

BOARD NOTES
11-23-09

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, November 23, 2009 with Rich Shail, LuAnn Schwingendorf, Bernie Baltes and Dale Groves present. Al Williamson was absent. Dr. Bender was also present.

Rich Shail reviewed the guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

- The Board adopted the agenda as presented.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

- The board recognized the Middle School Spell Bowl winners who placed 1st in their level at LaPorte and qualified for State competition at Purdue where they placed 2nd.
- Marcia Kelly and Cassie Friend presented the Pre-School Program at Prairie View Elementary which is supported by the YMCA of LaPorte.
- Amy Mullen reviewed the services provided to date through Health Services as follows:
 - Clinics with LaPorte and St. Joe County. They have completed Rolling Prairie - 1st and 2nd dose for H1N1. Prairie View received their first dose. St. Joe administered the mist to Olive students. We are waiting for more doses to complete the high school and middle school.
 - Amy has been meeting with departments throughout the corporation to discuss the H1N1 and Universal Precautions.
 - Held the seasonal flu clinic. Over 90 people participated with more than half under the age of 18.
 - Working on certifying food service personnel on CPR - about 36 employees.
 - Kindergarten vision screening was completed.
 - Will wait until after the first of the year to complete other screenings due to the H1N1 inoculations.

CONSENT ITEMS

- The board approved the Consent Items as follows:
 - Minutes - October 19, 2009
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll

- Personnel as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Retirements/Resignations/Leaves
 1. Jennifer Smith - Math Teacher - NPMS - Leave of Absence beginning approximately January 16, 2010 to May 3, 2010.
 2. Karen Schiele - 3rd Grade Teacher - Rolling Prairie Elementary School - Retirement effective November 11, 2009.
- Employment
 1. Matt Beahm - Temporary 3rd Grade Teacher - Rolling Prairie Elementary - Beginning approximately January 6, 2010 to February 15, 2010

NON-CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations
 1. Sarah Nelson - ATSE Instructor - Resignation effective November 10, 2009
 2. Lisa Andersen - Secretary - NPHS - Resignation effective November 10, 2009
 3. Tina Wolfram - Building Technologist - Prairie View Elementary School - Effective November 7, 2009
 4. Charmaree Herbst - Food Service - Resignation effective approximately November 27, 2009
- Employment/Transfers
 1. Cassie Friend - ESL Assistant - Prairie View Elementary School for approximately 15 hours per week
 2. Lori Schneider - Transfer from Receptionist at NPHS to Secretary at NPHS effective November 16, 2009.
 3. Robin Savchick - Receptionist at New Prairie High School effective November 23, 2009.

4. Ron Bougher - Lead Custodian - Rolling Prairie Elementary School effective November 23, 2009
 5. Cindy Pardy - Tech Assistant - Prairie View - Effective November 23, 2009
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
 1. Joel Hostetler - Head Girls Tennis Coach
 2. Teresa Hostetler - Assistant Girls Tennis Coach
 3. Wes Hobart - Head Wrestling Coach - NPHS
 4. Chris Sammetinger - Assistant Wrestling Coach - NPHS
 5. Doug Matthys - JV Girls Basketball Coach
 6. Kristen Freitag - Assistant Girls Basketball Coach - NPHS
 7. Michael Machiewicz - Freshman Girls Basketball

REPORTS

- Superintendent's Report

Dr. Bender reported on the following:

- Olive Elementary School came in at the top of their class for Spell Bowl and tied for third place in their categories.
- Dr. Bender met with Tony Bennett at the HECC Conference and discussed the licensing issues and school funding. With the proposed REPA changes, a concern is that an Assistant Superintendent would not have to have any type of licensing. There is a move to grandfather the licensing areas. We have six teachers at our middle school with no endorsements. We were told previously that it was okay for them to teach in their areas at the middle school under their current licensing; however, we recently found out that the school had been cited for that licensing piece. The teachers are now in the process of obtaining the proper certification.

