

BOARD NOTES
April 27, 2009

The Board meeting was held on Monday, April 27, 2009 with all Board members present.

- Rich Shail review guidelines for speaking on agenda items.
- The Board adopted the agenda as presented.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

- Kim Holifield introduced three students that won Science awards. Blake Lawson, Shelby Zarobinski and Chelsea Arthur shared their science projects. Chelsea received Top Scientist in the State and qualified for nationals. The board presented certificates to these three students.
- The Board presented certificates to the Vocal Music State Gold Medalists.
- The Board also presented certificates to the Instrumental Music State Gold Medalists. Mr. Belsaas also advised that Rebecca Miko received All State Honor Band.
- Certificates were presented to four Middle School students for their Scholastic Art Awards.
- Jill Fischer was recognized for being chosen as the 2009 Lilly Endowment recipient. Bernie Baltes indicated that the Unity Foundation does a lot of work for this award. Only two students in the county received this award.

Bernie Baltes was very proud of the presentations made by the science award students. He is very proud of their accomplishments.

Rich Shail feels we are turning the corner for academic and competition awards. Our curriculum is evolving and changing every day and these are the results of this.

- Roberta Janson discussed the new High School Garden Leadership Program that will be introduced at the high school. This is a project for freshman and sophomore non-college bound students. Students will receive credits for this class. Robert said it was very amazing that people took the time to have the interest in the program that she presented. Other organizations will also become involved in this project; i.e., the Co-Junior Leadership Group. Seeds have been donated as well. She has never experienced the welcoming that she received here at New Prairie.
- Rich Shail said there were a large number of students honored here tonight. The Boy Scouts are here this evening. They are required to attend a meeting - not to participate but just to attend. He welcomed their attendance.

CONSENT AGENDA

- The Board approved the Consent Agenda as follows:
 - Minutes - March 23, 2009
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll
 - Personnel Report as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
 1. Carol Shamory - Vocal Music Teacher - NPHS - Leave of Absence beginning April 17, 2009 through the end of the 2008-2009 school year
 2. JoAnn Gappa - 2nd Grade - Rolling Prairie Elementary School - Leave of Absence beginning August 10, 2009 thru October 22, 2009.
 3. Jenna Gensic - Language Arts - NPHS - Leave of Absence - half-time for the 2009-2010 school year.
 4. Catherine Dodd - 4th Grade - Prairie View - Retirement effective at the end of the 2008-2009 school year
 5. Ashley Donaugh - 2nd Grade - Rolling Prairie - Resignation effective at the end of the 2008-2009 school year

- Transfers
 1. Allison Middlebrook - Counselor - Transfer from Prairie View/Olive Elementary Schools to Olive Elementary School beginning with the 2009-2010 school year
 2. Karen VanOverberghe - Math Teacher - Superintendent's transfer from New Prairie High School to 5th Grade - Olive Elementary School beginning with the 2009-2010 school year
 3. Gary Trost - Counselor - NPHS - Transfer to Vocation Health Care Teacher - NPHS - Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year
 4. Deanne Gonzalez - Spanish Teacher - NPHS - Transfer to Math Teacher - NPHS - effective with the start of the 2009-2010 school year
- Employment
 1. Cassandra Neff - Counselor - NPHS - Effective with the start of the 2009-2010 school year

NON-CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
 1. Barb Willard - Payroll - Central Office - Terminated effective April 10, 2009
 2. Sylvia Thode - Custodian - NPHS - Resignation effective April 20, 2009
 3. Sally Jones - Secretary - NPHS - Retirement effective at the end of 2008-2009 school year
 4. Lorie Stevens - Lunchroom Assistant - Rolling Prairie - Leave of absence beginning April 18, 2009 thru May 29, 2009
 5. Mary Youngblood - Bus Driver - Leave of absence beginning April 2, thru April 24, 2009.
 6. Judy Duensing - Bus Driver - Leave of absence beginning April 1, 2009 thru the end of the 2008-2009 school year

