

Resource Review Public Meeting #1
Friday, August 18, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. at Brainerd High School Large Conference Room

In Attendance:

- Mr. Timothy Murtha- Director of Teaching and Learning
- Ms. Andrea Rusk- Brainerd High School Principal
- Ms. Kathy Johnson- Elementary School Principal
- Mr. Jonathan Anderson- Forestview Middle School Principal
- Ms. Robin Knutson- District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School
- Ms. Amanda Small- District Advisory Committee Member #1
- Mr. Mike Stanek- Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2
- Ms. Michelle Brekken- ISD181 School Board Member
- Ms. Erin Karlgaard- Elementary School Teacher
- Ms. Paula Rossum- Forestview Middle School Teacher
- XXXXXXXXXXXX- Student Liaison at Brainerd High School
- Ms. Karla Shepherd-Johnson- Brainerd High School Teacher and Secretary

Meeting Notes:

- The Director of Teaching and Learning began the meeting at 2:01 p.m. and conducted roll call. All members were present.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning stated there are twelve members. He said seven is a quorum with twelve members.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning asked if there were any volunteers to be the Committee Chairperson.
 - The District Advisory Committee Member #1 asked what the description and role would be for the Committee Chairperson.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said the Committee Chairperson would be responsible for guiding the structure of the meeting and following the agenda. They would not be responsible for creating the agenda. The Director of Teaching and Learning said he would create the agendas.
 - The District Advisory Committee Member #2 volunteered to be the Committee Chairperson.
 - The Brainerd High School Principal moved the motion for Mike Stanek to be the Committee Chairperson.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning asked if there were any volunteers to be the recording secretary.
 - The Brainerd High School Teacher said she is the secretary for a different Board and she would be willing to record the notes.
 - The Forestview Middle School Principal motioned for Karla Shepherd-Johnson to be the secretary.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning read aloud the complainant's written response of Sarah J. Maas' novel *Empire of Storms*. All members had a copy of the written complaint.

- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 asked the committee members if there was anything in regards to the written complaint that needed to be discussed.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning said the complaint is solely for the novel *Empire of Storms*.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 asked about time limits for speakers.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said he recommends looking at the full agenda to look at the scope of time for speakers.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 said this committee was not a debate. He said it is good to share opinions. The committee needs to focus on what the policy states, but not about the committee members' personal morals and ethics. He asked if there are audience members, how do we go about that? He asked if public comments were allowed or not.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that once the committee has done speaking about the merits of the work, the school board will look at the committee's recommendations.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 said the committee members have some reading ahead of us. There are 693 pages in *Empire of Storms*. He said he has some reading to complete himself.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 had the committee members look at the Report of Re-Evaluation Committee for the three criteria for the seven resource selection guidelines ("N/A," "No," or "Yes").
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said he would recommend looking at the report of reevaluation committee from 606. He said "N/A" means not applicable. Not all resources are the same. A library book for choice reading would not need to be standards based because it is for the personal interest of the reader.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that all committee members need to fill out the Report of Re-Evaluation Committee handout for the second meeting on Monday, September 18, 2023. The committee members can change their opinions, but he said the committee members should have done their homework prior (reading the novel *Empire of Storms* and completing the handout).
 - The elementary school teacher committee member asked for clarification. In regards to Resource Selection Guidelines statement #2 ("Was selected to support and enrich the individual school curriculum and to meet the personal needs of the students"). She clarified if a committee member selects "no," the resource does not have it, but it should.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 606 policy states "all resources," so the policy is an umbrella for all texts.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said yes, many school boards are looking for more guidance because there is nothing specific to library resources.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 asked if this committee will need to do this again after the new policy is established.

- The Director of Teaching and Learning was unsure because the new policy has not been written yet.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 asked if all committee members understood. He reiterated that all committee members need to have the Report of Re-Evaluation Committee handout completed before the next meeting on September 18, 2023.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning pointed out the “Findings of Fact” section on the Report of Re-Evaluation Committee form. He stated the book *Empire of Storms* is not at the Forestview Middle School library. It is located at the Brainerd High School library.
 - The District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School confirmed that this information was correct. *Empire of Storms* is not at the Forestview Middle School library.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning asked how often the book *Empire of Storms* was checked out at Brainerd High School. For this book, he believed it was only checked out one or two times.
 - The District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School said the Brainerd High School library is not utilized as frequently as the Forestview Middle School library. Not as many students are checking out library books from the high school library.
 - The Elementary School Teacher Member asked if the committee members were looking specifically at a building, even though the complainant wrote Forestview. She inquired if the committee members should be looking to see if the book should continue to be at Brainerd High School, or not.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning asked if the complainant knows the book is at Brainerd High School and not at Forestview Middle School.
 - The Forestview Middle School Principal said yes, the complainant knows this information.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 encouraged the committee members to look at the whole book, not just one paragraph. He said the committee members need to focus on our task of reading the book and not having outside voices skew our opinion. He stated read the book for yourself, and not get outside people swaying your judgment.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning mentioned the “Freedom to Read” statement. He will bring that policy statement at the next meeting on September 18, 2023.
 - The District Advisory Committee Member #1 said she believed the Director of Teaching and Learning already sent that statement out. She thought he already attached it and provided it for the committee members.
 - The District Advisory Committee Member #1 looked back at the previous email and apologized. She said the “Freedom to Read” statement was not attached.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said he will bring that policy statement to the next meeting.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 pointed out the novel *Empire of Storms* is not part of the school curriculum. The book is not being used in the classroom; it is in the Brainerd High School library.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said there are independent reading standards in the curriculum; the committee could look and see if there is some connection or not.

