

BOARD NOTES  
JUNE 26, 2007

The regular meeting of the school board was held in the Library of New Prairie High School on Monday, June 26, 2007 with Rich Shail, Bernie Baltus, LuAnn Schwingendorf and Al Williamson present. Colleen Lincke was absent.

Rich Shail reviewed the guidelines for speaking on agenda items.

The board adopted the agenda as presented.

**REASONS WE'RE PROUD**

Mr. Wrightson presented certificates to the following individuals in recognition of their efforts:

- Nicole McClure - 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Rolling Prairie- awarded “Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year”. Rolling Prairie Elementary School was awarded a check for \$1,000 in honor of Mrs. McClure. Mrs. McClure received a \$100 gift card for her classroom.
- John Slater - 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Rolling Prairie- honored as “2007 Educator of the Year” through the Real Services of LaPorte and St. Joe Counties for his good works over the past 15 years that have benefited local senior citizens in Rolling Prairie.
- Hunter Papai - student at Rolling Prairie Elementary School for his Power Point presentation entitled From Horses to Horsepower about the life and history of the Studebaker Family at the University of Indianapolis State History Fair. Hunter received 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Media Documentary category.
- Jeff Meinhard - 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Rolling Prairie - recognized for his community service project whereby students had a book drive for students in Africa. Mr. Meinhard said if students would raise 700 books, he would ride his bike to school in a dress. The students raised over 2,700 books. Mr. Meinhard not only rode to school in a dress, but he wore it all day (along with his matching purse and lipstick).
- Three students - Brittany Fisher, Erin Mender and Brittney Giesler received a certificate for their work in collecting the books and packing them to send to Africa.

Mr. Wrightson recognized Mark Norton, Technology Director with a certificate for being named "Future Business Leaders of America Businessperson of the Year". Mark will attend the National Conference in Chicago, Illinois on June 28<sup>th</sup> to receive his award.

- Mr. & Mrs. Romstadt would like to thank everyone for what they did for Libby and their family following her accident. Libby was hit by a drunk driver the day before graduation. Mrs. Romstadt said the visits, cards and meals from everyone were so appreciated. She also appreciated all the support from the high school.
- Jim Miko withdrew his request to speak.
- Mark Glassley - Teacher at NPHS - He said he has taught at New Prairie for 10 years. The last few years, things have moved so smoothly. He feels it is because of Clara Clark and Bart Curtis. They handle everything that comes across to them. He said he has seen things handled very well and very quickly. That is my reasons to be proud.
- Marcy Kauffman - Teacher at NPHS - She said this is her 23<sup>rd</sup> year teaching - nine of that at the high school. She said she just spent a month in Italy. Her most poignant part of the trip was working with the students there. She took photographs of our school and staff. She will never forget the look on their faces when she showed them pictures from our yearbook. The students kept saying "Bella, Bella", which means "beautiful". They saw the pictures of the pool, school uniforms, library, etc. This is an average size city. For whatever reason, funds are not there for the schools. We have much more than we think to focus on. It is not a time to focus on the negatives that we don't have. I am very proud. I have seen such a change the last two years. We are moving in a positive direction. We are taking on so many programs like Project Lead the Way, Vocational Building Trades - they just completed building a home. I am so proud of that because of the leadership and being aggressive getting grants. I have been helping to get some of those grants. I have complete faith in Bart Curtis and Clara Clark and complete faith in the capability of all of our staff. I want to continue moving in this forward, positive direction. I feel very strongly about that and I wanted to share that with you.

## **CONSENT ITEMS**

- The board approved the Consent Items as follows:
  - Minutes - May 21, 2007 and Worksession- May 29, 2007
  - Financial Reports
  - Claims
  - Payroll
  - Personnel Report as follows:

