

Regular Meeting

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District was held on Monday evening, November 16, 2009, beginning at 6:30 p.m., in the Board Conference Room at the William J. Brosnan School, 158 Laurel Avenue, Northport, New York, with Mr. Stephen V. Waldenburg, Jr., Chairperson, opening the meeting and presiding.

Members present: Mrs. Liz Dragone, Mr. Joe Gannon, Mr. Rob Ingraham, Mr. Tim Madden, Mrs. Donna McNaughton, Mrs. Arlene S. Munson, Dr. Kay Hutchins Sato, Mr. Stephen V. Waldenburg, Jr., Mrs. Karen Wills

Members absent: None

Also present: Dr. Marylou McDermott, Superintendent of Schools

1. President Waldenburg called the meeting to order.

Motion was made by Trustee Gannon, seconded by Trustee Ingraham, to convene in Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to potential litigation.

Unanimously carried.

At 7:50 p.m., motion was made by Trustee Madden, seconded by Trustee Wills, to reconvene in public session in the Cafeteria at the William J. Brosnan School.

Unanimously carried.

Public attendance: There were approximately 50 persons present.

2. Mr. Waldenburg led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance; and
3. Pointed out the emergency exits.
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Trustee Ingraham, seconded by Trustee Sato, to approve all items under 4.1:

- 4.1 Minutes
 - 4.1.1 Regular Meeting, November 2, 2009

Unanimously carried.

5. SPECIAL REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Marylou McDermott, Superintendent, asked Ms. Kathleen Molander, Assistant Superintendent for Business, to discuss why the ongoing District savings are important to the budgeting process for this year as well as next year.

Ms. Molander stated that the monthly savings that are being generated and announced each month will be returned to the taxpayer next year and will serve to reduce the tax levy. This year the district returned \$3.16m to the taxpayers. In order for the District to return a consistent amount year after year to the taxpayer, the following must happen: Either the District is going to receive unanticipated revenues or the District will realize unexpended appropriations. Examples of the unexpended appropriations are the

savings that are being announced each month. If the district does not return a consistent amount to the taxpayer next year it will cause the tax levy to increase and cause a spike in the tax rate. Ms. Molander stated that these savings are very important in the budgeting process for the 2010-11 school year in that a consistent amount can be returned to the taxpayers.

Dr. McDermott presented her monthly report noting District-wide savings for the month of October of \$40,194. Those savings were realized through reductions in teacher substitute costs of \$18,900 and in custodial, clerical and security overtime of \$21,294. Dr. McDermott also noted reductions in costs through the use of electronic communications such as ConnectEd, email and web pages with further reductions noted in postage, paper, and maintenance and repair of machines. Reduced kilowatt usage in buildings is not only conserving energy but also reducing energy costs.

Dr. McDermott noted that the 2008-2009 report of the Independent Auditor will be presented this evening by Mr. Peter Rodriguez and noted that the District is in a strong financial position.

The Superintendent announced the following accomplishments of the District's students and staff: Mr. Don Strasser was honored by Bank of America Merrill Lynch's Neighborhood Excellence Award as one of five local heroes for outstanding community effort. Northport Middle School student Kyle Orent was also honored as one of the five local heroes for raising \$115,000 in four years for Canine Companions through his lemonade stand. The November 12th issue of *The New York Times* features the success of A Midwinter Night's Dream. Art Chairperson Peter Falotico was selected to receive the New York State Art Teaches Association "Outstanding Service Award". The outstanding efforts of the Drug and Alcohol Task Force will be featured on News12 on Thursday.

5.1 Accomplishments of Staff and Students

5.1.1 Ms. Irene McLaughlin, Northport High School Principal, introduced Alexandria Derasmo, Business Department Student of the Month. Ms. McLaughlin stated that Alexandria (Lexie) has clearly distinguished herself as one of the hardest working and most compassionate students. She has challenged herself with an intense academic program that includes Accelerated, Honors, AP and IB level courses. Lexie is one of the most gifted students within the Academy of Finance program and, most recently, she completed a summer internship at Winthrop Hospital in the field of medicine. Ms. McLaughlin also noted that Lexie has a strong commitment to a wide range of extra-curricular activities including the National Honor Society, Foreign Language Honor Society, Business Honor Society and the ALS committee. Ms. McLaughlin stated that Lexie is one of the most well-rounded and hardest working students that Northport has to offer. Her determination, maturity and poise have helped her to successfully navigate through high school and will surely be of benefit to her in the future.

