

BOARD NOTES
October 18, 2010

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, October 18, 2010 with Rich Shail, Al Williamson, Bernie Baltus and Dale Groves present. LuAnn Schwingendorf was absent. Jim Dermody was also present.

Rich Shail reviewed guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

The board adopted the agenda as presented.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

- High Ability Program – Olive Elementary School

Casey Gumm, Coordinator of the High Ability Program, indicated that we have third and fourth grade self-contained classrooms at Olive and a 4th grad self-contained classroom at Prairie View. The 5th grade at Rolling Prairie also has a website along with enrichment classes. The Middle School is working to place students in this area of high ability. The High Ability mission and vision is now on the corporation website. Barb Papai has the 4th grade at Olive and Gail Hartman has the 3th grade. Chris Gesse has the 4th grade at Prairie View.

Gail Hartman said that since students demonstrated technology skills at Olive, they wrote a grant to receive a mobile lab. Each student has a laptop which has extended their educational opportunities. Gail explained how they use the laptops as education resources for research, current news, geography, history and math.

Barb Papai's class has received iPads and students demonstrated the educational opportunities they derive from them. Students indicated this technology makes learning more fun.

Rich Shail said this is an outstanding use of technology. Anytime you can make learning more fun for students that is where it should be. This is the direction we should be going. Jim Dermody said teachers deserve credit for this as well. They have to adjust their instructional style. This is a great evolution.

Dale Groves asked if the self-contained classes are all day. The 4th grade at Olive and Prairie View are all day. The third grade at Prairie View is not all day because of the numbers. They are trying to move in that direction.

- Sandy Gleim from the Youth Tobacco organization in LaPorte County provided an update on the tobacco control provided to schools in the State of Indiana. They are seeing a decline in youth smoking in the high schools and middle schools. The New Prairie Schools support a 100% smoke free campus.

CONSENT ITEMS

- The Board approved the Consent Items as follows:
 - Minutes – September 18, 2010
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll
 - Personnel Report as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Employment
 1. Kari McLaughlin – Temporary 6th Grade Language Arts Teacher – Beginning September 24, 2010 and continuing through the end of the 2010-2011 school year.
- Employment – Extra-Curricular
 1. Melanie Cloonan – PL 221 Chair – Rolling Prairie
 2. Tara Bush – Co-Science Fair Coordinator – Prairie View

NON-CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
 1. Tracey Sheedy – Bus Driver – Leave of Absence beginning October 12, 2010 and continuing for approximately 6-8 weeks.

2. Nicole Hart – Bus Assistant – Resignation effective October 15, 2010
3. Marylin Keller – Teacher Assistant – Olive Elementary – Retirement effective August 16, 2010
4. Katherine Taylor – Library Assistant – Prairie View – Resignation effective September 29, 2010.
5. Jennifer Hynek – Teacher Assistant – Prairie View – Resignation effective September 22, 2010.
6. Mavis Atkinson – Bus Driver – Leave of Absence beginning October 7, 2010 for approximately two weeks.
7. Angela Lenig – Receptionist – Prairie View Elementary – Family Medical Leave of Absence beginning September 20, 2010 for approximately 2-3 weeks.

- Employment

1. Christine Smith – Cafeteria Assistant – Middle School – Effective September 20, 2010
2. Lisa Davis – Teacher Assistant – Prairie View Elementary – Effective September 22, 2010
3. Cindy Kirkham – Cook/Dishwasher – Olive – 5 hrs. per day – Effective October 1, 2010
4. Bonita Moore – Library Assistant – Prairie View – Effective October 13, 2010

- Employment – Extra-Curricular

1. Ben Anderson – 8th Grade Boys Basketball
2. Ben Anderson – 7/8th Assistant Volleyball

REPORTS

- Superintendent's Report
 - Mr. Dermody recognized the Girls Golf Team and Coach Craig Kuta who qualified as a team for Regionals. He also recognized the Boys Cross Country Team as Conference Champs along with Coach John Arndt.
 - Mr. Dermody advised that following the 2010 DOE ME Report, we are down 18 ½ students from last year. The board also received a copy of a ten-year enrollment history. Bernie said in looking at this history report, he is concerned about the graduation rate as we have gone from 245 students in Grade 9 in 2007-08 to 203 students in Grade 12 for 2010-2011. Mr. Dermody will look into this.

The Board also received a report on student transfers out for 2009-2010 and cash transfers in for 2009-10. Mr. Dermody believes most of the transfers out are due to the economy.