## **CERTIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations/Retirements
  1. Jennifer Hite - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Multi-Disciplinary Teacher - Leave of absence beginning August 10, 2007 and continuing for approximately six weeks.
  2. Rachel Chelminiak - ½ - Kdg. and ½ - Resource Teacher - Olive Elementary - Leave of absence from Reading/Resource Teacher for the 2007-2008 school year
  3. Joshua Hinds - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher - Olive Elementary School - Resignation effective June 25, 2007.
  4. Barbara Seeley - French Teacher - NPHS - Retirement effective immediately
- Employment
  1. Jessica Feathers - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher - Prairie View Elementary School - Beginning August 10, 2007
  2. Chelsea McDonough - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher - Prairie View Elementary School beginning August 10, 2007
  3. Kristy Ondrovich - Temporary Half-time Kindergarten Teacher - Prairie View Elementary School - beginning August 10, 2007 through January 7, 2008 (1<sup>st</sup> semester)

4. Summer School Teachers as follows:
- Frank Hobart - Language Arts - NPHS - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester
  - Driver's Training Instructors as follows:
    - Mark Belsaas
    - Bart Curtis
    - Richard Dornbos
    - Matt Flagg
    - John Grabowski
    - Marcia Johnson
    - Brian Lindorf
    - Mark McBride
    - Marty Mosson
    - Tim O'Neil
    - Doug Snyder
  - Summer Band
    - Mark Belsaas
    - Gail Banister
  - Extra-Curricular - 2007-2008 school year
    1. Barb Papai - Co-PL221 Chair - Olive Elementary School
    2. Janis Kiff - Co-Spell Bowl Sponsor - NPJHS
    3. Heidi Babin - Co-PL221 Chair - Prairie View Elementary
    4. Gail Hartman - Co-Young Astronauts - Olive Elementary
    5. Gail Hartman - Spell Bowl Sponsor - Olive Elementary
    6. Cory Neuenschwander - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Football
    7. Rebecca Gaff - Co-Spell Bowl Sponsor - NPJHS
    8. Jerry Colanese - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Basketball
    9. Dena True - Team Leader - NPJHS
    10. Melissa Kuczmanski - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Volleyball - Prairie View Elementary
    11. Jeff Suttor - Head Boys' Swimming - NPHS
    12. Jessica Feathers - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Basketball
    13. Jim Miko - Department Chairman - Humanities

## **NON-CERTIFIED**

- Leaves/Resignations/Transfers
  1. Jack Bahbah - Technology Specialist - Resignation effective May 31, 2007
  2. Peggy Jandrisovits - Lunchroom Assistant - Rolling Prairie Elementary School effective June 1, 2007
  3. Crystal Parks - Food Service - NPHS - effective June 1, 2007
  4. Kristina Kaldahl - Social Service Advisor - Prairie View/Olive Elementary - effective June 4, 2007
  
- Employment
  1. Jack Haverstock - Transfer from Route #34 to Route #35 beginning with 2007-2008 school year
  2. Brenda Boniface - Bus driver for Route #6 beginning with the 2007-2008 school year
  3. Vicki Hiles - Bus Driver for Indianapolis Route beginning with the 2007-2008 school year
  4. Tina Bartz - Bus Driver for Route #34 beginning with the 2007-2008 school year
  5. Amy Kazmierzak - Bus Driver for Route #13 beginning with the 2007-2008 school year
  6. Summer Transportation Employment
    - Cleaning Buses - July 23 - July 27, 2007
      - Angie Keehn
      - Charlotte Hunt
      - Johanna Pickett
      - Diane Molnar
    - Summer Band Trips
      - Judy Duensing
      - Judy Ekovich

- LaPorte Special Education Summer School
  - Diane Prestin - sharing one route
  - Barb Kipler - sharing one route

7. Kindergarten Routes - 2007-2008 school year

- Rosie McCay
- Jack Haverstock
- Cindy Gamble
- Karen Swanson
- Lisa Jesswein
- Brenda Gorny
- Judy Duensing
- Ted Reed
- Sandy Kleine
- Tracy Sheedy

8. Allison Middlebrook - Social Service Advisor - Prairie View and Olive Elementary School beginning with the 2007-2008 school year

