

Thompson Board of Education

Special Meeting

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Minutes

In attendance: Kathleen Herbert
Shawn Brissette
Thomas Angelo
Donna Godzik
Jody Houghton
Valentine Iamartino
Linda Jarmolowicz
William Witkowski

Absent: Danielle Carlson

Also in attendance: Melinda Smith, William Birch, Shannon Grauer, Christopher Jones, Nathaniel Mayo, Thompson Employees, members of the public (zoom).

I. Call to Order

Kathleen Herbert called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Shannon Grauer led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Citizens' Comments

No Citizens Comments

IV. Superintendent Update:

- a. Homecoming Update – October 15th, rain date October 16th

Thomas Angelo excused himself from the meeting at 7:08pm.

- b. Long-term Substitute Teacher Rate

Melinda Smith provided the Board with a list of types of substitute teachers in the district and what they are responsible for. William Witkowski and Shawn Brissette expressed their concerns with the pay some substitutes receive. Discussion was held regarding the rate of pay for substitutes.

- c. Internship Program

Melinda Smith stated that the internship program is new to the school this year. An intern is a student who is in an accepted educational program. The school-based internship is available to students enrolled in a Master of Education program. This entitles them to 30 credits of tuition covered by the host school. Students are responsible for any other fees.

The cost of the school-based intern is approximately \$16,000. The intern is not entitled to any other employment benefits.

Thompson currently has one school-based intern, however, we would like to expand this partnership with Sacred Heart and any other colleges or universities. The district receives a MA student studying in the field of education at a reduced cost compared to a permanent sub at a cost of \$49,592.

Discussion was held regarding the program and how to get interns to stay committed to Thompson Schools. The policy sub-committee will meet to set boundaries for internships. More information will be shared at the November Board meeting.

Thomas Angelo entered the meeting at 7:37pm.

d. Vaccine /COVID Mandate Update

Melinda Smith stated that the Governors order went in to effect on September 27th regarding all employees being vaccinated.

We have 209 employees, 24 unvaccinated employees, 4 of them have refused vaccination or test, are on unpaid leave and are facing disciplinary action. One of these employees has resigned. Three employees are pending full vaccinated status; 13 employees are providing weekly testing results to the district.

Students at TMHS 223 students, 100 are vaccinated, 32 are unknown, 46% students are vaccinated. Don't have hard numbers at TMS, ~ 48 students are vaccinated.

Discussion was held regarding testing employees in the district.

e. Bus Driver Shortage

Melinda Smith stated that DATTCO is currently down two to three drivers. The thirteen drivers that were out recently have returned. An alternative bus company has been taking two students to out-of-district schools. One bus is servicing Killingly and Ellis. Dattco is in the process of hiring new bus drivers. All bus drivers are either vaccinated or are taking the weekly test.

V. Citizens Comments

Kathleen Hebert stated that the BOE has received guidelines for public comment that the Board will follow regarding engaging or not engaging in citizen comments.

Charlene Langlois thanked Shawn Brissette for thinking of the staff as a whole and not being discriminatory against those who decided not to be vaccinated.

VI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by William Witkowski, seconded by Shawn Brissette at 8:17pm.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

Minutes Submitted By: Danielle M. Pederson, Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved: