike and Farrington, and senators Rocca and Brandenburg. The representatives and state senators have been responsive to district concerns and have sought input on how the different proposals will impact our schools. She stated that while the district is encouraged by this collaboration with lawmakers, there is still much concern about Lansing's lack of movement on the school aid package as we get closer to forming the district budget for next year. In fact, lawmakers seem to be moving toward additional cuts in school funding.

She reported that she and Ms. Eagen Assistant traveled to Lansing to testify against a senate bill intended to reduce funding for our kindergarten program.

Dr. Johns stated that in the recent weeks, Michigan lawmakers have been hearing from many different special interest groups about this year's budget and are used to hearing from school officials.

The voices they need to hear from now are the voice of UCS parents and UCS teachers. The adults need to make sure their voices are heard when Michigan legislators meet to set funding priorities. The quality that's been built into this school district by our community is under an unprecedented threat.

The time for all of us to speak as one voice for the future of K-12 education in Michigan is now...our kids are worth the fight.

6. Community Correspondence

No community correspondence was acknowledged.

7. Public Communication

Dr. Klenow read the guidelines for Public Communication.

Ms. Cynthia Sylvester addressed the Board of Education.

Dr. Klenow requested Dr. Johns have an administrator follow-up with Ms. Sylvester.

8A. Governor's Proposed Budget Cuts

Dr. Johns stated that the resolution presented was part of the process for addressing school funding issues that will significantly impact our schools. State lawmakers are now considering a proposed aid package that - if approved - will result in the highest single school funding cut in Michigan's history.

The district continues to work with our community and state lawmakers to create an understanding about the devastating effect these reductions will have on programs. The message shared and the one that is being shared with state lawmakers is that the district cannot address such a dramatic cut in funding without impacting the quality of Utica Community Schools. After \$67 million in reductions over the past few years, the next round of reductions will seriously impact programs. Dr. Johns said that our lawmakers and public need to be aware that even if we implement cost-cutting suggestions being proposed at the state level, they will not cover cuts of this magnitude.

Dr. Johns presented a resolution that outlines our position on the current school aid proposal. The adopted resolution was sent to state lawmakers and is also being used as a basis to communicate with district parents on the current funding situation.

Motion by Territo, supported by Klida, that Utica Community Schools Board of Education approve the attached resolution as presented regarding Governor Snyder's proposed budget cuts.

Comments from the Board of Education were entertained. Dr. Ross stated that the magnitude of cuts is like cutting two grade levels.

Mrs. Templeton called the roll. Territo, Klida, Meyers, Ross, Klenow, Templeton

All Yeahs:

Absent: J. Prybys

Motion carried.

9A. Legislative Update

Mr. Tim McAvoy, Director of School/Community Relations, presented the Board of Education information on how the Utica Community Schools staff works with state lawmakers throughout the year to ensure our representatives are aware of the local impact of all proposed legislation. Since the release of the governor's budget in February, there has been a significant increase in legislation impacting local school districts. The district is engaged in regular conversation with our state lawmakers. Mr. McAvoy provided an update to the Board of Education and the community on the current status of school-related legislation; the impact of current bills on the district; the importance of working with Utica Community Schools and the impact current proposals would have on programs in the district. Mr. McAvoy stated it is important for the community to become informed and encouraged community awareness by going to the district Website, www.uticak12.org.

He closed by stating the district will continue to monitor legislative bills and communicate with lawmakers.

9B. English Language Proficiency Assessments Results

Mr. Robert Van Camp, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, reviewed the information on the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) results for Spring 2010. All English Language Learner students enrolled in grades K-12 who receive either intensive services or were part of the pull out program in Utica Community Schools were assessed.

These results align with Indicator 1.4, 1.10 and 1.19 from the Reaching Higher document which states that English Language Learners will show growth in reading, writing, speaking and listening as measured by the English Language Proficiency Assessment.

The Board of Education accepted the report as presented.

9C1. Site Acquisition – Policy #7100

9C2. Disposal of Surplus Land or Buildings Policy #7105

Dr. Klenow reviewed the two policies presented for a first reading, Policy #7100 – Site Acquisition and Policy #7105 – Disposal of Surplus Land or Buildings. These proposed revisions are to update the policies to current practices.

As this was first readings no action was taken. Dr. Klenow stated the policies will be brought forward as a second reading during the April 25 Board of Education meeting.

