

Summary of the Board of Education Meeting Thursday, December 8, 2005

ACTION ITEMS

- Elected Joshua Kaufman as Chairman and Diane Mikulis as Vice Chairman for the coming year.
- Approved a consent agenda including staff personnel, bids and contracts, appointment of the Impact Aid representative, school bus contact elimination and transfer, donations, Superintendent's Certification of Reporting Requirements, a right of entry agreement, and minutes of Board meetings; and received monthly status reports on the operating budget and school construction funds.
- Approved the FY 2005 Audit Report performed by Clifton Gunderson, LLP.
- Approved the membership of the FY07 Operating Budget Review Committee.
- Approved a tentative quarterly agenda January-March 2006, with amendments.

System is Building on Success; Continuously Growing and Learning

Chief Academic and Administrative Officer Sandra Erickson introduced the semi-annual progress report on the school system's *Bridge to Excellence Master Plan*. Erickson reported that while there is much success to celebrate, it is apparent that much work remains.

Theresa Alban, Director of Student Assessment and Program Evaluation, reported data that show all elementary and middle schools, and all but one high school, made Adequate Yearly Progress (as defined by NCLB) in 2005. The status of the one high school has been appealed and Alban is hopeful that soon we can report that all schools have met AYP. She also noted the system met its target at the elementary and middle levels to have 70 percent of students scoring at proficient or above in math and reading in all grades tested.

Alban also noted two other positive trends. Data show a significant increase in the number of African American and Hispanic students in elementary gifted and talented classes. At the high school level, the co-teaching pilot yielded dramatic results on the 2005 Algebra/Data Analysis High School Assessment.

Assistant Superintendents Bob Glascock and Linda Wise reported that data reflect the progress made through a continuous improvement process used at the district and school levels. Through intensive data analysis, planning and implementation of key strategies, individual schools and the school system made significant improvement and achieved many of the rigorous targets set for 2005. The process is a proactive change model, which incorporates an ongoing cycle of plan, do, study, and act (PDSA).

According to Erickson, improvement is not a destination, but a journey. The PDSA cycle is a process that enables the school system to build on its success and face new challenges with confidence.

County Revenues Running Ahead of Projection

In one of several annual revenue updates to the Board, Budget Director Jonathan Seeman reported that all county revenue sources are running above projections this year. He noted that as of October 2005, revenues were nearly 6 percent above the planned level and 11.6 percent above the level reported for October 2004. While still early in the year, the FY06 revenues appear to be off to a good start. Property taxes (except corporate), building permits, income tax, planning and zoning fees and hotel/motel tax continue to perform above expected levels.

Study Finds Swimming Program Infeasible

A study conducted by Athletics Coordinator Michael Williams concludes that it would be infeasible for the school system to add swimming to the Interscholastic Athletic Program. Williams cited cost, liability and risk, logistical problems, and limited availability of pools for practices and meets as factors that led to his decision.

Proposed Wellness Policy Draws Criticism from Boosters, PTSAs

A total of 28 persons testified at the public hearing on a proposed Wellness Policy. Of those who testified, the majority criticized the proposal, calling it “paternalistic” and “micromanaging.” Of those who spoke against the policy, most represented high school booster clubs and PTSAs. They expressed concern that the new policy would result in decreased revenue from concession stands operated during school events.

Seven persons, mostly from the health and medical community, supported that measure, calling for the school system to assume a leadership role in the fight against childhood obesity.

At a separate hearing on the proposed 2006-07 instructional calendar, Ellen Giles, Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Board, applauded the calendar development process and the efforts of the Calendar Committee to balance instructional time with the needs of teachers and parents. The Board will take action on the calendar at its meeting on January 12, 2006.

In Other Action...

Roger Plunkett, Business, Community, and Government Relations Officer, provided the Board with a legislative platform for consideration. He also reported on the Charter for the Revision of Policy 10200, which is necessary for the work of the Student Voting Rights Committee.

At Public Forum, Media Specialist Sue Portney of Gorman Crossing Elementary thanked the Board for providing a media assistant for her school. Parent Veronika Carella testified to the lack of response from the Board and the department related to her daughter’s situation. Nadja Muchow, of the Lions Club, presented the Board with information about the Lions Quest Program. Parent Linda Turner testified about safety issues related to her child and suggested there is need for more education regarding learning disabilities.

Mary Jane Grauso, PTA Council President, and Ellen Giles, Chairman of the CAC, reported on recent activities of their organizations.

The Board welcomed a visiting delegation of educators from China and also scheduled future meetings with community groups.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4 p.m. on Thursday, January 12, 2006.