- Transfers
 1. Tina Bernth - Social Service Advisor - Rolling/Prairie View - Transfer to Prairie View Elementary School beginning with the 2009-2010 school year
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Kristen Jacobs - Auxiliary Guard (Poms) - NPHS - 2009-2010
 2. Sarah Martin - Cheerleading - NPHS - 2009-2010
 3. Michelle Beliveau - Flag Corp - NPHS - 2009-2010

REPORTS

- Superintendent's Report
 - Cash Flow - Within two days of the General Assembly adjourning. We do not know where they are with the state budget. One bill would stipulate that utility bills would not be paid from the CPF. If that takes place, we will have a \$477,000 deficit. Dr. Bender is confident that will be corrected.
 - Tom Dermody will be at our May 18th meeting to give us a recap of the general assembly. We have also invited Jim Arnold and we are waiting for his response.
 - We are currently not receiving any monies from St. Joe because the LaPorte County assessment has not been certified. We will be discussing this with Bill Kaminski if this continues.
 - Dr. Bender said we have a Governor and State Superintendent who are not favorable with education. We may be looking at borrowing money after reviewing the cash flow. We will need to pay the bond bank with monies received. We are still owed \$4.7 million from the counties.
 - The board received minutes from the Breakfast with Bender meeting. Dr. Bender meets with them once a month. We will continue this in the fall. Bernie suggested that we may want to include a community member to this group.
 - Dr. Bender said we had our exit review with the State Board of Accounts which will be presented formally in May. It was very pleasant. There are some minor issues.

- Kindergarten Round-up was held recently. Enrollment is as follows:
 - Olive - 54 (will increase to 57-60)
 - Prairie View - 34
 - Rolling Prairie 65

We will be funding all-day kindergarten paid thru Title I and Title II for Rolling Prairie and Prairie View. We hope the State will give us the kindergarten grant again this year.

- We are currently in the process of writing a program for \$148,000 from the Federal Government from Title I for Innovative Programs and will be concentrating on the Village in LaPorte with the Latino community. It would be a stand-alone facility to work with these children.
- Dr. Bender has taken an approach to look at nickel and dime savings. We are trying to deal with things that we can control. Almost everyone in the corporation is doing direct deposit. This is about a \$5,000 savings to the corporation. It frees up some money. We are also looking at not mailing report cards. We are looking at creative ways to save money.
- The State Superintendent has indicated that students will be in school 180 days and we cannot use days for Parent/Teacher Conferences. Under our current Master Contract language, teachers are required to hold Parent Conferences. The current calendar for 2009-2010 will be changing. There will not be two Parent Conference days. We are trying to work with the Association to see how we can utilize those days. He would like to accomplish this before the end of the school year.
- Jim Holifield returned from his trip to China. He will have a presentation at the May meeting. Dr. Bender announced that we are in line to have a Chinese instructor for next fall at no expense to the corporation. They will offer Exploratory Mandarin Chinese beginning at the Middle School. We hope we can move to the high school and elementary schools if possible. This is a great opportunity for our corporation.
- Swine Flue - Amy Mullen distributed information to students. We are aware of the possibilities. We will watch to see if anything comes up.
- Student Cell Phones - Dr. Bender distributed information from Dave Emmert of the ISBA regarding sexual conduct with cell phones.

ACTION ITEMS

- The board approved the non-renewal of three non-permanent teacher contracts for the 2009-2010 school year. Dr. Bender indicated that letters were issued to the three teachers on April 17th. Dr. Bender said he does not take this lightly. They were very heartwarming, but it does not make it any easier. The Governor wants a flat line budget. There is no such thing as flat line in education. Teachers move up in steps. We had to figure out what that piece would be and why we had to RIF. We had two teachers retiring and one moving. This should open those positions, but as soon as the budget is approved, we will bring these people back if possible.
- The board approved the student/teacher handbooks for the 2009-2010 school year as presented. Bernie asked about the motorcycle policy and the requirement of a break pad. Clara said that is part of their requirements when they get their permit.
- The board approved the summer band program as presented.
- There was a motion to approve the new transfer tuition fee of \$2,300 - which was lowered from \$3,500 previously. Dr. Bender, however, indicated that there is a change in this. The State Superintendent has made it clear, as well as the Governor, to make education open enrollment. That is not the case. We do not have open enrollment where you can go anywhere you want at any time. It is the same transfer tuition regulation; however, the issue that has changed is the money. In January, the state took over the General Fund. There are no property taxes used for the General Fund now. This has been a plus for New Prairie because we are not getting property tax monies from the County, but we still receive monies from the State.