9D1. Board of Education Meeting Cancellation

Board of Education President Dr. Carol Klenow made the recommendation regarding a change to the regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings and recommended that the April 11, 2011, Board of Education Meeting be canceled due to the spring break.

The change to the regular meeting schedule will be posted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Motion by Meyers, supported by Klida, that the Board of Education cancels the Monday, April 11, 2011 regularly scheduled meeting.

Motion carried.

9D2. Board of Education Meeting Location Change

The staff and students of Bemis Junior High School have extended an invitation to the Board of Education to host the April 25, 2011 regular Board of Education meeting. Board of Education President Dr. Carol Klenow made the recommendation to change the regular meeting location of the April 25, 2011 Board of Education meeting to Bemis Junior High School.

The change to the regular meeting location will be posted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Motion by Templeton, supported by Territo, that the location of the regular Board of Education meeting scheduled for Monday, April 25, 2011 be changed to Bemis Junior High School.

Motion carried.

10A. Changes in Certified Personnel

Ms. Stephanie Eagen, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance, presented the changes in certified personnel since the last presentation to the Board of Education on March 14, 2011.

Motion by Klida, supported by Templeton, that the Board of Education approves the changes in certified personnel as presented.

Motion carried.

11A. Financial Report - Part II

Ms. Jill Tomy, Budget Director, reviewed Part II of the Financial Report for Utica Community Schools as of February 28, 2011. Part II reports on the financial status of the Capital Projects, Enrichment, Cafeteria, Trust and Agency and Internal Service funds.

The Board of Education accepted the report as presented.

11B. Schedule of Bills Report

Ms. Jill Tomy, Budget Director, reviewed information the schedule of bills for the General Fund and Capital Project Funds.

GENERAL FUND (03/16/11).....	\$ 1,309,755.53
GENERAL FUND (03/23/11).....	\$ 478,592.45
General Fund Total	\$ 1,788,347.98
BOND 2000:	
CAPITAL PROJECTS 2005.....	\$ 14,825.00
BOND 2000 Total	\$ 14,825.00
BOND 2003:	
CAPITAL PROJECTS 2007.....	\$ 32,763.75
CAPITAL PROJECTS 2008.....	\$ 35,267.75
BOND 2003 Total	\$ 68,031.50
BOND 2009:	
CAPITAL PROJECTS 2009.....	\$ 217,167.69
BOND 2009 Total	\$ 217,167.69

The Board of Education accepted the report as presented.

11C1. Technology – Utica High School Phase I

Ms. Eagen stated that the Utica High School renovation project requires technology related work that will be accomplished in several phases. Phase I will be initiated in summer 2011 and consists of technology infrastructure, equipment and services to:

- Relocate the fitness, weight room and wrestling areas to the closed pool area
- Install infrastructure in the ECC to support the temporary Media Center
- Convert existing non-instructional spaces into general purpose classrooms
- Relocate technology IDF and equipment

Ms. Eagen stated that four qualified bids were received. The lowest cost bid is being recommended and funding will be from the 2009 Bond.

Motion by Ross, supported by Territo, that the Board of Education accepts the bid for Utica High School Technology Renovations – Bid Package 1 from Complete Communications Inc. in the amount of \$39,189.09

Motion carried.

11D1. Miscellaneous School Renovation Projects – Phase I

Ms. Stephanie Eagen, reviewed competitive bids received for renovation work at Davis and Malow Junior High School and Stevenson High School. The project at Malow is to renovate the cafeteria serving line following the same design as the project at Davis Jr. High in 2010. The work at Davis is to place an additional HVAC unit in the servery area. At Stevenson High School the project is to infill the pool.

Motion by Ross, supported by Klida, that the Board of Education accept the following bids for Various Schools' Projects – Phase 1.

Motion carried.

11E. Construction Change Orders

Ms. Eagen reviewed the 2003 Bond Issue Construction Change Order #76.

Motion by Territo, supported by Meyers, that the Board of Education approve 2003 Bond Issue Construction Change Order #76 as submitted.

Motion carried.

12. Board Items

Mr. Territo, as the Vice Chairperson of Macomb County School Board Association, informed the Board of Education of the death of the MCSBA Secretary – Treasurer, Mr. Henry Ciodini.

13. Adjournment

Motion by Territo, supported by Ross, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Michele Templeton, Secretary
Utica Community Schools
Board of Education