The President of the Board and the Superintendent presented Alexandria with a certificate of commendation from the Board and congratulated her on her fine accomplishments.

5.2 Motion was made by Trustee Gannon, seconded by Trustee Ingraham, to receive the Annual Report of the Independent Auditor, prepared by Coughlin Foundotos Cullen & Danowski LLP for the year ending June 30, 2009.

5.2.1 Financial Statements and Supplemental Information

Mr. Peter Rodriguez of Coughlin Foundotos Cullen & Danowski LLP stated that the job of the external auditor is to express opinions on the District's financial statements by auditing the financials and eventually expressing opinions. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the firm begins its audit by understanding the District's internal controls and evaluating that controls are in place to prevent mistakes on financial statements. Mr. Rodriguez stated that once this is done for payroll, cash disbursements and cash receipts the auditors begin a risk assessment by looking at all the District's account balances and transactions. The

firm then designs an audit program with Financial Statement assertions in mind and they satisfy the audit procedures through confirmations with banks. Mr. Rodriguez stated that same is done with the District's revenues, making sure they are reported properly, and with State Aid through third party confirmation. Mr. Rodriguez noted that confirmation is probably the strongest audit evidence the firm can gather. The auditing firm then makes sure the balances are complete and liabilities are recorded on the balance sheets. They gather as much evidence and information as needed to form a detailed opinion.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that the opinion issued for the Northport-East Northport School District for the year ended June 30, 2009 was an unqualified opinion. Mr. Rodriguez noted that all the assets and liabilities in the financial statements were fairly presented and free of material mistakes. The unqualified opinion is the highest level of opinion that auditors can express on financial statements. This opinion is reflective of professional standards and government auditing standards and compliance with rules and regulations. Mr. Rodriguez noted the firm did note some control deficiencies during the year that they felt rose to the level of a material weakness and made some recommendations regarding procedures over accounts receivable as related to the Special Education Fund, Summer Program for Students with Disabilities and the Special Education Pre-K Program. The firm also recommended monthly bank reconciliations to the general ledger on a monthly basis, updating the capital assets inventory within the Assetmaxx program, and District procedures for health insurance premiums paid by employees and retirees.

President Waldenburg and Superintendent McDermott thanked Mr. Rodriguez for his report.

Mr. Warren Arthur, Chairman of the Audit Committee, stated that the Audit Committee met before the meeting with six members present and vote unanimously to recommend that the Board of Education receive the Annual Report of the Independent Auditor.

Vote on Trustee Gannon's motion to receive the Annual Report of the Independent Auditor, prepared by Coughlin Foundotos Cullen & Danowski LLP for the year ending June 30, 2009 was unanimously carried.

The President of the Board stated that the audit report will be made available to the public on the District's website on Tuesday and any questions will be answered at the next meeting of the Board of Education on December 7, 2009.

5.3 Review of instructional initiatives in the following area:

5.3.1 Music Education

Mr. Izzet Mergen, Director of Music Education K-12, presented the 2009-2010 Music Instructional Initiatives. Mr. Mergen stated that the music department will continue to support the district-wide initiative of supporting instruction through the use of technology. Professional development at Music Department meetings will include training and instruction in the use of SmartMusic, Moodle and Charms. Mr. Mergen noted that the SmartMusic software encourages kids to practice and Moodle allows the posting of MP3 clips for the students to practice at home. Additional initiatives reviewed by Mr. Mergen were the establishment of District-wide Music Department Learning Communities and the establishment of elementary string curriculum, grades 4-5, to encompass the Suzuki-based approach coupled with clearly established benchmarks and when to introduce note-reading. Mr. Mergen reviewed the Professional Development Workshops offered to staff.

At the elementary level, the music department continues to produce the annual children's concert for pre-k – 3rd grade community members and their families, and will hold the 2nd Annual Night of 1,000 Strings. At the middle school level, collaborative efforts between the middle schools and high school are planned to promote the continued study of music. At the high school level, the Annual Senior Vocal Recital program continues and the Northport Chapter of the Tri-M National Music Honor Society offers all the fourth and fifth graders free NYSSMA music tutoring for the NYSSMA solo & Ensemble Festival. Mr.