However, in dealing with transfer tuition, if a student wants to come to New Prairie prior to the first ADM count day, they can come in at no charge. After that date, we will need to look at the percentages, etc. We cannot charge tuition fees for transferring students any more. The policy is still in place and we can be selective. We do not have to take students who are in trouble. This will enable us to bolster our numbers. We have parents who send students to private school. He would suggest that we do not take any students after the ADM count. Bill Kaminski agrees with this. If you take students after the ADM, then you begin getting into problems with both schools allowing the exit and entrance of students.

We will adjust the policy to read that we will accept transfer students per our written policy for no additional funds up to the first official ADM count day. We will accept that recommendation and make it known publicly. We have about 25 families interested at this time.

Bernie said he has a concern because the facility use is not included in the General Fund. Bill Kaminski said that is the argument that the Governor and State Superintendent will say that about the reason for open enrollment. Dr. Bender said we have the right to refusal. This will be a win/win now, but once it goes to open enrollment, we will not be able to shut it off. This is a realization, but two schools have to work together.

Al Williamson was concerned if we need to put a cap on entrance. Dr. Bender said we are about 25 students below projections now, so we do not want to do that now. We could get reduced from the state funding. This will be an evolving policy in the next few years. Rich asked if this is strictly for in-state students. There will be no more Michigan students - correct? Dr. Bender said it is just for Indiana residents.

- The board approved district-wide accreditation through AdvancEd. Dr. Bender said NCA is a method of improvement. All schools currently participate in NCA now. It is less expensive to go district-wide. He would recommend we do this to look at student achievement. NCA really shines here. There are only a few schools in the state who are NCA accredited.

DISCUSSION

- Special Education Process and Procedures

Dr. Bender said we belong to the Co-op governed by the LEA which is LaPorte Schools. They have the final control over the co-op. We are experiencing some growing pains. We have two full placement programs at New Prairie. It is the right thing to do because they are our children. We have a community based program at Olive and an EH program at Prairie View.

One issue we have is providing substitute assistants for these classrooms. It is very difficult to find people to fill those positions. Those individuals must be employed by the LaPorte Schools. They have an expensive process for substitutes to go through. We cannot get an assistant that is not a LaPorte employee. We are trying to work through this process with LaPorte.

Special Education is also part of the stimulus process. Through the IDEA, we are in line to receive \$599,882 in stimulus monies and \$22,000 in pre-school monies. There is a move with the LEA to capture that money for LaPorte to see how that money should be spent. Dr. Bender does not believe that is how it should be distributed. He will not sign over anything for the LEA to spend our monies. We have students in our corporation that have been identified and we are entitled to spend that money at New Prairie. The monies the other schools receive is not that much. They feel they should administer the money. It costs to work with money. We can work with our money for 7%. This is not an action by the board, but he wanted the board to be aware of this situation. The direction of the stimulus is to bolster technology and we would bolster this towards our special education students.

Another piece is when you have a fully placed classroom in your facilities, you are supposed to receive monies for those facilities. When I talked about this to the co-op, they said it was our students so you do not get the money. Then he found that \$75,000 is going back to LaPorte for use of facilities for the LaPorte students. They are now going to give us some monies. This is an evolving process as well. Some pieces of this need to change. He will keep the board posted.

Bernie said when he first came on the board, there were problems with the hiring of the director. They had no say in the hiring. It has been a continual situation with the outlying schools. Dr. Bender said he knows there is a history and they know I know there is a history. He will not let them to some of the things they are doing.

- The board held the first reading on the following policies: #0165.3, 1411, 1537, 2340, 3211, 3437, 4211, 4437, 5111, 7440, 7510, and 8510.

