



West Northfield School District 31

Board Briefs

A Summary from the Board of Education Meeting— September 24, 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

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Michael Berkowitz
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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.

2009-2010 Budget Approved: Following a public hearing which preceded the opening of the regular meeting, the Board of Education approved the District's 2010 Fiscal Year Budget. The new budget includes expenses of \$14,109,305 and projects revenues totaling \$14,198,580 including \$12,995,830 from property taxes and other local revenue sources, \$670,950 from the state government, and \$531,800 from the federal government. The projected budget surplus of \$89,275 will be added to the District's reserves.

In a report to the Board, Cheryl Roberts, Director of Business Services, pointed out that the 8.5 percent increase in revenue over last year's budget is primarily due to a one-time increase in federal aid through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) and anticipated additional property tax revenue. Specifically, the District is receiving \$270,300 in new federal stimulus money including \$89,000 in ARRA Title I funding for low income students to enhance the reading support program at both Winkelman Elementary School and Field Middle School. The revenue will purchase additional reading materials, as well as pay for the salaries of a new reading support teacher's position at Field and for five reading support first grade aides at Winkelman. The stimulus money also includes ARRA IDEA funding of \$179,300 which District 31 is using to pay approximately half of its share of construction costs for North Shore Academy, NSSED's (North Suburban Special Education District) new high school for local special education students. District 31 joins all township school districts in using these ARRA IDEA funds for North Shore Academy. District 31's payment balance of \$187,911 for the Academy is also included in the current budget.

The expenditure increase for salaries and benefits for all staff is 2.2 percent. As part of its technology initiative, the District has budgeted an increase in spending for technology equipment and services. The District has contracted to provide Edline web based services to enhance home and school communication within the school community. The District is spending \$45,000 to upgrade its Internet bandwidth connection at both schools from formerly used T1 copper lines to high-tech, fiber optic communication lines contracted through Comcast Business Services. The District's budget also includes spending of approximately \$60,000 for new computer software, laptop computers, document cameras, projectors and special education assistive technology.

Strategic Plan Presentation: Dr. Alexandra Nicholson discussed the District's plans to develop a new strategic plan in the current school year. She presented the following seven steps that will be taken as part of the plan's development. These include: Step 1—SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis which includes meetings with stakeholders to discuss the four topics; Step 2—Values/Belief Statements; Step 3—Strategic Parameters; Step 4—Mission/Value Statement; Step 5—Strategic Success Factors; Step 6—Goals; and Step 7—Objectives and Action Plans. A timeline was developed for these steps — SWOT meetings will be held in November and December; Strategic Plan Team meetings will begin in January; the development of the Strategic Plan document and communication with District stakeholders will be done throughout February and March; and the Strategic Plan will be included in the School Improvement Plan for 2010-2011 in April and May.

Financial Report: Cheryl Roberts presented a tax levy report She explained that this is the last year that the District will levy for the debt service fund. The District's final bond and interest payment is due in December 2010. As a result, the District's tax rate will drop by 17.5 cents resulting in a loss of almost \$1.5 million of revenue. This discussion will continue at the October Board meeting. Information about the discussion will be communicated to District families inviting them to attend the meeting to hear more about the District's financial concerns regarding the loss of this revenue and to receive their comments.

Next Meeting: The next Board meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 29, in the Field School Learning Center.