

Regular Meeting

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District was held on Monday evening, February 7, 2011, beginning at 7:00 p.m., in the Cafeteria 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: Ms. Julia Binger, Mr. Joe Gannon, Mrs. Lori McCue, Mrs. Donna McNaughton, Mr. Andrew Rapiejko, Mrs. Jennifer Thompson, Mr. Stephen V. Waldenburg, Jr., Mrs. Karen Wills

Members absent: None
One board seat vacant

Also present: Dr. Marylou McDermott, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Terry Bouton, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Ms. Kathleen Molander, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Mr. Matthew Nelson, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Administration

1. President Waldenburg called the meeting to order.

Public attendance: There were approximately 60 persons present.

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

President Waldenburg stated that due to issues of importance that will require a motion to move into executive session later in the evening, the Public Work Session to discuss Board Policies will be rescheduled to February 28th.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, TREASURER'S REPORT AND MONTHLY SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

Motion was made by Trustee Gannon, seconded by Trustee McCue, to approve all items under 4.01

4.01 Minutes

4.01.1 Regular Meeting, January 10, 2010

Unanimously carried.

5. SPECIAL REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. McDermott stated that there was a situation at the high school on Friday where a threatening note was found written on one of the stalls in the boys' bathroom. Ms. McLaughlin alerted the 2nd precinct and an investigation commenced. Information was given to the public that would not hamper the investigation. Dr. McDermott stated that the health and safety of all children was paramount. Dr. McDermott noted that excellent safety measures were in place at the high school this morning and everything went. Normal activities are expected to resume tomorrow. Dr. McDermott stated that this type of behavior will not be accepted in any school and assemblies are being planned so students understand that anything of a threatening nature is a felony and anyone who makes a threat will not be supported by the District.

Dr. McDermott gave a presentation on the 2011-2012 strategic budget planning. Dr. McDermott stated that certain community members made statements regarding the budget, some figures given were incorrect, and she wanted to give clarity and accurate information to the public. Dr. McDermott stated that the guiding principles of budget development are to maintain and enhance quality education district-wide in the most fiscally responsible manner; examine every budget line and reduce/eliminate wherever possible; avoid tax spikes by including necessary appropriated fund balance; include reasonable allocations for contingent expenses; utilize reserves appropriately to stabilize the District tax rate; recognize contracts, mandates, and laws govern much of the District's operation; and meet today's needs and plan for tomorrow's challenges in this turbulent fiscal climate. Dr. McDermott noted that the Moody's Report from August of 2010 made several references to the District's "sound reserve levels" and made the following statement: "Having built its reserves over the past few years, Moody's believes that the district maintains moderate financial flexibility and expects the district to continue to manage effectively given timely tax levy increases and judicious expenditure controls." The district received an "unqualified opinion", the highest opinion issued by auditors, for the Fiscal Year ending 2010 from the External Auditors Cullen and Danowski, LLP. Dr. McDermott stated that long-range fiscal management stabilizes the tax rate, allows for contingency expenses, funds reserves appropriately, preserves programs and services and protects property values. A lack of strategic planning could result in inconsistent tax rate spikes, school building closings, reduction of services, increased class size, reduction and/or elimination of interscholastic sports, elimination and/or reduction of clubs, reduction in academic program, and downgrading of Moody's financial rating which would affect borrowing power. Dr. McDermott stated that school districts must use the NYS Uniform System of Accounts, noting that there is no designated account in the NYS system for unreserved designated fund balance which is the part of the fund balance that is returned to the taxpayer each year in order to lower the tax levy and this fund is generated by unspent appropriations or unanticipated revenues. Dr. McDermott reviewed the annual differences in expenditures/revenues for the 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years. Ms. Kathleen Molander, Assistant Superintendent for Business, stated that the 2009-2010 year was very unique in that Governor Paterson "spun up" the ARRA funding, and transportation contract costs and TAN funding were significantly reduced. Ms. Molander reviewed the audited financial statements.