Bernie discussed board policy #0165.3. In the past we removed Community Comments from the agenda. He asked if the board thinks it is something that would be of value to re-instate. Previously they did not have to register to talk. It was an open session for community members. Because in the past people abused it, we did away with it. He always felt we had to do that. He is not saying yeah or nay - just wondering what the board thinks.

Al Williamson thinks we are doing well without it. It could open up things again. If someone wants to talk, they can let us know and we can research it.

LuAnn feels it could get out of hand again. They have the opportunity to address the board. They can bring up comments at the meetings when there have been concerns. When Dr. Bender has brought up things, people have been able to talk. Dr. Bender said this is a meeting held in public. He wants it to remain professional. He has seen it the way you had it and it makes a mockery out of the meeting. As your superintendent, I am pleased with the way it is.

Rich said with the Breakfast with Bender, they have an opportunity to bring up ideas. People have been able to bring a different avenue to us. It is limited to a certain amount of people, but we are getting good things out of it. Bernie said he will be opening this up to other people next fall. Rich said that is the type of input we want to see. We have an opportunity for people to talk on the agenda items. I also sometimes get it from the outside that we are short-changing the community, but I tell them there are avenues and they have to follow the process. No one wants to do that.

#5111 - page1 - E - where students who change legal settlement and completed 11th grade, they don't have to pay for the senior year. Dr. Bender said this has been that way for a long time. This is pretty much the standard in Indiana. We get them on the ADM count.

#7510 - page 6 - Bernie would suggest we change the word "gasoline" to "fuel".

#2340 - Rich asked how this fits in with our Robotics team who go out of state for several days. Dr. Bender said it is difficult to supply support for our vehicles if they travel 200+ miles. The issue originally came about because the City of Chicago has different regulations that we could not adhere to. We have a policy that parents can take them. It is not an ideal situation, but we may want to deal with it later. Camp Eberhart is not that far away. Rich said he understands that the only means of transportation would be by corporation-owned buses. Al said there is a different policy that allows us to drive. Dr. Bender said to read through this policy and give me your input. We will work thru it. Bill Kaminski will also review the policy.

- Sunday Use of Campus Facilities

Dr. Bender said this is for discussion only. We have been looking at nickel and dime savings. As you look at them, they can add up to a full-time secretary or treasurer. We have been looking at campus facilities. We are very tight on custodians. Once some have retired, Greg and Keith talked to

you about the change of scope for the corporation with very little money, but it creates issues with other buildings. We applied for a levy at the middle school for maintenance. We have been approved, but will not see money until then. We are trying to look at ways to ease the load. The after-math of weekend activities, custodians getting called out for alarms and getting caught up with cleaning is quite a bit. We spent \$2,000 on alarm calls from Saturday night to Sunday night. It is two hours of overtime every time they are called out.

Dr. Bender asked the superintendent's association and 83% of the school corporations do not have open facilities on Sundays. Those that do not are concerned about the added expense of heating and lighting, but the biggest piece is that we have a responsibility to the community to let kids be kids and part of the family. When they are open, it pulls away from family time. It would be a way for us to recoup some monies. Are they large amounts of money? No, but we have several activities on Sundays. Some could be changed. This is the board's call. Some board members say it is community facilities and it should be open. We have 2,681 families. Not all of them use that. Only a select few use those facilities. We are providing for a select few and there is an expense for this. If there are personnel involved, we don't charge. We have public education, but we do not have free education. It is the same with the facilities. There is upkeep for these facilities and it comes out of everyone's pockets. The board takes the position that Sundays should be for families.

Dale said he agrees that we might want to stay away from campus use on Sundays. It is family time. Students are not forced to be at an event. It should be a family time on Sundays. That is my opinion.

