

BOARD NOTES
May 20, 2008

A worksession was held at 6:15 p.m. on Monday May 19th with Rich Shail, Al Williamson and Bernie Baltes present. LuAnn Schwingendorf and Shelly Goethals were absent. Dr. Phil Bender was also present.

- Dr. Bender discussed the Full-Day Kindergarten proposal to the Board. Dr. Bender advised that Rolling Prairie Elementary School has been designated as a school-wide Title I school. Prairie View is designated as a targeted school. This is based on the latest census placing Rolling Prairie at 40% poverty level and Prairie View at 28%. Rather than receiving \$83,000 in federal monies, we will now receive over \$200,000.

Dr. Bender reviewed some financial information which will allow us to offer full-day kindergarten with no additional cost to the General Fund. We can actually see a savings of \$43,000 in the General Fund by utilizing Title I, II and V monies along with the FDK grant monies from the State of approximately \$1,050 per student.

If we project 190 students in Kindergarten, we would be looking at four teachers at Rolling Prairie, three at Prairie View and three at Olive. With our current kindergarten teaching staff, we would need to hire two additional full-time teachers.

The biggest concern with offering this program is not knowing what the state will fund after two years. We will have to monitor this program after the two year period.

Dr. Bender indicated that Title I funding is for schools that have a high poverty level. Title II is a school improvement program based on testing scores. Title V is to be used for innovative programs. All three Title programs can be used to offset the residuals. Title I will pick up the \$17,734 residual and \$23,000 at Prairie View. Since Prairie View is a targeted school, not all the students are eligible for services. However, all kindergarten students at Prairie View will be targeted. Olive has a residual of \$18,447. We will utilize Title II and Title V monies to pay that residual. Therefore, we would gain \$43,000 in the General Fund because we were paying half-time kindergarten teachers.

Our intent is to hire 1 ½ Title I teachers with the balance of the \$90,000. Title I gives us the opportunity to offer the full-day kindergarten for at least two years. We do not know what will happen with the program because of the state grant monies. We feel it will be beneficial to offer this program.

Bernie said he was torn with a decision, but will go with whatever the board wants. He can see how it is good for the students. He talked to some individuals who indicated it was a government funded day-care. Phil said about 10-12 years ago he would have agreed. Our kindergarten teachers have gone to some training. It is not true now. The first part of the day is for academics and then they will work with social skills. It provides more opportunity for one-on-one support.

Dr. Bender said along with this we have to have assessments in place. We have some new things on the horizon. We will have K-2 electronic assessments. We needed to look at ways to do assessments without taking away from teacher instruction.

Bernie asked if we will maintain the same number of teacher assistants. Phil said we will not be taking away any primetime assistants from the classes where they should be. When numbers were high in kindergarten, we would place an assistant there to help.

Bernie asked if there is any way to target students that learn in different ways. Phil said that is the learning modalities. This is some of the research that supports full-day kindergarten because they can assess these students and establish programs for them.

- Phil said we are looking at a notification service that gives immediate feedback to parents in case of emergencies. The concept is uploading our basic information to the company's system. If we have to contact parents immediately, we put in the message and all parents are notified by computer or phone. There is a fee of about \$2.00 to \$2.25 per student. We could also use this system for school delays, early release and athletic event changes. This is a contracted service. They are PowerSchool compatible. It is sensitive to parent's work numbers and switchboards. Middlebury Schools currently use School Messenger. We looked at School Messenger and School Connects. We are working with the companies currently on pricing.

Bernie asked how many numbers per student can be loaded. Phil said School Connect is unlimited; the other company has a limit of five numbers. No message will be left on a recorder. They will keep dialing the numbers until they get an answer. This would be used in case of a major magnitude situation. There are many options it can do. This would be a voluntary program for parents. We could also include board members in the system.

The worksession adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the School Board was held on Monday, May 19, 2008 with Rich Shail, Al Williamson and Bernie Baltus present. LuAnn Schwingendorf and Shelly Goethals were absent. Dr. Phil Bender was also present.

Rich Shail welcomed Dr. Bender as he hosted his first board meeting. Dr. Bender will replace Mr. Wrightson as Superintendent. He is currently the Acting Superintendent.

Rich Shail reviewed the guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

- The board adopted the agenda as presented.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION

- Kathy Nicklas and “Birdie”, her dog, were introduced by Amy Myers. Amy indicated that Kathy and Birdie volunteer their time and visit the schools to read with the children. The children sit on the floor as Birdie lays on his blanket. The children read to Birdie as other children pet her.
- Mark Norton demonstrated the new GPS Bus Tracking System that is currently installed in 19 of our current fleet. The tracking system lets us know when a bus leaves and arrives at each zone. We can track if a bus driver stopped at a student’s home and if that student was picked up. In the event a bus breaks down, the bus garage will be alerted of the location of the bus. We expect to install the remaining fleet by September. All building principals and Central Office will also have access to this information.