There was a discussion regarding the workers' compensation reserve and verification of workers' compensation claims, the total amount of each reserve fund, the ERS reserve fund, the unreserved undesignated fund balance, the Moody's report, property values, and the growth of the reserve fund balances.

5.01 Accomplishments of Staff and Students

5.01.1 Ms. Jennifer Nesfield, District Chairperson of World Languages and ESL, introduced Samuel Kessler, World Languages Department Student of the Month. Ms. Nesfield stated that Sam is an amazing student with a natural aptitude for languages, part of a select group of multi-lingual students at Northport High School, fluent in English, French and Spanish. Sam has excelled at all levels in the language classroom, achieving a perfect score on the New York State Regents Examination in Spanish, earning high grades in his IB courses, and he challenged the Advanced Placement French Language Examination as a freshman. Ms. Nesfield noted that Sam is an IB diploma candidate and has been named as a Commended Scholar and an AP Scholar with Distinction. Sam is a member of the National Honor Society, World Language Honor Society and the Tri-M Honor Society. In addition he is involved in a varied of extracurricular activities serving as President of the Tri-M Society and is a member of Students for 60,000. In addition to his interest in engineering and medicine, Sam has expressed a desire to continue his study of language in college. Ms. Nesfield stated that Sam is a source of pride for the Department of World Languages, Northport High School and the community.

President Waldenburg and Superintendent McDermott congratulated Samuel on his accomplishments and presented him with a commendation from the Board.

5.01.2 Ms. Jennifer Nesfield, District Chairperson of World Languages and ESL, introduced Jessica Qiao, English Language Learner Student of the Month. Ms. Nesfield stated that Jessica is an incredible young woman who came to the United States from Shanghai, China in 2007. Jessica has not only acclimated to Northport High School but has managed to enrich the lives of many other students in the last four years. Ms. Nesfield noted that Jessica has a tremendous desire to be successful in all of her classes and worked diligently to improve her English skills and learn the material necessary to succeed in all of her mainstream classes. Jessica has not only met all of her graduation requirements but has also pursued some of the most challenging classes offered at the high school. Her current schedule includes Advanced Placement Calculus AB, college-level Medical Anatomy and Physiology, IB Physics HL and IB Business & Management HL. Ms. Nesfield stated that Jessica has embraced the challenge of learning a new language and expanding her horizons, both academically and personally. Jessica has expressed a desire to pursue a career in medicine and Ms. Nesfield stated that she is a source of pride for her family, the English as a Second Language Department and Northport High School.

President Waldenburg and Superintendent McDermott congratulated Jessica on her accomplishments and presented her with a commendation from the Board.

5.02 Review of Instructional Initiatives in the following areas:

5.02.1 World Languages and ESL

Ms. Jennifer Nesfield, Chairperson of World Languages and ESL, stated that the 2010-2011 World Language Department Initiatives are to continue to develop common assessments aligned with New York State Standards, the SLP, and the Modern Language Regents Examinations and continue to strengthen the level of articulation between courses of the same level across the District; to provide the World Languages faculty with professional development opportunities related to the instructional uses of technology and differentiated instruction; and to expand current and develop additional virtual classroom projects and increase student interaction using the *Moodle* web interface. Ms. Nesfield noted that in August 2010 New York State decided to eliminate the Second Language Proficiency Examination in all languages and the Regents Examinations in German, Latin and Hebrew. Northport has joined the FLACS consortium and will assist in the creation of NYS approved regionally developed assessments to ensure that 8th grade and German students continue to earn credit for their language classes. Ms. Nesfield stated that she is a member of the FLACS Steering Committee that is spearheading the exam initiative. Ms. Nesfield reviewed the data of the World Language External Assessments, NYS Proficiency Examinations, Second Language Proficiency Exams, NYS Regents Examinations, NYS Regents Exams in LOTE and International Baccalaureate SL Language B Exams. Ms. Nesfield discussed examples of differentiation in World Language including tiered assignments, formative assessments, student centered activities and cooperative learning assignments. Ms. Nesfield noted that teachers have begun to use *Moodle* as a virtual extension of their classrooms and have begun to incorporate interactive and web 2.0 technology projects in their units of instruction.