Al Williamson said when Rolling Prairie and New Carlisle were split and consolidated to New Prairie, what we provided was a combining of these communities. When you see kids now, it is not where you live. These students that use these facilities are learning at a younger age the feeling of growing up together. Coaches say it is a community. If we take this away, we will lose that. If we put a policy in, we could not let a church use the facilities like we did when the Rolling church burned down. There is the fundraiser for breast cancer on Sundays. We take that away. Our corporations are so rural that they can use it. If we are spending money for alarms, we can look at this. I have talked to a number of people about this. They said, "why does a school have to tell me how to raise my child on Sundays." "If I want my child at an event on Sundays, let me make that decision. Don't have a school tell me that." I can appreciate that. Any kids

coming on Sundays are being forced. They are not. They are here on their own free will. Phil said he has received 37 calls because they are being pushed on that Sunday. I tell them why they don't tell the people scheduling the days, and they say they are afraid they will be punished. They are very cautious. Al said he did not know that. That is the first he heard it. He would like to see it used more for the community. I am a community based person and I know how important it is to the community. Only one person he talked to said it should be closed.

Rich said we need to take a look at this. From a dollar and cents aspect, \$2,000 is not much, but it could be used in other areas. They all add up. He would be satisfied as long as we make accommodations for these programs at other times. Make the times throughout the week. I am okay with not having it open on Sundays. Al said what if a church burns down. Rich said it is covered that if there are unique cases, it can be looked at and we could allow the Sunday use. Rich asked about the outside facilities. If we limit the use of buildings, the outside people have an advantage. We need to be careful how we look at this. It merits us looking at this and coming up with some consensus. We should look at it from all aspects. Rich is glad Phil brought this to our attention.

LuAnn asked if the buildings are heated on Sundays. Phil said with the HVAC, there are ways to turn it down. We do not have one here at the high school building, but the middle school does. Al asked if there is a turn-down timeframe where it is cost effective. Phil said he is not an expert in this area to answer that. If we enter into a situation where any negative things come up, if the utilities are not put back in the CPF, I will have an emergency meeting and we will have to make cuts, and it cannot be personnel because we are past the window. There will be major issues. He hopes we do not have to deal with it.

Bernie said he is torn both ways. When we proposed the new middle school, we said there would be more opportunities to have the buildings open. I hate to shut it down, but I will be honest - the biggest problem has been the basketball. That is where the complaints have come from. I do not get complaints from one-night activities. I have been involved personally, and there was a negative involvement. Because of that, my grandson said he may not want to play basketball anymore. He is a 5th grade student, but he was disenchanted. He does not want to play. It hit close to home. I am torn on it.

Dale asked how busy are we on Saturdays compared to Sundays. Phil said we have IHSAA rules. We do not do anything on Sundays for IHSAA, but they will run on Saturdays. Phil said he does not know if people realize how skeletal we run here. At other schools, this would not happen. No one complains here. We have a high turn-over with temps, but stable with our employees. Phil said he just wanted to bring this up and create an awareness. He is looking at places where it has the least impact. Rich said for him to keep looking at other areas.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Bernie said when Dr. Bennett was here at New Prairie, we talked about some issues of concern - equality of funding and how far down the totem pole we are. He acted like he was aware of that. Dr. Bender said it is a legislative issue. They have to understand how it got there because people did not want to pay. I hope this will change in time. Bernie said he seemed agreeable to look at it.

Bernie said we also talked about snow days. He was dumbfounded how many snow days we accumulate here.

Bernie said he seemed open towards vocational funding as opposed to strictly academic funding. What are we doing for the 60%-80% of students that will not graduate from college. Dr. Bender said it is a new day in the state for education. I will tell you he is not Suellen Reed. He has some good points. Any connection we can have with anyone in Indianapolis will be beneficial.

Bernie said he was reading about a town that was destroyed by a tornado. They said they were trying to re-build, but were concerned because they did not have a school any more. He said they are getting a school for 200 students and spending \$49.4 million. We should feel pretty fortunate for what we have.

Bernie said he concurs 100% with the Breakfast with Bender. They have been talking about this activity for years. He is glad to see it come to fruition.

- Dale Groves said he had the opportunity to see Grease. He did not know if he would get in. He has never seen so many people turn out for that. It was very good. He wanted to give his compliments to everyone involved.

- Dr. Bender said he lost one of our people at Prairie View - Yvonne Schwarz. She did a wonderful job for that school. He held a moment of silence in her honor.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 18th at 6:30 p.m. (CST).