- Employment - Extra-Curricular

1. Craig Kuta - Boys Golf - 2006-2007 school year

- Employment - Extra-Curricular for 2007-2008 school year

1. Deanne Gonzalez - Head Volleyball - NPHS
2. Janice Jasinski - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Volleyball - Olive Elementary
3. Bobby Whitenack - Wrestling - Prairie View Elementary
4. Lanette Ness - Spirit Club - NPJHS
5. Janice Jasinski - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Basketball - Olive Elementary
6. Joyce DeLaurentis - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Volleyball - Olive Elementary
7. Rhonda Smoroske - Yearbook Sponsor - NPJHS
8. Mary Kay Hinds - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Volleyball - Prairie View Elementary
9. Jennifer Smith - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Volleyball
10. Cathleen Lower - Head Girls Swim Coach - NPHS
11. Sarah Martin - Cheerleading Coach - NPHS
12. Charles Schmitt - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Boys Basketball
13. Lynne Holewczynski - Co-Student Council Sponsor - Olive
14. Nancy Niespodziany - Co-Student Council Sponsor - Olive
15. Andrea Stack - Auxiliary Guard (Flags) - NPHS
16. Joel Hostetler - Head Boys Tennis - NPHS
17. Teresa Hostetler - Assistant Boys Tennis - NPHS
18. Nadine Kleine - Poms - NPHS

## **REPORTS**

- Superintendent's Report
  - Mr. Wrightson met with Ritschard Brothers regarding the basketball court issue at the new middle school. He stated that when they starting digging, they had problems with the soil. They said it cost \$6,100 to dig the borrow. Then when we talked about re-locating the courts to a different location, they said it would cost us \$60,000. Mr. Wrightson reviewed all the additions and deductions for the project. They wanted \$14,000 to fill the borrow they dug. It cost them \$6,503. He said if it cost \$6,503 to dig the borrow, we would only pay \$6,503 to fill it. Mr. Wrightson said we will not move to put those courts on the south side at this time. He will have the board determine what they want to do at a later date. We will be credited \$23,000 for that project. They originally wanted to credit us \$2,550. After our meeting today, we will receive a credit for \$23,107.
  - Mr. Wrightson distributed information to the board regarding the tax statements which have not been distributed by St. Joe or LaPorte. LaPorte said possibly by the end of July they would distribute to taxpayers with a due date of August. We would receive a settlement possibly by September. St. Joe said they have no information regarding dates to mail their tax bills.

Mr. Wrightson said by us not getting our settlement, we will have to borrow money. In July we will have a positive balance of \$1.5 million. In August, we will have a positive balance of \$285,000. We will have negative balances in September of \$445,000, October of \$1.3 million and November of \$2.1 million. We will bring a resolution to the board to borrow \$3.5 million in July. If LaPorte comes through, it will be less.

- Distributed a copy of a letter from the DOE regarding mandates for High Ability students K-12. The mandate says school corporations shall provide curriculum for High Ability students in core academic areas. Mr. Wrightson said this is another reason for our request for a High Ability Facilitator.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- Cafeteria Bids - We only received one bid for Milk - Scholl's Dairy; and one bid for Bread - Nickel's Bakery. The board approved the milk, bread and cafeteria bids for 2007-2008 as received.

Bernie said in looking at the increased prices for milk and bread, it is not because of the grain. They say it is because of the ethanol that items will be higher, but it is after the raw product is shipped that the high cost is incurred.

- The board approved the Affidavit for Payment.
- The board approved the School Improvement Plans for Rolling Prairie and Prairie View Elementary Schools for the 2007-2008 school year.
- The board approved the Summer Band Program for the Band Director and Assistant Band Director. The program is similar to last year's program. Bernie asked if this is covered through Summer School funding. Duane said it will come from the General Fund.
- The board upheld the decision for the Student Expulsion Appeal Case #3.

Bernie Baltus said he has struggled with this for several weeks. Our policy does not say anything - it is up to the handbook. You do not have much of a choice but to follow through. He said he would like us to find an alternative to keep students in school rather than expel them. He said at the retreat we talked about alternative education. He would like to see how we can implement an ISS program rather than expelling students. He said he would like to make that comment. We will be doing the budget soon and he would hope that is something we could look at strongly.

