

BOARD NOTES  
December 15, 2008

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, December 15, 2008 with Rich Shail, Al Williamson, Bernie Baltes and Shelly Goethals present. LuAnn Schwingendorf 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**

- Ruth Trujillo, Transitional Counselor at New Prairie Middle School and High School talked about the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholarship Program and the Mentoring Program at the Middle School.

Ruth advised that about 25% of the students qualify for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholarship program. Students enrolled in this program could earn \$8,000 per year for their college tuition. Ruth introduced Maria Leon, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student, who is currently enrolled in the program. Ruth is also Maria's mentor. Maria said "a mentor is someone who cares about you, your whole life - not just your homework."

Ruth said the mentoring program is targeting the 21<sup>st</sup> Century scholars to help them stay in the program and become successful.

Dr. Bender indicated that he has been attending local organizations with Ruth talking about her program. He said it has opened many doors with organizations who want to know more about New Prairie. Ruth has generated many attributes for the students at the middle school.

Rich Shail said Ruth's position came about for several different reasons - with the new middle school and additional students, along with the HSTW audit who recommended a transitional counselor. We did not know what the expectations this position could bring. He said Ruth has exceeded his expectations of what this position brought. There are hidden benefits. He wanted to thank Ruth for the work she has put into this position.

Dr. Bender said in January, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be signing up for high school courses which will also flow into this position. It will help you understand what this position is all about. This is escalating the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Program. He also wanted to thank Ruth for what she has done.

Bernie said the position would not have existed had Dr. Bender not done some financial work to make it happen. He wanted to thank Dr. Bender for helping with this program. Dr. Bender said he had some driving force there to move into this position. Ruth wanted to thank the board and administration for giving her the opportunity to take this position.

- Maureen Stafford, Director of Instruction and Assessment for Munster Schools, discussed District-Wide Accreditation with the Board. She said the purpose is to help schools and districts improve. NCA merged with CASI, SACS and CITA to become AdvancEd. She said District Accreditation ensures all people, process departments and operations of the system work in concert. Maureen indicated there are about 11 school districts in Indiana that have district accreditation.

Bernie asked how you handle individuals who do not feel things need to be changed. Maureen said you make them part of the decision-making process. Get them involved. Rich said Bernie was instrumental in bringing NCA into the corporation and has been able to see the advantages.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- The board approved the Consent Agenda as follows:
  - Minutes - November 24, 2008
  - Financial Reports
  - Claims
  - Payroll
  - Personnel Report as follows:

### **CERTIFIED**

- Employment
  - 1. Gabriella Post - Temporary 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher - Prairie View Elementary School - Beginning January 8, 2009 and continuing thru January 23, 2009.
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
  - 1. John Slater - 2<sup>nd</sup> Boys Basketball - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade - Rolling Prairie

## **NON-CERTIFIED**

- Employment/Transfers
  1. Barb Willard - Payroll Clerk - Central Office - Beginning January 5, 2009
  2. Lorianne Bailey - Lunchroom Assistant - Transfer from Rolling Prairie to Middle School Lunchroom Assistant
  3. Amy Kraus - Co-Lunchroom Assistant - Rolling Prairie Elementary School - 3 days/week
- Employment - Extra-Curricular
  1. Wes Hobart - Head Wrestling - NPHS
  2. John Mrozinski - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Basketball

## **REPORTS**

- Superintendent's Report
  - Dr. Bender reviewed the cash flow for the months of November and December. He indicated that we received \$190,000 from the state for Full-Day Kindergarten. We also received our summer school funding. We still owe monies to the Indiana Bond Bank. We have a roll-over in place for that to happen. We are still receiving different stories from the counties, and we still have not received a certified budget. Dr. Bender said as we come to the end of our budget period, we are in very solid financial shape because of Keith Dennis and Sharon Heirbrandt along with everyone in the district.
  - Dr. Bender wanted to comment on the self-portrait art work displayed by Theresa Serry's 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. He said we have an outstanding art department in the district. We will continue to add to that.
  - Dr. Bender said the high school will be presenting a change in the curriculum program by possibly offering a Bio-Medical program. This would replace the health services program currently offered at A.K. Smith Career Center. This would be paid for by the Vocational Education grant. Dr. Bender indicated there are 87 million baby boomers entering retirement. There are about 20 million post-baby boomers. The largest area of need will be in the medical field. We are taking a very pro-active approach at the high school.

- Dr. Bender said we are moving forward with the fees and textbook collection process for January. We are still discovering things along the way. We need to separate instructional fees out of textbook fees.
- The NIESC Board of Governors met at our Middle School last week to see what we have to offer in the way of technology. The Board was very excited to see what we are doing here. It was a wonderful way for them to see what we have at New Prairie. Dr. Bender feels we have a very functional building.
- The Board Organizational Meeting will be held on January 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.
- Dr. Bender reviewed the latest ISTEP report for 2008. He advised the board that we will be getting two reports. This is the fall installment. He did not do as much detail because of things he has been dealing with over the past several weeks.

Dr. Bender indicated that you will notice a lot of flatness in the scores. You will see where we are heading with overall student achievement. We spend money for professional development, but he has a concern whether we are getting our dollars worth in meeting student achievement. As he looks at the flatness, he wonders what we are doing wrong. We may possibly not doing a lot wrong, because we have a lot of students passing and a lot of students that are not passing. However, we are not seeing a lot of passing plus. He wants students to go to the next level. We want to make sure our students are doing the best they can. He is fearful that our students are not looking beyond just passing.