Mergen noted the continued evolution of the Music Department web page to include NYSSMA times and room numbers, “downloadable” NYSSMA and Summer Music forms for students, teachers and parents, and the announcement of music calendar events.

Mr. Mergen thanked the Board of Education and the District for their continued support of Music and the Arts.

After a brief discussion, President Waldenburg and Superintendent McDermott thanked Mr. Mergen for his informative report.

5.4 Motion was made by Trustee Munson, seconded by Trustee Sato, to receive the final recommendations for course catalog changes at the middle schools for the 2010-2011 school year.

There was a brief discussion regarding a typographical error in the 6th grade Math/AIS section, and the physical education and world language programs.

Vote on Trustee Munson’s motion to receive the final recommendations for course catalog changes at the middle schools for the 2010-2011 school year was unanimously carried.

5.5 The President of the Board reviewed the upcoming Board of Education meetings. A Public Work Session is scheduled for November 23rd followed by regular meetings of the Board of Education on December 7th, December 21st and January 11th.

5.6 President Waldenburg stated that Board Counsel provided an update on the transportation issues addressed at the November 2, 2009 Board Meeting where several questions were posed. The first question was regarding transportation to and from the Village PreSchool. Since the students were only being bused from home to school and then to the Village Preschool and there was no “third leg” of the trip did that change the answer as to whether the District can provide transportation for those students. President Waldenburg stated that the answer was no, it did not change anything.

Ms. Adrian Forman, a parent, asked who decided that the Village Preschool cannot be determined as a nonpublic school, a child care center or a day care center. Ms. Forman stated that the Village Preschool is certified by the State as an educational facility and she checked into it and that it does provide child care. Ms. Forman stated that she thinks the District’s attorney is ill prepared to answer the questions and that the Board is hiding behind the law and hiding behind an attorney and not willing to be pro child.

President Waldenburg stated that the Village Preschool classifies itself as a preschool and it cannot fairly be characterized as a non-public school. Mr. Waldenburg also stated that the information from Board Counsel is used as guidance in making decisions and in protecting the interests of the community.

With regards to the concerns about a Child Safety Zone north of Route 25A off of Reservoir Avenue, it was discovered after researching when the traffic light was installed by Suffolk County at the railroad crossing on Elwood Road, that the entrance configuration of the high school had been changed. The high school entrance had physically moved south to the traffic light. Mr. Waldenburg stated that the District is in the process of re-measuring from that entrance to the homes north of Route 25A to see if students qualify for bus transportation.

Dr. McDermott stated that parents will receive a letter from the transportation department stating whether they qualify or do not qualify for bus transportation.

In response to a question, President Waldenburg stated that a public vote is required to approve a Child Safety Zone. Mr. Waldenburg noted that the distance is measured by the nearest available publicly maintained route and the statute does not allow the Board to change that.

There was discussion regarding contacting Suffolk County regarding curbs along Elwood Road, requesting “no turn on red” at the intersection of Elwood Road and Route 25A and repainting the crosswalks. There was further discussion regarding the State Law requiring a seat for every student qualified to take a bus and legislature proposed to change the law.

Dr. McDermott stated that she spoke with Commissioner Dormer of the Suffolk County Police Department regarding the transportation issues at Fifth Avenue School and the commissioner determined that the situation was not unsafe. Dr. McDermott noted that Mrs. Joan Baltman, Principal Fifth Avenue School, will be holding a meeting next week to further discuss options.

There was a long discussion regarding changing the measurement point of all schools to the front door of each school. The sense of the Board was to ask the Superintendent to provide information to the Board members regarding the number of students that would be entitled to busing if the point of measurement was changed and the financial impact to the District. The Board directed Dr. McDermott to begin with three schools: the high school, a middle school and an elementary school.

There was further discussion regarding Board of Education Policy #8411.1, *Transportation to Child Care Locations*. Trustee Gannon suggested changing the wording of the policy under section 2 to include the definition of a child care location as described by New York State Law and to eliminate “programs licensed or registered pursuant to §390 of the New York Social Services Law which lie outside the attendance zone of the school the child attends under the following circumstance”

There was a long discussion regarding the concern that the Village Preschool is licensed as preschool under New York State law and not as a child care location.