REASONS WE’RE PROUD

- The board presented certificates to the following students for their recent accomplishments at the Academic Super Bowl and Future Problem Solvers:
 - Nathan Hynek
 - Jessica Blaze
 - Deanna Menke
 - Dylan Mulzon
 - Nick Rehlander
 - Dustin Allen
 - Tyler Miller
 - Kody Kleine
 - Korey Bender
 - Ashley Bowman
 - Mark Cichos
 - Lisa Fischer
 - Samantha Wagner

Rich said you, the students are the greatest asset. It is because of you that we are here.

CONSENT AGENDA

- The board approved the Consent Agenda as follows:
 - Minutes - April 28, 2008
 - Financial Reports
 - Claims
 - Payroll
 - Personnel Report as follows:

CERTIFIED

- Leaves/Resignations
 1. Lori Kienitz - Vocal Music Teacher - Olive/Rolling Prairie - Leave of Absence beginning August 11, 2008 and continuing through September 5, 2008.
- Employment
 - Summer School Employment as follows:
 - Frank Hobart - Language Arts - Grades 9-12
 - Steve Wade - Algebra
 - Kelle Cartwright - Language Arts - Grades 6-7-8
 - Kristina Pentelow - Math - Grades 6-7-8
 - Gail Banister - Exploratory Band and Summer Band
 - Mark Belsaas - Summer Band
 - Driver's Education
 - Mark Belsaas
 - Ted Crisman
 - Matt Flagg
 - John Grabowski
 - Marcia Johnson
 - Brian Lindorf
 - Mark McBride
 - Marty Mosson
 - Doug Snyder
 - Larry Szczechowski
 - Donnie Thomas

NON-CERTIFIED

- Employment
 1. Erica Ketterer - Library Assistant - Prairie View Elementary - Beginning with 2008-2009 school year
 2. Kim Colgazier - 3-hour Cook/Cashier - NPHS - Beginning with 2008-2009 school year
 3. Sandra Rowe - 4-hour Cook/Clean-up - New Middle School - beginning with the 2008-2009 school year
 4. Denise Tuholski - 5-hour Cook/Cashier - New Middle School - beginning with the 2008-2009 school year
 5. Tracy Kosinski - 5-hour Cook/Cashier - New Middle School - beginning with the 2008-2009 school year

REPORTS

- Sandy Gleim, Executive Director of Healthy Communities, spoke on Indiana Youth Smoking and their goal to decrease teen smoking. The State of Indiana asked that every school in the community receive a tobacco survey. The survey is to try and safeguard our children. Indiana is now the 5th highest smoking state. High school smoking is at 24% and middle school is at 8%. As part of the Healthy Communities, we will also fund every school district as they select a student athlete as a role model who does not smoke. Posters will be made of the student to promote non-smoking. Sandy said Healthy Communities also insures students who otherwise cannot afford health insurance.
- Middle School Update
 - Working on curtain wall. Making slow progress
 - Pouring sidewalks
 - Hard surface is out of the way
 - Gym finished
 - Cafeteria will be finished
 - Casework about 95% complete
 - Completing kitchen equipment installation
 - Working on lights
 - Working on fire pumps

No change in completion date as of this time.

- Keith said we are facing three issues currently:
 - Meeting with Peerless about upgrading the high school water system controls
 - Waiting on report on the storm lines and erosion to evaluate whether it is a design or installation problem
 - Bleachers - still do not have a response from Ziolkowski. We are talking to floor and bleacher people to see whether we can get it resolved
 - Lift Station - Issue with contractor. There are five fiber optic lines along their way. They got as far as the bank but would need extra money because of the optic lines. The contract said they are responsible for locating lines.

Bernie asked if the well is set up so you can use either well for both buildings. Keith said that is the way it is set up. We do not want stagnant lines.

Rich asked if we are generating punch lists and walk thrus. Keith said they will be doing the mechanical punch lists and will start with the architect's punch list.

- Superintendent's Report
 - Dr. Bender said he would like to thank the board for the opportunity to serve in the capacity of superintendent. He said 18 months ago he came up here "green". He and his family have been very excited about being here. His wife and children have made the transition. He would like to thank the staff for that. He would like to thank everyone for their hospitality.
 - Talked about an emergency notification system during the worksession. Dr. Bender feels the time is right for doing this - not just on the issue of threats, but because of fog and snow delays. It is not always easy to listen to radios. This would be a great benefit for us. Mark Norton is working on this. We hope to pick a system and put those options together for next year.
 - Dr. Bender said he attended the ICE Recognition program. He said Marcy Kauffman did a nice job in recognizing the sponsors and the students who participated.

