



West Northfield School District 31

Board Briefs

A Summary from the Board of Education Meeting— April 15, 2010

Board Briefs is a regular report that is posted on the District web site to keep parents and staff up-to-date on developments at Board of Education meetings.

2009-2011 Board of Education

David A. Handler, President
Jeffrey M. Silver,
Vice President
Mary Crowe-Richards,
Secretary
Michael Berkowitz
Shel Leshner
Bonnie Schoenberg
Robert Spector

Dr. Alexandra Nicholson
Superintendent

Board of Education meetings are held on the second and/or fourth Thursdays of the month at 7 p.m. in the Learning Center at Field School. The public is invited to attend.

Closed Session: The Board of Education went into closed session at the beginning of the meeting to consider matters of personnel.

Audience Recognition: WNTA President Dr. Gary Shine, Field teacher, thanked the Board and Dr. Alexandra Nicholson, Superintendent, for improving communication between the union and the Board of Education. As an example, Dr. Shine noted the collaborative work of the administration and teachers on the Teacher's Appraisal Committee and the Mentor/Mentee Committee. He reported that WNTA members and the Superintendent meet regularly to keep each other informed and work together to resolve any issues.

PTC Report: Holly Anderson, PTC Executive Board Member, reported on the upcoming Sports Challenge Night and Appreciation Coffee. Based on the recent recommendation from the District's law firm, she said that the PTC is pursuing a change in its financial reporting status as an individual entity rather than an entity of the District.

Approval of Paid Summer Work: The Board approved summer work by staff. The literacy specialists, the RtI Committee, ELL teachers and various grade-level teams will be working on curriculum and other projects. Other approved summer projects include technology classes for staff, new teacher training, and health office administrative work.

Approval of Legal Work: The Board approved the offer of the law firm of Kirkland & Ellis to handle the law suit that past Superintendent Paul Kimmelman filed against District 31 on a pro bono basis. Since Board President David Handler is employed by this law firm, Board member Mike Berkowitz questioned if there was any conflict of interest in accepting this offer. Dr. Nicholson said she looked into it and there would not be a conflict of interest.

Fees for 2010-2011 School Year: Dr. Nicholson reported that staff researched the fees that are being charged and have readjusted the amounts for the 2010-2011 school year to more accurately reflect the actual cost of the materials and supplies. Kindergarten's fee will increase from \$55 to \$60. The first and second grades fees will increase from \$55 to \$75. The third and fourth grade fees will increase from \$65 to \$85. The fifth grade fee will increase from \$75 to \$95. The sixth-eighth grade fee of \$115 will remain the same. Other optional fees remain unchanged. Mary Crowe-Richards questioned the \$50 reed fee for band members and Dr. Nicholson reported she would have more details about reed usage at the May meeting.

Transportation Fees: In a report to the Board, Dr. Craig Schilling, Interim Director of Business Services, explained that District 31 has historically subsidized the cost of transportation for its students. In the 2009-2010 school year, the subsidy was approximately \$117,000. Per contract for 2010-2011, the cost of student transportation will increase 3%. However, the district's tax revenue is only increasing 1%. In order to maintain the same level of subsidy for 2010-2011, the administration recommended a \$20 increase for round trip transportation and \$10 for one way transportation. The recommended fees are: \$420—round trip full payment; \$437.50—round trip 2-pay plan; \$260—one way full payment; \$35—early bird discount for those who register by June 25.

Parent Involvement Policy—1st read: Dr. Nicholson summarized the need for having a parent involvement policy. This is a requirement for schools accepting Title I funding. The Board will vote on this policy at the May meeting.

Board Reports—Foundation Donation: Board member Bonnie Schoenberg announced that the Education Foundation is making a \$35,000 donation to the District to fund wireless infrastructure in the buildings.

Next Meeting: The Board rescheduled its May meeting from Thursday, May 27, to Monday, May 24, at 7 p.m. in the Field School Learning Center.