- The Director of Teaching and Learning said at the next meeting, there will be a roll call vote by person for each individual committee member's responses to the Report of Re-Evaluation Committee form. The Director of Teaching and Learning said he will be responsible for publishing the results. The committee members will do the math, the vote will be taken, the decision will be made, and each committee member must sign and this will be the official record of the decision.
 - The ISD181 School Board Member said the committee members can change their thoughts and opinions, if thoughts are changed after the discussion.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said the white sheet of paper (Report of Re-Evaluation Committee handout) is our homework.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 said at the end of the second meeting, the committee members will be voting.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning told the committee members to look at this book in the ISD181 District, not at Forestview Middle School. He said the committee members are basing it on the high school because that is where the book is currently at the B.H.S. library.
 - The Forestview Middle School Principal said there is no intention of having this book *Empire of Storms* at Forestview.
- The Elementary School Teacher member said she was curious what the suggested age level recommendations for reading the book are and what the text Lexile level is for the novel *Empire of Storms*.
 - The District Advisory Committee Member #1 said she looked up that information and the recommendations are thirteen to seventeen- years-old.
 - The ISD181 School Board Member inquired if this information could be sent out to the committee members prior to the second meeting.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said he will send this information out to the committee members.
- The District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School commented on the rubric for ordering books in the ISD181 School District. The librarians look at the books that are in the TitleWave account. She stated that collectively, a group of people in each building make the decision (Forestview Middle School had English teachers come in and determine if the books are grade appropriate and at the appropriate reading level).
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 stated there is no rubric per se.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that vendors provide books in bulk. These are the books kids will want to read. The librarians will go through and if a book is too mature for middle schoolers, then it will be bumped up to the high school.
 - The District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School said this happens a lot. She stated you can't judge a book by its cover, literally.
 - The District Advisory Committee Member #1 stated that she has heard a lot about the Forestview Middle School check-out policy (parent signature required for mature books), but she has not heard about the Brainerd High School check-out policy. She inquired what the library policy is at B.H.S.
 - The High School Principal stated that is a fair question. She said the high school does not have a mature reader section.

- The ISD181 School Board member stated that no parent permission is needed at the high school.
 - The District Librarian and Media Specialist at Forestview Middle School reiterated that the library is not utilized as much at the high school level.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 asked if this is something the high school will look at.
 - The Brainerd High School Principal stated that in her tenure, there has not been a book challenged for an independent reading book.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 stated that with the current climate, there may need to be a policy added at the high school level.
- The Director and Teaching and Learning asked if all committee members could read the pink handout.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 read aloud the handout.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 pointed out #6 “Testimony”- 30 minutes. He stated that he was not sure if it would take that long.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated the rebuttal is limited to 10-15 minutes. The question about public comments was brought up. The Director of Teaching and Learning said if the committee follows school board policy, public comments have a maximum of three minutes time limit.
 - The Brainerd High School Principal stated that the last time she worked on this, it was a curriculum challenge. Each side was given 15 minutes, they may decide how to subdivide the time, unlike public comments in school board meetings, it is not referenced here. She stated it is not past protocol to allow public comments.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning agreed with the Brainerd High School Principal. He stated that was his understanding as well; no public comments.
 - The Brainerd High School Principal stated she was a participant in the process of the last curriculum challenge. Five minutes were given to ask questions. There was not an open dialogue, like in school board meetings. She stated there are strict time limits that the committee adhered to the last time.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 stated just to clarify, there will not be public comments. The complainant has the right to bring other people (experts) to speak for ten minutes.
 - The Brainerd High School Principal said she would support to keep #6 testimony timeline at 30 minutes (15 minutes for