In response to a question from Trustee Madden, Mr. John Lynch, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services, stated that he placed a call to the principal of the Village Preschool to acquire information and he was told by the principal that the Village Preschool is a State Licensed Preschool program following the Montessori methodology. They have an enrichment K program but not a full day kindergarten program. Mr. Lynch stated there was no indication that the program was licensed as a childcare/daycare facility, the only license they had from the State Education Department was a Preschool Education Program following Montessori methodology.

The Board requested that Dr. McDermott get a second legal opinion regarding transportation to the Village Preschool.

Dr. McDermott stated that she will request a second legal opinion on the transportation to the Village Preschool and asked Board members to give any additional questions to the district clerk by Friday. Dr. McDermott also stated that Board Policy #8411.1, *Transportation to Child Care Locations*, will be available on the District’s website.

Motion was made by Trustee Munson, seconded by Trustee Sato, to reorder the agenda and move up items 8. and 9., before Communications and Public Participation.

Unanimously carried.

Motion was made by Trustee Munson, seconded by Trustee Sato, to approve all items under 8. and 9., including Supplemental 8.1.2 (Schedule B - #4), and excluding severed item 8.1.4 (Schedule D).

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT, GENERAL - FOR BOARD ACTION

8.1 Personnel Schedules, each dated November 16, 2009, and each attached and made part of the official minutes:

- 8.1.1 Schedule A - Certified Staff
- 8.1.2 Schedule B - Non-Instructional Staff (including Supplemental B)
- 8.1.3 Schedule C - Salary Transfers
- 8.1.4 Schedule D - Extra Pay - severed
- 8.1.5 Schedule J - Committee on Special Education

8.2 Approving the following District parents to serve as parent members for CPSE/CSE meetings during the 2009-2010 school year: Rachel Moore Bogner, Dina Frisoli, Tara Healy, Lori Maldavir, Andrew Rapiejko

9. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT, FINANCIAL - FOR BOARD ACTION

9.1 Approving membership in the New York State School Boards Association in the amount of \$11,115.00 for 2010.

9.2 Approving the following donations to the District:

9.2.1 \$3,801.00 from various donors to the Michael C. Kauffman Memorial Scholarship Fund

9.2.2 \$50.00 from NYSDOT Flower Fund to the Deborah A. Shavalier Memorial Scholarship Fund

9.2.3 \$25.00 from Colette and Hans Malik to the Geraldine Wolf Memorial Scholarship Fund

9.2.4 \$500.00 from Linda Gruhn to the Happy School Bus Scholarship Fund

9.3 Approving transfer of general fund appropriations in the 2009-2010 budget

Vote on Trustee Munson’s motion to approve all items under 8. and 9., including Supplemental 8.1.2 (Schedule B - #14), and excluding severed item 8.1.4 was unanimously carried.

Motion was made by Trustee Munson, seconded by Trustee Sato, to approve item 8.1.4 (Schedule D).

8.1.4 Schedule D - Extra Pay

Vote on Trustee Munson’s motion was as follows:

YES: Mr. Gannon, Mr. Ingraham, Mr. Madden, Mrs. Munson, Mrs. McNaughton, Dr. Sato, Mr. Waldenburg, Mrs. Wills

ABSTAIN: Mrs. Dragone

Motion passed.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 Email from Mr. Albert Prisco, received November 5, 2009, to Mr. Stephen Waldenburg Jr., and Members of the Board, re: School closing on Jewish holidays

Mr. Prisco addressed the Board stating that there has to be separation between state and church and the schools should remain open on the Jewish religious holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Mr. Prisco stated that the Jewish population is only 7.4% which would not justify a high absentee rate of

students and staff. Mr. Prisco stated that the only way to justify this would be to keep the schools open on these holidays and see the absentee rate.

Trustee Gannon stated that the Jewish population percentage is probably more like 10%, and 10% of the teaching population would be 50 teachers absent with an additional 650 students absent. Mr. Gannon stated that this is very ineffective teaching and a waste of time and money.

President Waldenburg stated that he responded to Mr. Prisco with reasons as to why the District closes on those holidays and they are valid reasons. The District plans its calendar to coincide with Western Suffolk BOCES and the 18 component school districts. The schedules are coordinated so student services are not interrupted.

At 11:00 pm, motion was made by Trustee Sato, seconded by Trustee Dragone, to extend the meeting.