- Dr. Bender attended the DLGF meeting that was held in LaPorte last week. They will be giving their report on the re-assessment for LaPorte County. He is not sure where they are going, but the impact of what is occurring is huge for government entities in LaPorte County. We will be asking the board to approve a bond issue because we are not receiving our funds.

- Attended a meeting with the Co-op. They will be asking their board to approve additional personnel for the New Prairie Schools for the 2008-2009 school year to staff additional classes within our schools. Our corporation has grown in the area of special education. Many students are transported to LaPorte and we are picking up the expense for transportation and classrooms. We will be bringing some students back in a protected environment. Classes will be 5-7 students and teachers will be provided by the Co-op. There will be classes at Olive, Prairie View and the middle school. We are also looking at an additional supervisor to help principals with the case conferences. The Co-op will have to pay us for the space and utilities. We will finally get appropriate staffing for our facilities. This, however, is subject to approval by the LaPorte School Board. Dr. Bender said we will not move classrooms unless there is proper personnel.

ACTION ITEMS

- The board approved the Summer Band Program for Mark Belsaas and Gail Bannister. This is the normal summer program and has nothing to do with the exploratory band program that will also be offered.

- The board approved lunch prices for the 2008-2009 school year as follows:
 - Elementary - \$1.60
 - HS/Middle School \$1.85
 - Adult - \$2.70

We have decided not to increase lunch prices for students for the 2008-2009 school year. However, adult prices had to increase based on federal regulations which require us to charge 4% over the base price which was \$2.40. Ala' carte will not see much of an increase.

- The board approved the resolution for the bond bank and warrant agreement to borrow monies for the General Fund for approximately \$6 million, the Debt Service Fund at approximately \$2.4 million and the Pension Fund for \$135,000. We will need to borrow because we are not receiving our monies from the county due to the re-assessment.

- The board approved Technology bids from Network Solutions for new data equipment at \$186,417, new telephone system at \$160,540 less a \$5,000 combination deduction. The total bid package is \$341,957.
- The board approved the revised school calendar for 2008-2009 school year. The revision includes the new graduation date of May 31st and changing January 5th to a teacher workday and January 6th as the teacher in-service day.
- The board approved the corporation resolution for 1st Source Bank to change the signature on the Lunch Account from Mr. Wrightson to Dr. Bender.
- The board also approved the facsimile signature for 1st Source Bank to Dr. Bender.
- The board approved the student/staff handbooks for the elementary schools, middle school, high school and athletic handbook. The board wanted to be sure all students are aware of the rules for attending parties and consequences attached to those violations. Clara indicated that the Athletic Department and Coaches meet with parents and students. Dr. Bender advised that the theme of the elementary handbooks will be “Bullying”. Students in grades K-5 will receive the handbooks. Title II monies will pick up the cost for the primary grade handbooks.
- The board approved the school improvement plans for all buildings as submitted. Dr. Bender advised that we are in a three-year cycle. For years two and three, only updates are reported to the state. This is just for goals and strategies that schools felt were necessary.
- The board approved the implementation of Full-day Kindergarten in all schools for the 2008-2009 school year as discussed in the worksession. Bernie said he has been the first to drag his feet on this issue, but due to the presentation tonight, he agrees with the plan.
- The board approved the Title I Program for the 2008-2009 school year as discussed in the worksession. Due to the monies we will receive and the use of the residuals, we will be able to hire an additional Title I teacher at Rolling Prairie and a half-time teacher at Prairie View.
- The board approved the lowest and best bleacher bids from Interkal at the base price of \$232,960 after receipt of the drawings and stamp from the qualified engineer. Al Williamson asked if there was a concern since this is the company who installed the bleachers at the new middle school. Keith Dennis said he feels comfortable with the fact that the problem is really the floor and not the bleachers.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Al Williamson said he was touched by the presentation this evening with the students along with parents, administrators and teachers. He said he cannot thank you enough for the recognition you are giving our school. Thanks for your hard work.
- Bernie wanted to commend the ICE Program as well. He said his son still benefits from participating in that program. Different people learn in different ways.
- Bernie asked if we could address the Goals and Mission Statement at the Board Retreat in July. Dr. Bender said that is on the agenda.
- Rich Shail wanted to thank the teachers and administrators for all that they do. You do a wonderful job. He wanted to welcome Dr. Bender. He said he looks forward to his leadership and skills. You are the right person to take us to the next level. He said he is sure the administrators feel the same way.