- removal, 10 minutes for testimony, and five minutes for comments/discussion).
- The Director of Teaching and Learning inquired about 6A ii, which states, “Committee Questions- Five Minutes.” He shared that it takes him two minutes to ask a question, and he believes each committee member should have the opportunity to be able to ask a question, if they so choose.
 - The Brainerd High School Principal amended her first motion. She stated to have the presentation time remain with approval of a motion to increase the time for questions and answers for committee questions only.
 - The Forestview Middle School Principal reiterated that time would be extended for committee questions.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said he would bring a timer.
 - The District Advisory Committee Member #1 seconded Brainerd High School Principal’s amended motion.
 - The Elementary School Teacher Member pointed out that the committee members will have time to ask questions as well in #7: Committee Discussion.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 reiterated #7A (Committee Discussion) edited.
 - #7 A Edited: “Each member is provided with an opportunity to comment or ask questions of the persons presenting for the committee to prompt discussion.”
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated it is the role of the secretary to tally the votes at the second meeting and each committee member signs their name.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 stated he will read each of the seven statements and then each committee member will read their response (“N/A,” “No,” or “Yes” for the seven statements).
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated that when committee members get to #7 on the white form, everyone will speak their piece.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 asked if the committee should add #7C on “Committee Discussion,” so there is time allotted for the results to be discussed of the research.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning added #7C: “Any discussion of the tally of the resource selective guidelines.”
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 inquired about #8A “Roll Call Vote on the question.”
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said the committee can strike out everything past “for use per current practice/policy___retained, but further use is subject to the following restrictions/limitations___” because B.H.S. does not have this.

- The ISD181 School Board member stated it was her understanding that other books by the same author (Sarah J. Maas) are in question. She asked if the committee is basing this decision solely on the book *Empire of Storms*.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said there would be another committee for a different book, due to the length of the novels in this series.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 inquired if the committee members should look at the whole series, in order to save time. If the book *Empire of Storms* is removed, the other books in the series will probably be questioned.
 - The ISD181 School Board Member asked if the committee should make our decision on the entire series.
 - The Forestview Middle School Principal stated that would not align with the ISD181 policy.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said that a possibility could be that the committee members make a recommendation to the Board.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 stated that he assumed the Director of Teaching and Learning is going to make a recommendation to the Board of this ad hoc committee.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said he will speak to the Board on the findings of the committee (whether the book is retained or removed and the ad hoc committee recommends this decision for the entire series, and then the Board will make their decision).
- The Director of Teaching and Learning will have the list prepared for the Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2. He stated that the two of them should meet before the second meeting.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 said that would be much appreciated.
- The ISD181 School Board Member inquired if both sides are usually represented.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated yes, that is what it states in the policy.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said that in some cases, the district librarian spoke about the collection or a teacher in the District speaks about it.
 - The teachers on the committee, the District Librarian and Media Specialist at the Forestview Middle School, and the District Advisory Committee Member #1 stated that they wanted to read the book first before being willing to speak about it.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 reminded the committee there will not be public comments.
 - The Brainerd High School Principal pointed out #6 “Testimony” and read, “All speakers must be identified to the Director of Teaching and Learning in advance to be placed on this agenda.”
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning stated the book *Empire of Storms* was purchased for an intent- for independent reading purposes.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 said the book could have been overlooked. He said that can happen.

- The District Advisory Committee Member #1 inquired about the seven resource selection guidelines the committee members are measuring the book *Empire of Storms* on. She asked how many responses of “yes” does the committee mean for the book to be retained. She wondered what the deciding factors are.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said the statement at the bottom of the handout “Decision Reached” is how the decision will be made. He stated the seven selection guidelines help frame discussion.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 asked if there are any more clarifying questions from any of the committee members.
 - There were no further questions from the committee members.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning said the committee still needs to approve the agenda for the next meeting as revised.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 said that the Student Liaison at Brainerd High School’s voice is important.
 - The Student Liaison at Brainerd High School stated that she might talk during the next meeting after she reads the novel.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 asked for a motion to approve the next meeting agenda with the revisions.
 - The Elementary School Teacher Member makes the motion; The Elementary School Principal seconds the motion.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning said he would send out the revised agenda to the committee members.
 - The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 asked if the Director of Teaching and Learning could send out the revised agenda by next Friday, August 25.
 - The Elementary School Teacher Member suggested that the committee give the Director of Teaching and Learning two weeks from today (September 1 by 3:00 p.m.) to send out the revised agenda.
- The Committee Chairperson and District Advisory Committee Member #2 said the next meeting will be scheduled for Monday, September 18, 2023 2:00 p.m. same location: the Large Conference Room at Brainerd High School.
 - The Google Calendar invite that the Director of Teaching and Learning sent out stated the next meeting on **September 18, 2023 will be from 1:00-2:30 p.m.**
- The Forestview Middle School Principal asked if the Director of Teaching and Learning can send a Google Calendar invite.
 - The Director of Teaching and Learning said he can send out a Google Calendar invite for meeting #2 later that day on Friday, August 18, 2023.
- The Brainerd High School Principal motioned for the meeting to be adjourned. The Director of Teaching and Learning seconded the motion. The meeting is adjourned. The meeting concluded at 3:02 p.m.