

BOARD BRIEF

Regular Meeting

December 15, 2008

AT THE December 15, 2008 MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, THE BOARD TOOK ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS...

RECOGNITION

The Board of Education recognized Mrs. Virginia Martell's service to the Long Hill Township School District upon her retirement and presented her with a gift to thank her for her dedication to the students of the district. Ms. Becker thanked Mrs. Martell for her outstanding ability to work with students who spoke so many different languages as the district's ESL teacher.

Dr. Rovtar recognized Phoebe Sharp's service as the district's representative on the Long Hill Township Library Board and presented her with a small gift to thank her for her many years of dedication in this role. Dennis Sandow, Phyllis Clemson and Diane Dellureficio, Trustees on the Library Board, also made comments thanking Ms. Sharp for her dedication and acknowledging the many contributions she had made to the Library Board through her involvement for 18 years.

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Becker noted that the Board received a thank you letter from the Senior Center for the assistance that Alex Blinder had provided with the installation of two new computers. Letters were received from two Gillette School teachers praising the work of the Gillette School custodial staff.

PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT

Mr. William Colantano, district auditor, presented an overview of the June 30, 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The report was reviewed with the Finance Committee prior to the meeting. The only recommendation that is contained in the report is one that was also included last year. The Board needs to continue its efforts to increase its surplus. It is important for the district to have a larger surplus to be able to address emergencies or unforeseen situations. The district appropriated \$200,000 in free balance into the 2007-2008 school budget which almost completely depleted the district's surplus. With some of the unanticipated expenses the district has encountered, the district has not been able to generate funds to replenish the fund balance. Mr. Colantano provided some comparative data that showed changes in district revenues and expenditures over a ten year period. While the property taxes have increased, the amount of state aid the district received has not increased proportionately. More of the burden of supporting the school district budget has fallen to the taxpayers. The district does appear to be keeping expenditures under control. Because the business office has such a small staff, a suggestion was made to look at addressing continuity issues in terms of back-up and cross training with regard to business office operations.

Mr. McCarthy thanked Mr. Esposito for his capable management of the 2007-2008 budget given the difficult financial circumstances that were encountered during the year.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Relations – Mr. Carbone reported that in light of the fact that the Legislature is contemplating moving the school election to November, perhaps we will need to defer the discussion with the Finance Committee in terms of presentation and explanation of the 2009-2010 budget.

Technology Committee – Mr. Butterworth reported that the Technology Committee met on December 10th. The committee discussed recommendations for the selection of a new Student Information System software package. Our current program is being phased out and will no longer be supported. The committee is reviewing the differences in price and service between the providers. A discussion took place with regard to a "bio" for each board member being placed on the website. There

was not a great deal of enthusiasm for this option. Alex provided the committee with a general update on the work that has been completed. The committee discussed the need to increase our Internet speed. The committee also discussed the need to replace 220 of the district's computers which are in their 7th year of service. Options for financing the computers as well as developing a cycle for ongoing replacement were discussed. The need to upgrade the telephone system was also discussed. The current system is outdated and parts are no longer available.

Negotiations Committee – Mr. Meringolo reported that the committee met on December 10th with the district's benefits consultant. A report will be given in executive session.

Policy Committee – Mrs. Nyquist reported that several policies are being recommended for deletion this evening. These policies are no longer needed as the topics are covered by statute and/or negotiated agreements with the employees. The New Jersey School Boards Association recently published a listing of 9 policies which need to be revised to comply with the accountability regulations. The Policy Committee has completed all of these revisions and the district is compliant.

Mrs. Nyquist also reported that she and Mrs. Scanlon attended a workshop presented by the Board Attorney on the accountability regulations. She will share copies of the presentation with the other board members.

Finance Committee – Mr. McCarthy stated that the Finance Committee met to review the list of Bills and the Board Secretary and Treasurer's reports. All are in order and the committee recommends approval of the corresponding resolutions on this evening's agenda.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Dr. Rovtar reported that the district recently collected data for the annual state report on Limited English Proficient students. She indicated that it was of interest that we have 113 students who have a native language other than English spoken at home. Among those students, there are 19 different languages represented.

In response to a rumor that appeared to be circulating through the community last week, Dr. Rovtar stated that at this time, absolutely no determination has been made yet as to the assignment of AM/PM for next year's kindergarten. Assignment in previous years has been based on where the student resides. The only discussion that has taken place is that the "boundaries" that were previously established for the assignment of AM vs. PM need to be re-examined in light of the fact that the current guidelines have created a sizable disparity in the class sizes between AM and PM. We are looking to balance the class sizes next year. We are also looking to create efficient transportation route for the mid-day Kindergarten drop off and pick up. We will need to wait until after Kindergarten registration has taken place in order to see where the members of the 2009-2010 Kindergarten class reside. We will then be able to make determinations about assignment to AM/PM.