Dr. Bender said our teachers in grades K-8 have been doing acuity. This is a pilot program this year. We need to make sure to look at different ways of teaching so students can learn. That comes with making sure our teachers are using different strategies to be sure students get the information. The administrative team feels the district-wide accreditation will help pull everything together.

- Dr. Bender received the revenue forecast from the DOE. He said it does not look good. The governor indicated he does not expect to change anything in the K-12 education funding. He does have a commitment to full-day kindergarten and teacher salary steps. The top priority is education according to the report. Dr. Bender said we were asked if we would prefer six half days of Early Release Days or three full days. He indicated we would like the three full days.

Bernie said we see a more continual movement in the math areas at the elementary level. He asked why it is better in this group and how can we apply this to the other groups. Dr. Bender said there are usually peaks and

valleys in the elementary groups. He said he wants to see the NCA information together. At the moment he does not have time to direct this. We need everything to look to see what is going on. It is difficult when you track from different schools. This is the first time the sixth grade will be all together.

- Construction Updates

Keith Dennis reported on the following:

- The sewer project is on hold. We are waiting for Embarq to move their lines. They will not have their employees out working in bad weather. It may be spring before they are able to finish.
- At the middle school, we have paid almost all the contractors. We are holding some retainage. Ziolkowski asked for a \$400,000 reduction in retaining. There is about \$250,000 left. The bleachers are the big issue. They will take care of that.
- Floors in restrooms and some other issues need to be completed.
- Carpet people are reviewing the issue of unraveling in the south curtain area. They feel it is faulty carpet and they will replace.
- We had some issues with the air handlers that keep tripping. It appears to be a controller issue.
- One boiler is not operating.
- Dishwasher is finally working and holding the temperature. The company will extend the warranty for another two years and a \$2,000 credit.
- The detention basin is substantially complete. We found that the pipe in one section was installed improperly. There is a change order issued for Ritschard that they do not agree with. They do not want to replace it.
- The Rolling Prairie entrance which will be closed in like the middle school so we have a controlled area will be worked on during the holidays.
- HVAC project in the High School East is being worked out with Fanning/Howey. Notice to Bid will be out in January. We will have to call for a special board meeting to approve the bids in order to meet the contract timelines for replacement during the summer.

- Dr. Bender wants to thank Keith on the job he has done as construction manager and Director of Finance. He does everything I have asked him to do. He wants to thank Keith for his efforts.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- The board approved the resolution for the Indiana Bond Bank Roll-over. The original bond was to end in December. We will not have the money and we need to roll it over.
- The board approved the High School Curriculum Guide for the 2009-2010 school year as presented. Rich asked for clarification on the Sapphire Choir. Clara indicated that with the Introduction to Health Care Program, students will leave high school with a CNA certification. They will receive certification through Hamilton Grove. We will receive monies for this program. Dr. Bender said we will need to have the numbers of students enrolled before we can proceed with the program.

Bernie said he approves of this curriculum 100%. He asked how Clara arrives at introducing new programs. Clara said she meets with the department leaders and the interest of students. We are able to expand the art program because of having more room. Bernie said he is very impressed and likes what he sees. Al asked if we will have to add staff. Clara said we may have to add a half staff member, but we will have grant money to support that.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

- Bernie indicated that his son and daughter-in-law were selected to go to Baltimore, Maryland to participate in a farm equipment show. They visited a farm where 500 cows are milked by robots. This is thinking outside the box. This is a family owned farm run by a 70-year old family. This is the type of things we are going to see in the future. We have to prepare our students for this type of environment.
- Al would like to thank Keith because he answered all his questions. He wanted to thank Clara Clark for the program recommendations. He would like to thank Dr. Bender for everything he is doing. He also wanted to say that we will miss Shelly Goethals and appreciate what she has done.
- Shelly said she attended the Middle School Band Concert. She wanted to comment that we not only have a great art program, but a great music program. Dr. Bender said this is the first time for 6-7-8 students were together. There is strength in numbers. Dr. Bender said he had the opportunity of singing with the high school choir which was a great opportunity.

- Rich said that Dr. Demuth in LaPorte came out with a discount program for their employees. They can go to vendors and show their badge and receive a discount. Rich would like to see if we can get involved in this.
- Rich commented on the call system for school cancellations and delays. He said he can't tell you how many comments he has received from the community regarding this system. They are very appreciative. Dr. Bender said when we receive calls that they want to be removed, they need to understand they are not just being removed from the cancellations, etc., but for any emergency in the corporation. If they want to be removed, we will do so.

Dr. Bender said the NIESC came out with a system that will also contact the media they serve. They originally were going to charge a fee, but when school corporations did not join, they decided to offer the service for free. We will be included in this.

- Rich said he owes Dr. Bender a vote of thanks. He received the New Carlisle News and a report dropped out. He was excited that we finally got the word out of what the principals did to recognize what they are doing. This was done very well.
- Rich said on a sad note, we have to say good bye to Shelly Goethals after serving as board member for the last 18 months. She is a very sharp individual. She jumped into the position very well. He wants to say thank you.

Joann presented a gift from the board and corporation as a token for her services.

- Dr. Bender said tonight marks 23 months that he has been with the corporation. He said it is great to be here.