The After School Language Program has seen a dramatic increase in enrollment and curriculum development in 2010-2011. Participating students from Bellerose, Dickinson, Fifth, Ocean, Pulaski and Trinity are bused from their home schools to Norwood Avenue on Wednesday afternoons for French, Italian and Spanish classes. Ms. Nesfield noted that over 20 weeks students will be introduced to basic vocabulary and grammar and will have an opportunity to explore a variety of cultures through language.

The English as a Second Language Department Initiatives for 2010-2011 include developing a virtual curriculum using *Moodle* that is geared to help the ELLs in all subject areas; providing the ESL faculty with workshops and professional development opportunities related to the instructional uses; completing an item analysis related to the four language skills on the NYSESLAT examination with the goal of improving classroom instruction; and continuing to use differentiated instruction techniques and tiered assignments to further individualize instruction. Ms. Nesfield reviewed the 2010 New York State English

as a Second Language Achievement Test Results, enrollment trends, examples of differentiation in ESL, and how technology is incorporated in ESL classes.

President Waldenburg thanked Ms. Nesfield for her very informative report.

5.03 Board discussion and action to provide the Superintendent with direction for the development of the proposed budget for 2011-2012

President Waldenburg stated that the Board must provide direction to the Superintendent for the 2011-2012 budget which will be formally presented on Monday, March 7th. Mr. Waldenburg stated that Albany appears to be signing on to a 2% tax rate cap.

In response to questions from Trustee Rapiejko, Dr. McDermott stated that she and Ms. Molander have worked very closely to come in with a budget under a 2% tax rate increase without anticipating layoffs and implementing the initiatives as fully as possible with modifications as needed. Dr. McDermott stated that District will utilize reserves appropriately and implement efficiencies and economies in anticipation of a reduction of \$1.5 million in State Aid. Ms. Molander noted that the District does not know what the Town of Huntington assessed valuation will be in October when the tax levy is set.

Trustee McNaughton stated that it is important that the children's education is preserved and that through sacrifices and the hard work that was done the proposed 2% tax rate increase is still enhancing educational programs.

In response to question from Vice President Wills, Dr. McDermott stated that it is uncertain if additional fte's will be needed with the initiative to reduce core class size at the secondary level.

Trustee Thompson stated she was concerned about the going forward with providing internet computing devices to all instructional personnel stating that it is a big expense and such a broad sweeping initiative that does not involve providing them to students.

Mr. Matthew Nelson, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Administration, stated that discussions can be had regarding the plan which can be manipulated and changed.

Vice President Wills stated that a tax rate increase under 2% would provide stability in the tax rate for future years, no excising of staff, and allows the District to move forward with technology.

In response to a question from Trustee Binger, Ms. Molander stated that the unanticipated expense this year has been due to the significant amount of snow.

Motion was made by Trustee Waldenburg, seconded by Trustee McNaughton, directing the Superintendent to formulate the 2011-2012 budget not to exceed a tax rate increase of 2% to be presented on March 7, 2011.

Unanimously carried.

A community resident noted that the Governor's proposed law is for the lower of a 2% tax cap or CPI.

President Waldenburg stated that the actual budget will be presented on March 7th and encouraged all community members to be involved in the budget discussions scheduled during March.

5.04 The President of the Board reviewed the upcoming Board of Education meetings of February 28th, March 7th, March 21st, and March 28th.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

6.01 Email from Mr. Jim Pavlica to Members of the Board, received January 24, 2011, re: enrollment data/closing a school

Mr. Pavlica addressed the Board noting a steady decrease in enrollment from 2005-2006 and asked at what point and by what process would the Board consider closing a school for reasons of reduced enrollment.

President Waldenburg stated that this is a situation the Board treads on carefully looking at enrollment data and demographics. The Board would engage the PTAs and the parents who are directly affected and study the capacity of the buildings.