- Mr. Dermody and Bernie Baltes reported on the recent ISBA Conference they attended in Indianapolis. Some highlights of the Conference include:
 - Speaker Larry DeBoer regarding the challenging financial times in education and the legislative future.
 - The importance of professional development and state assessments gradually moving on-line
 - Discussion on funding formula and weighted funding. The Association voted and supported weighted funding 80-50.
 - ISBA Board held to not increase salaries on the Association level.
 - Change in education – new term – “Shift Happens”
 - Presentation on how a school corporation partnered with community to open a community health clinic in a school.

- Session talked about a school corporation that invited the entire community to take part in building the school corporation budget.
 - Session on “Going Green”. School corporation partnered with a town to put up a windmill.
- Mr. Dermody recognized the Middle School for their “Christmas in April” fundraiser
- Mr. Dermody will hold four “Superintendent’s Night Out” community meetings for the public to attend. The schedule is as follows:
 - Tuesday, October 26th – Rolling Prairie – 6:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday, November 3 – Prairie View – 6:00 p.m.
 - Thursday, November 4 – NPHS – 6:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday, November 10 – Olive – 6:00 p.m.

This schedule will appear in the South Bend Tribune, Herald Argus, WLOI/WCOE and on the website.

- Mr. Dermody recognized Lloyd Wood for his suggestion to have students wear red LCD buttons during the early morning hours of bus pick-ups. Drivers are able to see students standing out for the bus. Olive is the first to receive these buttons because of their earlier start time for elementary students. He wanted to credit Lloyd for this idea. It has received great responses.
- Mr. Dermody wanted to congratulate the Board for receiving ISBA recognition of Outstanding Board Status. Rich Shail was also awarded Level II Board recognition by the ISBA.
- NPUSC Energy Savings
Keith Dennis reviewed the measure and results of the energy savings implemented from 2009-2010. Mr. Dennis listed the areas each school contributed to reducing energy costs; i.e., reducing heat and air conditioning, turning off lights in hallways, reducing lights in classrooms, etc. Mr. Dennis also listed some concerns experienced by the energy initiative such as technology concerns, mold, etc. Keith and Greg will review all areas and assess the pros and cons. Bernie said that Michigan City turns all of their air conditioners off during the summer. Mr. Dermody will gather data from area school corporations to compare.

- Upgrading Ball Diamonds at Olive Elementary

The New Prairie Little League has made a proposal to upgrade the existing ball diamonds at Olive Elementary School. These upgrades will be financed by the New Prairie Little League and not the school corporation. Because the fields are the property of New Prairie Schools, they must seek approval from the School Board.

ACTION ITEMS

- The Board approved the Reimbursement Resolution for the renovation of the High School and Rolling Prairie cafeteria areas.
- The Board approved the Preliminary Bond Resolution for the renovation of the High School and Rolling Prairie cafeteria areas. These resolutions are part of the legal process for the project.
- The Board granted permission for the Treasurer to transfer from major accounts. This is an annual end of the year budget process.
- The Board accepted donations for Prairie View, Rolling Prairie and Olive Elementary Schools as follows:
 - Monetary donations from various individuals in the amount of \$379.50 for the Science Lab at Prairie View
 - Target 1% Donations in the amount of \$105.75 for Prairie View
 - Dictionaries for all 3rd grade students at Prairie View from the Rolling Prairie Lion's Club
 - Donation of \$400+ from the Rolling Prairie Class of 1960 to be used as needed at Rolling Prairie
 - Anonymous monetary donation to Olive Elementary to be used for struggling families in their school

Bernie Baltus said his wife attended the 1960 Alumni dinner and they decided to take up a collection after Mrs. Hambling took the time to host that class with a tour of the school and discussed the poverty level of the school. The reunion leader asked for the donation of the attendees that evening.

- Approved the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement for LuAnn Schwingendorf and Al Williamson.

- Approved the bus bids for the purchase of five 72-passenger buses from IC Collins/Midwest Transit for a total of \$385,010 which includes the trade-in value of five buses. Lloyd Wood said these are the same buses purchased two years ago and they have experienced no problems. Bus prices have increased by approximately \$6,000 which Lloyd said is attributed in part to the EPA pollution regulations.
- The Board approved the overnight field trip request for the FBLA to attend state competition. Bernie said this trip is well worth it when they see what these students get out of this program. Mr. Dermody said we are in the process of scrutinizing all field trips for educational goals and benefits.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Bernie Baltus said there were three great articles in the South Bend Tribune regarding Charter Schools, Bullying and How we Grade Teachers.
- Rich Shail wanted to compliment Jim Holifield for hosting the individuals from China. This has been very positive for our school corporation and the Middle School. He has heard great feedback on this. He has some concerns about sending our students to China, but Jim Dermody has been asked to look into all aspects of this trip. Rich said after just spending several weeks in China for work, it makes you appreciate the United States and our freedom.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 22nd at 6:00 p.m.