

BOARD NOTES

August 24, 2009

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, August 24, 2009 with all board members present.

Rich Shail reviewed guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

The board adopted the agenda as presented.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

Kregg VanMeter, Title I Activities Coordinator, talked about the New Prairie Activities Center which recently opened through stimulus monies. Mr. VanMeter indicated how proud New Prairie should be of their corporation from the transportation personnel to food service personnel along with staff, administration and the superintendent. He has had so much cooperation from everyone.

The program is offered to students identified as Title I in grades K-2 at Prairie View and all grade levels at Rolling Prairie. There are 102 children in grades K-5 that live in the Village and 94% of those students are on free and reduced. Sixty-four percent of those students are Latino. We are bringing the services to the children of Rolling Prairie. This program is not just for the Latino students but anyone identified with Title I needs. The Center is open from Monday through Thursday from 3:10 to 5:30. On Fridays, the Center is open for parent/child activities in the evening. Programs include homework assistance and edutainment activities which include games like Scrabble, Connect Four, Monopoly; recreation with reading and math twists, using art to teach science, and Cryptoclub - using math to make and break secret codes.

At Prairie View, there will be a three-day program from 3:10 - 5:00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. There will also be a before and after school program at Rolling Prairie Elementary.

Mr. VanMeter said we need a sustainability plan to maintain the program after the two-year period ends. The following organizations have partnered with the Activity Center: Minority Health Coalition, LaPorte County Public Library, Boys & Girls Clubs of Michigan City and Global Media Productions.

Dr. Bender said he has submitted a request to the state for recognition of this program. We needed to look outside the box to meet the needs of these students and this program is really trying to accomplish this. Bernie suggested we contact Fr. Keim of St. Joe Parish in LaPorte as he has been very instrumental in working with a lot of the Latino families in the community. He may be able to offer some assistance.

CONSENT ITEMS

- The board approved the consent items as follows:
 - Minutes - July 27, 2009
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll
 - Personnel as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Employment/Transfers
 1. Matt Beahm - Temporary 2nd Grade - Rolling Prairie Elementary School - August 10, 2009 through October 23, 2009
 2. Doug Snyder - Transfer to Interim Assistant to Principal - NPHS - effective August 10, 2009 for the 2009-2010 school year
 3. Gabriela Post - Title I Teacher - Rolling Prairie Elementary School beginning August 10, 2009
 4. James Schwingendorf - Temporary PE/Health Teacher - New Prairie High School beginning August 10, 2009 for the 2009-2010 school year.
 5. Laura Palman - 4th Grade Teacher - Rolling Prairie Elementary School beginning August 25, 2009.
 6. Tommy Sunn - Temporary 3rd Grade Teacher - Rolling Prairie Elementary School beginning August 25, 2009 and continuing for 6-8 weeks.

- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Melanie Cloonan - Co-Spell Bowl Sponsor - Rolling Prairie Elementary
 2. Vicky Mosson - Co-Spell Bowl Sponsor - Rolling Prairie Elementary
 3. Cheryl Karczewski - Co-Science Fair Sponsor - Rolling Prairie Elementary
 4. Vicky Mosson - Co-Science Fair Sponsor - Rolling Prairie Elementary
 5. Mark McBride - 8th Grade Boys Basketball
 6. Jeff Meinhard - 6th Grade Girls Basketball

NON-CERTIFIED

- Resignations/Leaves
 1. Jessica Finn - Bus Assistant - Resignation effective August 9, 2009
- Employment/Transfers
 1. Candace Swihart - Title I Assistant - Prairie View Elementary School - effective immediately
 2. Nicole Hart - Bus Assistant - Effective immediately
 3. Jen Hynek - Title I Assistant - Prairie View - Effective immediately
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Scott Kresca - 7th Grade Assistant Football
 2. Mallory Johnson - Co-Cheerleading Coach - NPMS
 3. Megan Elkins - Co-Cheerleading Coach - NPMS
 4. Ben Anderson - 7th Grade Boys Basketball
 5. John Arndt - Assistant Cross-Country Coach - NPHS
 6. Marlene Nickerson - Assistant Cross-Country Coach - NPMS

REPORTS

- Superintendent's Report

Dr. Bender wanted to recognize several staff members who attended the board meeting:

- Casey Gumm - High Ability Coordinator
- Chrystal Wilkeson - Department Head at NPHS who is working on her administrative intern program

- John Gensic - Biology Teacher who will be part of the leadership team going to Indianapolis
 - Doug Snyder - Assistant to the Principal - NPHS

- Dr. Bender wanted to recognize Greg & Jeff Thompson who have contributed some extensive work on the cross country trail due to water damage. This is not the first time they have spent many hours keeping this trail in tact.

- Dr. Bender indicated that this will be an adoption year for Math. We do not know what will happen this year, but it is very important. We will be looking into this very seriously. Prentice Hall wants to do a pilot program at the high school this year.

- We have received H1N1 updates. Dr. Bender said we will follow the State Department guidelines as well as guidelines from the county. He indicated the best thing anyone can do is wash their hands.