The Cogat (Cognitive Abilities Test) is administered annually in grades 3 through 7. The results are used as part of the criteria for the Horizon (gifted and talented program). Since the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at Millington and Central are currently engaged in studying the Horizon program and will be making some recommendations regarding the program and selection criteria and since the administration of the Cogat to all students costs the district more than \$3,000., we are going to hold off on the administration of the Cogat until the PLCs have done some more work and we have clearer direction on what the future of the programs will be. It is possible that another assessment tool may be chosen as part of the criteria.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Dr. Wetherell reported that interviews have been conducted for the maternity leave vacancies that are coming up in her building. One appointment is being recommended this evening. The second will be on the January agenda. She attended the required Integrated Pest Management Training. The Bus Safety drill was conducted early this month. Gillette School has a "Mitten Tree." The mittens and gloves will be donated to the Office of Temporary Assistance in Morristown. Friday is "white day." Holiday activities will take place on Monday and Tuesday next week. It is challenging to determine refreshments that can be served given the nutritional guidelines and food allergies that students have. The Long Hill Parents and Professionals for Exceptional Children will have their next meeting on January 7, 2009.

Kindergarten registration will take place on January 14 and 15. Dr. Wetherell also reported that she has been working on the math curriculum to develop a more user friendly format. Language arts and science will continue their curriculum work on the staff inservice day on January 19th.

ADMINISTRATORS AND TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR'S UPDATES

Mrs. Dawson reported that a bus safety drill was also conducted at Millington School. She expressed her appreciation for the donation of dictionaries for the third grade students that was made by the Grange. The students collected an enormous amount of food during the first week of school to be donated to the food pantry. The PTO donated some new rugs for the Millington School entrance. The rugs arrived last week and they really brighten up the hallway. Mrs. Dawson has been meeting with the teachers in grades 3 through 5 to review the writing component of the NJASK. She has also been working with the second grade teachers on the school's math goals. Students are working on demonstrating how they know how to solve math problems so they will be prepared to address the word problems that are open ended on the assessments.

Mr. Cimino stated that Central School also participated in the bus safety drills that were conducted by the Long Hill Police. Mrs. Delanoy chaperoned the group of students who participated in the spelling bee with other area schools. The choral concert took place on December 11th, featuring the Banana Song, which was a collaborative effort between Mr. Birckhead and the sixth grade chorus. The band concert will be held on December 18th. The Lions Club recently sponsored a peace poster contest. Central School students garnered the first and second prizes. The basketball and cheerleading seasons begin tomorrow afternoon. Some eighth grade students are engaged in a mural painting project that has been organized by Mrs. Dunn and financed through a grant from F.O.R.C.E. Mr Salzer, advisor to the student council, has organized Sparkle Day for December 19th.

Mr. Blinder reported that the installation of the accelerated reader program has been completed at Millington School and in progress at Gillette School. He is exploring options for a telephone system upgrade that may result in some possible savings for the district.

BOARD SECRETARY'S UPDATE

Mr. Esposito stated that he had been working on the development of the 2009-2010 budget. The bid documents for custodial and maintenance services were finalized by the attorney today. A prebid meeting will be held on January 6th and the bid submission date will be January 13, 2009. The bids will then be reviewed and analyzed and a recommendation made to the Board.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mrs. Gronske questioned whether the Board was obligated to appropriate the \$200,000 surplus into the budget. Dr. Rovtar explained that while the Board was not legally required to appropriate the \$200,000, a decision was made to utilize those funds to help reduce the tax impact and to increase the likelihood that the budget would pass. Mrs. Gronske indicated that F.O.R.C.E., the LHEA, and the PTO will be co-sponsoring a Harlem Wizards basketball game to be played at Watchung Hills Regional High School on February 27th. The district faculty and administrators will be playing against the Wizards. Volunteers are needed for this event. Anyone wishing to help may contact Mrs. Gronske. The proceeds from the event will go to the district's Technology fund.

Mr. Sandow indicated that he appreciates the ability to receive the Friday Flyers electronically each week. He enjoys being aware of what is going on in the schools.

