



Schuyler Community Schools  
Board of Education Regular Meeting  
Thursday, March 29, 2012 4:00 PM  
504 R School 697 Road 16 Schuyler, NE 68661  
401 Adam Street  
Schuyler, NE 68661-2400

#### I. Call Meeting to Order

**Discussion:** Also present was Superintendent Stevens, Principals Grammer, Vrba, and Pavlik.

##### I.A. Pledge of Allegiance

**Discussion:** All present participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

##### I.B. Declaration of Open Meeting

**Discussion:** President Jedlicka declared this to be an open meeting that was previously posted in public places.

#### II. Public Forum - We ask that all presentation be limited in their length.

##### II.A. Recognition of visitors and guests

**Discussion:** There were many guests presents representing the three rural schools.

#### III. Board Requests/Reports/Action Items

##### III.A. Budget

**Discussion:** Superintendent Stevens presented his plan for District 504R specifically and other SCS schools in general. District 504R will remain open for the 2012-2013 school year but will not provide an educational opportunity for the 5th, 6th, 7, and 8th graders. The students in these grades would have the opportunity to transfer to other schools in the SCS district or a waiver would be signed by the superintendent if a student would elect to option into another district. The superintendent did not think there would be a problem with the new district refusing the option request. After the 2012-2013 school year, District 504R would be closed. The remaining staff from 504R would be retained in another SCS school. In April of the 2010-2011 school year, the board of education voted to keep District 504R open for the 2011-2012 school year and revisit the issue in six months to look at the upcoming enrollment. Also, at that time the state aid that SCS would receive for 2011-2012 had yet to be determined. The rationale behind Superintendent Stevens plan was that it would provide a better educational environment for an individual teacher with reduction in grade levels and student numbers; the loss of state aid over the past two years of \$1,700,000; the retirement of one teacher each at Fishers #24 and Richland School; and low enrollment which leads to a high per-pupil-cost. The board of education will make the final decision on this issue at the April meeting.

##### III.A.1. 4R Plan

**Discussion:** Questions and comments from audience members and answers from the administrators/school board were: Question - What other cost-cutting measures were looked at? Answer - A list of cost-cutting measures were implemented at the end of 2010-2011 and has been retained and a freeze has been placed on any new purchases. Also, the Dept. of Education

recommends that a percentage of cash reserve be kept to help meet ongoing expenses if a tax shortfall would occur. Question - Can the school board provide a "written contract" to promise that Richland School or Fishers #24 will also not close? Answer - No, that is not possible due to variables in finances and enrollment. Question - Can the NIFDI consulting fee be eliminated? Answer - The NIFDI reading program was implemented due to low reading scores. Scores have increased by 22%. The contract for NIFDI consulting has been signed but the hope is that the upcoming year will be the final year of consulting fees because SCS will be teaching the program to other SCS teachers. Comments - Patrons of 504R feel betrayed; parents of students at the school believe in SCS and are actively involved. "We have our numbers and we have been bullied and threatened and lied to." Everyone has their own financial problems and SCS has theirs, too. Everyone needs to be fiscally responsible. Is there a five-year plan and does it include District #24 and Richland School? Comment - Country kids have always had a better education and I (audience member) see no problem with one teacher teaching K-8. If 504R needs to make financial cuts, then everyone else in every SCS school also needs to make individual cuts. Answer - The per pupil cost came out of the board of education retreat and the board looked at many different options to stretch the dollars they have to work with. Question - Why haven't the modular classrooms been sold? Answer - Attempts have been made with no success. Question - If the school board does not approve the plan to move the 5th,6th,7th, and 8th graders, what will happen? Will parents be notified of the board's decision? Comment - What is best for our students? Teaching methods have changed, SCS is a diverse district and we must change with the times. Question - How much does one cent of the levy bring in to the tax support? Answer - The one cent levy brings in \$90,000. The maximum levy is \$1.05. Board Response - If patrons of 504R feel strongly about their school, then they need to remember this at election time. The administration of SCS did not feel it was up to them to make the decision about 504R; they thought it should be a school board decision. The board president does not want to see the rural schools close. District patrons need to "step up to the plate and get involved in the school board and the city council." Education is the most important thing a parent can do for a child. Students do not get a lesser education in the town schools; all district teachers do a great job. It is a tough choice but it comes down to economics and the dollars we have to work with. If enrollment numbers would increase, the board could reconsider the matter at 504R but enrollment numbers will continue to be monitored at all schools.

#### IV. Correspondence Items

#### V. Executive Session

#### VI. Adjournment

Prepared by: Sally Jakub, Secretary to the Board