Dr. Bender also talked with Tony Bennett on the school funding. Tony Bennett had no idea that New Prairie was third lowest from the bottom of the state in funding. Rep. Tom Dermody sits on a committee to look at this. Rep. Dermody said that no matter what they would do, it would be better than what we have now at New Prairie. The funding is terribly lopsided.

Dr. Bender attended a superintendent's meeting in Plymouth recently where area legislators attended. He was concerned how little those legislators know about education. The exception is Tom Dermody and Jim Arnold. We are fortunate that they represent our area.

- Dr. Bender attended an Education Summit in New Jersey recently where Arnie Duncan, Secretary of Education, was the guest speaker. There is a drive to make systematic change in education. They talked about the "Race to the Top" funding. Indiana is in a position to receive \$100 - \$250 million to be used for education. You must qualify in the following categories:
 - Longitudinal data systems
 - Premium on student achievement
 - Great teachers and leaders
 - Alternative routes to certification
 - Compensation for those teachers who have a high achievement

Other superintendents around the United States cannot believe how we operate our schools on the low taxing base that we have in Indiana.

The State Superintendent has indicated that revenue was down. He said we need to be careful because public education is on the chopping block. Dr. Bender does not foresee that happening because it would avoid Race to the Top funds. The state has to have plans to the federal government by December 18th with Phase I being awarded in April. Dr. Bender said he hopes it is based on creativity and not Title qualifications.

Bernie said in reference to Charter Schools, if they go in that direction, won't that just pull the gap further apart from the "haves" and "have not's?" Dr. Bender agreed.

Bernie said in reference to the statement about how low the taxes are in Indiana, he said he owns land in Iowa and pays significantly higher taxes there and that is land only with no buildings.

- Cash Flow

Dr. Bender reviewed the current cash flow for December.

- Curriculum Leadership Team - NPHS

Chris Cortier said the Curriculum Leadership Team had been working on a plan to increase the current high school credit requirement from 40 to 46

credits. The Team's charge was the development and evaluation of curricular programs as mandated by the IDOE and suggested by HSTW. New Prairie is currently on the lower end of the number of credits required compared to other school corporations. On the current 8-block system, our students can earn 8 credits a semester; 16 credits per year and 64 credits overall. The team is also looking at the possibility of students graduating in seven semesters.

Dr. Bender said we have to be ahead of the game in order for our students to be able to get into college. We need to advance the rigor.

ACTION ITEMS

- The board granted permission for the Treasurer to transfer from major accounts within the General Fund, Transportation Fund and within locations for the Capital Projects Fund for year-end procedures. This is a routine process.
- The board adopted a resolution for the Indiana Bond Bank Advance Funding for January 2010.
- The board approved the snow removal quotations for C.J.'s Outdoor Services for the High School/Middle School and Outdoor Enterprises for the three elementary schools for a three-year period.
- The board approved the request from the Curriculum Leadership Team to increase the graduation requirements at New Prairie High School from 40 credits to 46 credits beginning with the 2014 class.
- The board approved the out-of-state field trip request for the Robotics Team to travel to Wisconsin for competition in March.

Bernie asked if they have fundraising in place and need help. Mr. Hobart said they can always use help because they have to charter a bus for the trip. Bernie said they would help in any way they could. Frank said they lost \$5,000 that they were anticipating to receive from I/N Tek who just notified them that they could not donate that money. He said once they start building the projects in January, they have no time for fundraisers.

DISCUSSION

- Dr. Bender said Keith Dennis and Greg Dudeck have been working with the high school personnel to address the renovation needs. They have been working with Fanning/Howey to address those needs which include expansion of the cafeteria and serving area, administration office as well as other areas.

