



West Northfield School District 31

Board Briefs

A Summary from the Board of Education Meeting— March 18, 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.

Allstate Safety Grant: Dr. Alexandra Nicholson, Superintendent, introduced Ellie Klooster, Allstate Corporate Relations Communication Consultant, who came to the Board meeting to present a \$10,000 check to the District 31 Education Foundation for safety and security equipment at both schools. The check was presented to Dr. Nicholson, and Foundation members Bonnie Schoenberg and Debbie Silver, former Foundation Co-Presidents, who initiated the Allstate grant request. Dr. Nicholson told the Board that Allstate's total grant for security updates will be \$43,000 based on a previous Allstate grant for \$3,000 and an upcoming grant for \$30,000 in the coming months. Dr. Nicholson noted that the grants will allow the District to upgrade its security equipment including but not limited to a new fob system and changing the classroom door locks so that they can lock from the inside in case of a lock down.

“Seussical Jr.” Preview: Field students involved in the spring musical presented several musical excerpts from the show for the Board and meeting attendees. More than 30 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students are participating in all facets of this production.

Communication/Audience Recognition: Winkelman students Sabrina Schoenberg and Grace Grouzard read a letter to the Board to request food improvements for the lunch program. Their letter was a Brownie troop project in which they were asked to write a letter to their School Board addressing a school related issue. Dr. Nicholson referred the girls to discuss their ideas with Winkelman Principal Maria Kalant. Also, David Handler read a communication from the Parent Teacher Club summarizing the group's recent fundraisers, programs and upcoming Sports Challenge event on Friday, April 23.

Perfect Match ELL Program: A presentation about the Perfect Match ELL (English Language Learner) Program was made by members of the Winkelman ELL Leadership Team including Joanne Panopoulos, Director of Student Services; Nicole Brisson, School Psychologist; Lori Shames; Winkelman Reading Specialist; and Amanda Bass, Kate Manos and Debbie Jeon, ELL teachers. These staff members recently attended a six day Perfect Match workshop and plan to incorporate this program's design at Winkelman to assist with the increased number of ELL students in the lower grades. The staff summarized some of the new legislative mandates regarding English Language State program requirements and WIDA (World Class Instructional Design and Assessment) proficiency standards. The staff also outlined plans for updating teaching responsibilities and staff development.

Board Meeting Calendar: The Board approved its 2010-2011 meeting dates including July 15, August 26, September 23, October 28, November 18, December 16, January 27, February 24, March 17, April 28, May 26 and June 23. All meetings will begin at 7 p.m. in the Field School Learning Center.

Title I Plan Approved: The Board approved a plan to request Title I federal funding to provide special programs and services for low income students in the District.

Mental Health Parity and Addiction Act: In conjunction with the passage of this new law, the Board approved currently opting out of paying increased benefits for employees covered by District health plans and agreed to consider this as part of WNTA negotiations for the next contract.

Student Fees: The Board reviewed current student fees paid by parents. Dr. Nicholson said a study is being done to determine actual costs before a recommendation is made at the April meeting for the Board's approval of student fees for the coming year..

Special Education School Visit and Observation Policy: Dr. Nicholson explained the need for this policy due to an increase in the number of parents arranging for outside independent educational evaluations for their children. The Board completed a “first reading” of the proposed policy.

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting is planned for 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 15, in the Field School Learning Center.