- Dr. Bender announced the current enrollment to date is 2,795 students compared to 2,665 last year. ADM should be around 2,703. Individual grades are as follows:
 - Kdg. - 184 (18 students per class average)
 - Grade 1 - 183 (20- student average)
 - Grade 2 - 203 (25-student average)
 - Grade 3 - 216 (24-student average)
 - Grade 4 - 218 (21.8-student average)
 - Grade 5 - 247 (less than 25-student average)
 - Grade 6 - 221
 - Grade 7 - 233
 - Grade 8 - 217
 - Grade 9 - 210
 - Grade 10 - 232
 - Grade 11 - 220
 - Grade 12 - 207

- We had 65 student transfers from outside the corporation. Of those 65 students, 61 have come from home school or private schools.

- Dr. Bender has received concerns from individuals regarding the two-hour delays. There has been no change in state requirements regarding two-hour delays. We do not lose any credit from the state for two-hour delays; however, it costs the corporation about \$12,000 for every two-hour delay. This is lost instructional time and staff is paid for not being here. This is possibly something we may have to look at in the future.

- Dr. Bender will hold a financial information meeting at New Prairie High School on Tuesday, August 25th at 3:30 p.m. He will provide basic budget information.
- Dr. Bender indicated there is a vendors program for screening applicants that we may look into. It is a pre-screening program with candidates. There is also an evaluation component that comes with this.
- There is a Distance Learning Program supported by the NIESC. This is different from other programs. Example: Last year the Spell Bowl was not able to participate in competition due to a weather-related issue. With this distance program, they would be able to participate.
- We have received a letter indicating that our School Board is being recognized for outstanding status through the ISBA.
- The NSBA conference will be held in Chicago from April 10-12. This would be a great opportunity for our board to attend since it is so close to home. The ISBA conference will be held at the end of September in Indianapolis.
- Financial Report
 - Keith Dennis gave an update on the textbook collection process. We have collected over \$40,000 from fees that were due from 2007-08 and earlier. We turned in about \$70,000 - 150 parents to the collection agency. We only received a small number of calls from those parents. We collected \$5,178 to date from the agency. We are currently 40% ahead of collections from last year. We feel the message is getting to parents that we will pursue payments.
 - Construction Updates:
 - We have almost completed the HVAC project at High School East. We are working on some areas of concern at this time.
 - The fire well at the Middle School failed. Peerless tried to correct it, but sand kept coming in. They had to drill a new well and worked round the clock to complete the project prior to the start of school. The well is up and running. They have agreed to build a building for this well. Fanning/Howey will work on the design.
 - We will complete the final punch list at the middle school.
 - We are finally connected to the Town of New Carlisle's septic system. We tried to pump out the finishing pond ourselves, but we were told we could not do that. We excused Oselka as the contractor. We are pumping and hauling away the waste through an independent company at this time. The demolition of the existing station remains. We will re-submit quotes for this project since it has gone beyond a year. The original quote was \$38,000.

- Keith Dennis reviewed the current cash flow. We are losing about \$300,000 per month. We want to borrow \$800,000 from the bond bank since this will be the last opportunity that we can borrow. Over \$4,388,000 will be owed to the bond bank - all due to not receiving monies from LaPorte County.

Bernie asked what the current situation with LaPorte County is. Dr. Bender said we were told that LaPorte County may be reducing our funds by 20% from 2006-2007. They told Sharon that we may have to re-pay some of the monies we already received. Dr. Bender is concerned with the interest we will have to re-pay on the bonds that we had to take because LaPorte County is not doing their job.

ACTION ITEMS

- The board approved the bond bank resolution for a Midyear temporary loan.
- The board approved the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement for LuAnn Schwingendorf. Dr. Bender indicated that the PE/Health position was vacated by Doug Snyder. We issued a temporary contract to Jim Schwingendorf to fill this position. All procedures were followed to fill this position.

Bernie asked how far to we go when determining a conflict of interest. Bill Kaminski said there is no clear line, but would suggest it for a direct relative. A pecuniary interest stands out here.

- The board approved the donation from the Olive Twp. Parent Advisory Council in the amount of \$12,000 for the Bridges Program at Olive.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- The following policies were introduced for first reading: #0144.2, 2464, 3231, 5460, 6460, 7434, 7541 and 8600.01. We will share these policies with the Meet & Discuss Team on Wednesday.

The policy on a Tobacco Free environment had to be revised because we were not in compliance with the Smoke-Free guidelines with the state. Bernie asked how we handle a situation when we see someone smoking on school grounds. Dr. Bender said if you know the people, you may want to say we are not supposed to smoke. He said we have seen some employees from Performance Plus smoking and we had to address this issue. Clara said they announce at every ballgame that this is a smoke-free environment.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Dale Groves wanted to welcome everyone back to school.
- Bernie feels that the high number of students wanting to attend New Prairie is the direct result of PR from Dr. Bender and the entire board as well as the cohesiveness of the board and administration. He would like to compliment everyone here that helped in that area.

The next meeting will be held on September 21st. This is the 3rd Monday of the month.