6.02 Email from Mr. Albert Prisco to Members of the Board, received January 31, 2011, re: teachers' contract concessions

Mr. Prisco was not present to address the Board but President Waldenburg stated that all the Board members received Mr. Prisco's letter.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

<u>Name</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Robert Harvey Parent	Stated that his property misses the .75 mile distance mark by 129 feet and asked if the right of way on MarKan Drive is considered school property, and where the official point of entrance to the building is defined.

Ms. Kathleen Molander stated that Ms. Johnson in Transportation did re-measure and sent Mr. Harvey a response. Ms. Molander stated that she would request Ms. Johnson to look into the situation again.

Joe Stewart Parent	Stated that some electives are a waste of money and should be cut instead of touching the reserve funds, inquired if all high schools have a nine period day, and asked what the costs would be between having an eight period day and a nine period day.
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President Waldenburg stated that if electives were eliminated students would be placed in study halls and that it is a philosophical discussion to reduce periods. Ms. Irene McLaughlin, Northport High School Principal, stated that if there are not enough students to fill an elective that course will not run. Dr. McDermott stated that the District has always offered many opportunities for all types of students and the Board does take into consideration the voice of the community.

Community Member Asked if there was any update on the LIPA situation

Dr. McDermott stated that she and Trustee Gannon met with Senators Flanagan and Marcellino, and Assemblymen Raia and Conte in Supervisor Petrone's office. Trustee Gannon stated that the trip to Albany has been cancelled after discussion with our representatives that legislature is only in a two day work session. Dr. McDermott stated that she would get in touch with Supervisor Petrone and report back at the next meeting.

Motion was made by Trustee Gannon, seconded by Trustee McCue, to approve all items under 8.0 and 9.0, including Supplemental 8.01.1 (Schedule A #43), and Supplemental 8.03 (Agreement)

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

8.01 Personnel Schedules, each dated February 7, 2011, and each attached and made part of the official minutes:

- 8.01.1 Schedule A - Certified Staff (including Supplemental A #43)
- 8.01.2 Schedule B - Non-Instructional Staff
- 8.01.3 Schedule C - Salary Transfers
- 8.01.4 Schedule D - Extra Pay
- 8.01.5 Schedule J - Committee on Special Education
- 8.01.6 Schedule K - PDC NASA
- 8.01.7 Schedule L - PDC UTN

President Waldenburg noted the retirement of seven certified staff members and one clerical staff member and thanked them for their service to the District.

8.02 Adopting the proposed School Calendar for 2011-2012

8.03 Approving an Agreement between the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District and an employee of the custodial/grounds/maintenance unit dated January 28, 2011

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

9.01 Declaring the attached list of selected equipment as surplus and approving disposal in accordance with Board policy

9.02 Approving a 2010-2011 Instructional Service Agreement between the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District and S.A.I.L. at Ferncliff Manor

9.03 Approving 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 Special Education Services Contracts between the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District and Harborfields Central School District

9.04 Authorizing the Board President to sign a contract with the following school district to provide Health Services for Northport-East Northport students attending school in that district during the 2010-2011 school year.

9.04.1 Syosset Central School District, eighteen (18) students attending Our Lady of Mercy Academy @ \$817.88, totaling \$14,721.84

Vote on Trustee Gannon's motion to approve all items under 8. and 9., including Supplemental 8.01.1 (Schedule A #43) and Supplemental 8.03 (Agreement) was unanimously carried.

10. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT - FOR INFORMATION ONLY

10.01 Schedule H – Use of Facilities

10.02 Schedule I – Home Instruction

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

12. NEW BUSINESS

12. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:45 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, motion was made by Trustee Wills, seconded by Trustee Gannon, to adjourn the public meeting and enter into discussion with Board Counsel regarding contract negotiations, the employment history of a particular corporation and potential litigation of a particular corporation in Executive Session. This information contains confidential information which may compromise our position in such matters.

Unanimously carried

At 11:50 p.m. the Chair declared the meeting adjourned.

Beth M. Nystrom
District Clerk

bmh