Vote on Trustee Sato's motion was as follows:

YES: Mrs. Dragone, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Madden, Mrs. McNaughton, Dr. Sato, Mr. Waldenburg, Mrs. Wills

NO: Mr. Ingraham, Mrs. Munson

Motion passed.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

<u>Name</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Tim Madden Trustee	Inquired about the number of kindergarten students and the spike in numbers from September to October. Mr. Madden noted the numbers at Bellerose went up from 52 to 61, Norwood went up from 49 to 57 and Pulaski went up from 61 to 71.

Mr. John Lynch, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services, stated that he did not have the report available but would look into Mr. Madden's questions.

Rob Ingraham Trustee	Stated that he wanted to recognize all the student athletes, coaches and the athletic director. Mr. Ingraham noted that eight of the nine fall teams went on to the playoffs, the girls cross country team won the Suffolk County Championship, the boys soccer team won the League II Championship, and two tennis players participated in the State Championship. Trustee Ingraham stated how proud he was of the teams and the continued support of the athletic program.
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Denise Mumm UTN-EN	Asked if there are security guards that attend athletic functions and if the email updates received by Board members from NYSSBA could be made public
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Dr. McDermott responded that the Security Department determines the number of personnel appropriate for each event.

President Waldenburg stated that the Board members receive the updates because they are members of the New York State School Boards Association and they would have to inquire if they are allowed to post the updates to the school's website.

Brian Loeber Northport Lacrosse Club	Stated he asked permission to distribute flyers to students regarding open registration for the Northport Lacrosse Club and he was told that due to a policy change to reduce costs, no flyers would be distributed to students but they will be
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posted on the District's website. Mr. Loeber noted that it was at no cost to the district since he supplied all the copies of the flyers, and that registration numbers are significantly down. Mr. Loeber stated that students can be potentially missed as parents are used to relying on flyers coming home.

Dr. McDermott noted that the schools are inundated with flyers which cause an ongoing interruption. Mr. Matt Nelson, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, stated that last year the District distributed over 250,000 flyers to students. Mr. Nelson noted that the initiative to discontinue the distribution of flyers actually came from students who wanted the District to move toward a more "green" environment.

Dr. McDermott stated that she would take into consideration the points Mr. Loeber brought up.

Mary Gilmore
Parent

Read a letter to the Board stating that the District needs to consider implementing a full day kindergarten program and develop a three to four year plan for this implementation. Ms. Gilmore noted research that supports the necessity of a full day kindergarten program and stated that there are serious flaws in the data that suggests there is no difference between a half day and full day kindergarten program. Ms. Gilmore read a list of the benefits and positive outcomes for children who attend full day kindergarten as compared to their peers who attend half-day kindergarten. Ms. Gilmore stated that specifically the District uses the Teachers College reading program but can't use the kindergarten program because there is not enough time because it is meant to be a full day program. Ms. Gilmore stated that people at Teachers College said that Northport is behind the New York City Schools that Teachers College work with.

Dr. McDermott stated that she cannot accept Ms. Gilmore's statement regarding Teachers College. Dr. McDermott noted that the District utilizes the balanced literacy program and the Reading Writing Workshop employed in the District is excellent. The program is a very vigorous, well received program by students, with a tremendous amount of individualized attention. Dr. McDermott stated she would like to see Ms. Gilmore's data regarding the Teachers College.

Vice President Munson stated that no one is against a full day kindergarten program, it is an economic problem. The kindergarten program offered is a focused and intense program.

There was a long discussion regarding the fiscal implications of a full day kindergarten program, the District's previous studies of full day kindergarten and demographics, and propositions brought before the public that failed.

10. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT - FOR INFORMATION ONLY

10.1 Schedule I – Home Instruction

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

12. NEW BUSINESS

12.1 Motion was made by Trustee Wills, seconded by Trustee Dragone, approving the following resolution:

"RESOLVED, that the current members of the Board of Education's Audit Committee whose terms have expired or are expiring on December 31, 2009, remain in their respective positions until all applications are received and new members are appointed by the Board of Education in January 2010"

Unanimously carried.

There being no further business to discuss at this time, motion was made by Trustee Sato, seconded by Trustee Munson, to adjourn the meeting.

At 12:00 a.m., the Chair declared the meeting adjourned.

Beth M. Nystrom
District Clerk

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