



West Northfield School District 31

Board Briefs

A Summary from the Board of Education Meeting— July 23, 2009

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.

Public Hearing:

Parent Teacher Conference Day Waiver: In opening the hearing, Dr. Nicholson explained that District 31 is seeking a waiver for 2 full days of parent/teacher conferences requiring five hours of conferences each day. If the state grants the waiver, District 31 will hold school on March 24 and 25 with each school day followed by five hours of parent teacher conferences during the late afternoon and evening. March 26, 2010, will be a day off for teachers and students. No comments for or against the waiver were received.

Regular Meeting:

Presentation of School Recognition Certificates: Dr. Alexandra Nicholson informed the Board that both Field and Winkelman Schools received a Certificate of Recognition from the Illinois State Board of Education.

Employment for 2009-10 School Year: The Board approved the employment of Cheryl Roberts as the full-time Director of Business Services. The Board was introduced to Mrs. Roberts and talked with her prior to the meeting. The Board also approved hiring Stephanie Heller as a full-time special education teacher for Field and Winkelman Schools; Amanda Bass as a full-time ELL teacher for Winkelman; Lisa Klein as a reading specialist at Field; Toni Poteres as a full-time special education teaching assistant at Winkelman; and Eric Sotomayor as a full-time custodian at Winkelman.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Nicholson discussed the benefits of joining the purchasing card program sponsored by the Illinois Association of School Business Officials in lieu of applying for new District 31 credit cards for purchases. The former District credit card accounts were closed. Dr. Nicholson also summarized the District's lunch program's operating statement which indicated a \$1,438 profit for the 2008-09 school year.

Administrative Reports: Principals Maria Kalant and Erin Murphy summarized summer work to prepare for the new school year; Director of Students Services Joanne Panopoulos discussed the special education staff's summer training on a new method of preparing IEP reports through Skyward; and Director of Communication Nancy Wasielewski discussed summer work designing and preparing the District's Handbook, Summer Communicator Newsletter, Web updates, Foundation 5K Brochure and other communication programs.

Board Reports: Mary Crowe-Richards summarized the NSED building program; Robert Spector reported on Ed-Red meeting legislative updates; and Bonnie Schoenberg reported on the Foundation's 5K Walk/Run on October 4. Dr. Nicholson reported that the District is still anticipating the release of state funding for the \$1.8 million construction grant approved in 2002, according to information from State Rep. Elaine Nekritz.

Student Assessment Report: Dr. Nicholson summarized results of student assessments including 2008-09 MAP and ISAT scores. Regarding the MAP scores, Dr. Nicholson presented grade level charts from 2005-2009 depicting the growth demonstrated by the students. She pointed out the District grade level mean RIT scores are higher than the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA) norm RIT scores in every grade level in reading, language usage and mathematics. The RIT scores of all graduation classes from Field exceed the NWEA norm RIT scores. The NWEA MAP norm group consists of over 2.8 million students from 42 states. 2009 MAP Township norms are not yet available. Regarding the District's ISAT scores, Dr. Nicholson noted that the District once again made AYP according to the federal No Child Left Behind standards. She showed several charts summarizing results for math, reading, science (grades 4 and 7 only) and writing (grades 3, 5 and 8 only). Math scores for grades 3-8 were excellent ranging from 93 to 98. Reading scores for all grade levels ranged from the high 80s to the mid 90s. Dr. Nicholson pointed out that with 48 percent of our new students entering with below local expectation scores in reading and with 33 percent of our students entering with limited English proficiency, maintaining these high percentages is an indication that our RtI problem solving and reading intervention system are having a positive impact upon the progress students are making. Science scores remained stable. However writing scores took a significant drop. Dr. Nicholson said administrators and teachers are carefully reviewing the writing scores and will report back to the Board at the September meeting.

Closed Session: A closed session was held to discuss legal and personnel issues.

Next Meeting: The next Board meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, August 27, in the Field Learning Center.