Duane said not necessarily. He said he gave the board a memo last week to look at the policies concerning expulsion/suspension and whether the board wants to change that policy. He said he shared Moffatt County's policy which showed the first offense for alcohol was a 10-day suspension. We also looked at LaPorte's and NEOLA's policy, not including other drugs and alcohol. We have had a "Zero Tolerance" policy for many years. The administration carried out those policies in place. If the board says we have some concerns and the board feels we need to change, you will not get any objection from the superintendent or the administration.

In Minnesota and Colorado, if a student was expelled, that student still received an education. They had to be tutored. That cut down the number of expulsions because of financial obligations. In the last six years, it has been Zero Tolerance. Do we go and say, "drink the first time and get caught, but the second time you are out?" We had suspensions at the JHS because of the Alternative program there. Our best interest is the students. Where is



that line drawn when the law is broken? Do you get the first, second or third chance to be in a program? Duane said he concurs with Bernie. He liked the Student Code from Moffatt. He feels we should take a look at that here. It is laid out very well. We want to build character in kids. Also, for students to learn that if you make a mistake, there are consequences to pay. It is more severe in some areas than others. We increased from 25% suspension to 33% in the athletic handbook for next year. There is no second chance there. They should have a right to education. Duane said he agrees with Bernie.

Rich said along those lines, the elementary handbooks' "Zero Tolerance" for the same offenses for tobacco, drugs, alcohol and inhalant consequences are not as clear and concise as the high school. There are five different consequences in the elementary. He is just asking Duane about the linier We should be looking at the Zero Tolerance linier. He is requesting that we have a worksession with the administration and discuss this to see that it is complete and across the board as far as disciplinary action for the same actions. Duane agrees 100%.

- The board approved the recommendation of the administration to hire a half-time High Ability Facilitator for the corporation which coincides with new mandates from the state to identify High Ability students. Marcia Kelly and Sherry Bailey have put together some criteria for this position which will be funded through grants. Remediation will also be a part of this position which will make for a full-time position.

Bernie asked who determines what high ability is. Duane said there will be a test and it will be laid out. Bernie said he looks at a person who works well with his hands, but is not high academically, etc. What happens for those students? Duane said some of the programs will identify those areas. Duane said when you look at the state mandates with high students, 75% of our curriculum is in that area of high ability. He said he knows Bernie likes the vocational areas. Bernie said his son's ability in the vocational area helped him succeed. We need to do a better job of serving those students in the vocational area.

Lisa Smiertelny, a teacher at Rolling Prairie said 10% of the total corporation are identified. She said a teacher could look at a student hands-on and recommend based on their performance. Those students would not be completely missed. Duane said what bothers him is the bureaucracy.

- The board approved the recommendation of the administration to increase the hours for the ESL position from 30 hours to 37.5 hours starting with the 2007-2008 school year. Rich Shail asked what the numbers are and the

impact it has on our school. Mrs. Hambling said Rolling Prairie has a 15% Hispanic population - the highest of all our schools - and it is growing. When they were observed for NCA, they asked us to declare "WAR" on the ESL, special education and low poverty students. Those students must take the math test even if they came from Mexico the day before. The state gives them one year to take a test. AYP looks at sub-groups and one of those sub-groups is ESL. We must make AYP. Angie said they have wonderful teachers working hard with the assistants who service the high school, junior high and three elementary schools. We need a lot of help. Students are failing. We are asking for a few extra hours. It is the first step in declaring war.

Bernie asked how many students are at Rolling Prairie now. Angie said there are 50 students currently. Bernie said when he came on the board, there were three students. In 8-9 years, we have gone from three to 50. He said he feels justified in what we are looking at here.

- The board approved the student handbooks for Rolling Prairie, Olive and Prairie View Elementary Schools as presented. Angie Hambling reviewed the changes in the handbook for both Rolling Prairie and Olive. Rich would like some clarification in Olive's handbook regarding the duration of not participating in an activity when parents fail to pick up their child after an event. Rich feels we need to define whether that is the remainder of the school year, semester, etc.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

- Bernie said when he first came on the board, there was a rumor that employees were not to contact board members. He said he thought that rumor had been put to rest. That rumor has arisen again. Bernie said I am here to tell you that you can call me any time you want. My telephone number is listed in the book. If you call my home and I am not there, my wife will direct you to call my cell phone. Anyone should feel free to contact me any time.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.