Keith Dennis said they realized they could not complete the projects through Capital Projects monies and began thinking about alternative financial options. Costs listed are for construction costs only. You would need to add 25% for soft costs and 20% for design contingency costs. Those projects listed are:

- High School Cafeteria - Projected Construction Cost - \$1,700,000
- High School Administration - Projected Construction Cost - \$2,950,000
- High School Safety Items - Projected Construction Cost - \$1,361,000
- High School HVAC - Projected Construction Cost - \$2,965,000
- High School Classroom Furnishings - Projected Cost - \$425,000
- High School Technology Upgrade - Projected Cost - \$1,673,500
- Synthetic Turf for Football Field - Projected Construction - \$875,000
- Miscellaneous Parking Lot Upgrades
- Resurface of Track at Olive - \$177,000 or \$336,00 for new sub base with resurfacing
- Upgrade HVAC at Rolling Prairie - \$1,195,000

Keith Dennis said we receive approximately \$2.5 million per year in CPF monies, but we have commitments to those funds as follows:

- Copier Equipment Rental - \$177,000
- Utilities - \$477,000
- Emergency Allocation - \$200,000
- Custodial Services - \$225,000
- Technology Salaries - \$422,000
- Replacement of Tech Equipment - \$250,000
- General Maintenance - \$105,000

This leaves a balance of \$644,000 for projects.

Keith said there are different funding opportunities which include:

- Qualified School Construction Bonds
- Zero Interest Bonds funded through tax credits for lenders
- 14-17 year term for bonds
- \$177,861,000 allocated for 2009
- Expect similar amount for 2010
- May use 2010 funding for 2009 unapproved projects

The traditional bonding rates are currently running at 3.25%.

Dr. Bender wanted to share this information with the board. Around the state, there is a 50/50 chance of passing a bond issue. However, there was a school recently who estimated a project at \$35 million and after it was approved, the bids came in at \$23 million. This is the reason for discussion this at this time. There are local companies that may have to lay off because of no work. They are hungry for work and this could be in our favor.

Dr. Bender said there are issues that need to be addressed and some that are dreams. He said the middle school has advanced technology and our students come out of there with no place to go. We are seeing more operating referendums around the circle center of the state. He said even though these are tough times, it may also be the right time because costs are so low.

Rich said he understands there is a pay-back on the HVAC which is relatively quick. Keith said it would be faster with new boilers. They can get the board the pay-back numbers.

Rich said he added up all the items which total about \$21 million. Lloyd Condon of Fanning/Howey said not all of the items will apply. They did not do a finite analysis of the buildings. They are comfortable with the mechanical systems. They also feel comfortable with the figures for Rolling Prairie. They did not take discounts into consideration.

Rich said he sees a lot of “must haves”, but also sees things we can do without. If we are going to approach this, we will need to do something by February in order to meet the May deadline. Bill Kaminski said you do not want to do a special election. Rich would suggest a worksession to get some options and recommendations and discuss whether it is worth going for it. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain. It will have to go to the taxpayers to determine. We have a lot to gain.

Keith said in talking to bond council, you are up against a lot. You need the community together to see these projects. It is really aggressive to get on the May calendar.

Dale said there are things that would be wonderful to have. He feels we may be hard pressed to ask the community for money. He would have to see it in black and white and exactly what we would be looking at before making a decision. As a taxpayer, would I be okay? Maybe. Others may say absolutely not. Dr. Bender said the reason for the wide array of items is because those are items that some people would want. I agree that we need a worksession. Bernie agrees.

Rich said the first thing to discuss is the timeline. LuAnn said there was a lot of time to put together the process for the middle school.

Dr. Bender said we will work to get a date in December.

- Dr. Bender announced that Clara Clark was selected as Principal of the Year for District 2 Region. This is a great honor to our school corporation. He advised that we have several principals at New Prairie that have achieved this honor.
- Bernie said he was interested in the presentations by the Curriculum Leadership Team and getting students involved in the process. He would like to commend the teachers on their dedication.
- Dale would also like to thank everyone for their work.
- Dale would like to mention that raising the ISTEP scores for special education students at the high school from 30% to 75% passing is wonderful. Chris Cortier said Clara Clark sent that team of teachers to HSTW this summer and they concentrated on that area.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 14th at 6:00 p.m.