RESOLUTIONS

Minutes

- Accepted the minutes from the November 24, 2008 – Regular Meeting – Public & Private Sessions

Financials

- Approved the Payroll for November 26, 2008 and the List of Bills for November 25 - December 15, 2008 for payment as follows:

Fund 10	\$ 23,099.72
Current Expense-Fund 11	\$769,145.42
Capital Outlay-Fund 12	\$ -0-
Special Revenue Fund-Fund 20	\$ 34,745.15
Capital Projects-Fund 30	\$ 4,000.00
Debt Services – Fund 40	\$ -0-
Total	\$830,990.29

- Certified that as of September 30, 2008 after review of the Board Secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with appropriate district officials, to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over expended in violation of NJAC 6:20-2.13(B), and sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the year.
- Accepted the financial reports of the Board Secretary and the Treasurer of School Funds for the month ending September 30, 2008.
- Approved the transfers for September, 2008.
- Approved the acceptance of E-rate funding as follows:

Verizon	\$6,516.00
Xtel	\$ 388.54
TMobile	\$ 416.00
- Retroactively approved a payment of \$3,471.30 to Somerset County Educational Services Commission for extended year transportation for the 2007-2008 school year to Rock Brook School for special education student #2012937.
- Accepted the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), as prepared by William Colantano, School Auditor, for the period ended June 30, 2008.
- Authorized the Business Administrator to follow the Corrective Action Plan in order to implement the recommendations submitted in the June 30, 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.
- Acknowledged, with gratitude, the receipt of a donation of \$1,751.23 from the Long Hill Township PTO to provide funding for the advisor's stipend for Tiger Talk, the Central School Student Newspaper, for the 2008-2009 school year.
- Entered into a facilities agreement with the American Red Cross to use district school buildings as shelter sites in the event of a local emergency.
- Approved the Travel/Conference registration for the staff indicated for professional improvement or development as per the attached listing.

Special Education

- Approved the provision of bedside instruction for student #5986153941. Bedside instruction will be provided by the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission for one (1) hour per day, five (5) hours per week at a rate of \$62.00 per hour, at Children's Specialized Hospital, New Brunswick. Beside instruction will begin December 1, 2008 and continue until the student is discharged, approximate anticipated duration is 6-8 weeks.
- Approved Michelle Lawton, Behavioral Consultant, as a Board of Education contractor to provide services to the Long Hill Township School District for the 2008-2009 school year. The consultant will assess the needs of autistic students in the district with regard to educational programs/placements and home programming. Fee is \$125.00 per hour, not to exceed 12 hours.
- Rescinded the November 24, 2008 resolution approving a contract with the Above and Beyond Learning Group.
- Approved a contract effective December 1, 2008 with the Above and Beyond Learning Group to provide Home Programmer-Teacher services as follows: for student #999903 to receive, as per the student's IEP, 10 one-hour session per week with a home programmer at a cost of \$85.00 per session; 2 one-hour sessions per week with the Program Coordinator at a cost of \$145.00 per hour; and 2 hours per month of team meetings at a cost of \$230.00 per session. The cost of services is not to exceed \$40,000. through June 30, 2009. These services will replace home programming services currently

being provided by the Morris Union Jointure Commission. Home services for this student have increased from 6 one-hour sessions per week to 10 one-hour sessions per week effective December 1, 2008 as per the student's IEP.

Negotiations

- Approved the retainer agreement between the Board and Schwartz Simon Edelstein Celso and Kessler to serve as negotiations counsel for the Board for the successor to the 2006-2009 Agreement between it and the Long Hill Education Association.

Curriculum

- Approved the field trip as listed below:

May 7, 2009	Staten Island Zoo	All Kindergarten
\$4.00 per student	Staten Island, NY	4 teachers and 17 parents
\$7.00 per adult		
Parent paid		

Personnel

- Approved a school nurse practicum for Dorothy Bailey to be conducted at Gillette School with School Nurse Mary Beth Bawarshi for 14 weeks, one day per week, beginning January 20, 2009.
- Approved an adjustment to the salary approved for Susan Verdes, part time Teacher of Spanish at Millington School from .49 of Step 1 MA \$22,243.59 to .55 of Step 1 MA \$24,967.25 for the 2008-2009 school year.
- Approved the appointment of Sarah Peterman as a Kindergarten Teacher Leave Replacement for Rose Mary DiCarlo from March 2 through June 18, 2009 at the Step 1 BA Salary of \$42,595.00 prorated.
- Approved the appointment of the following people to the Substitute Teacher List for the 2008-2009 school year:

Christine DelSordo	Eunnee Spaven
Claire Romeo	

Policy

- Approved the deletion of the following policies:

4151.9	Maternity Leave
4152	Vacation Policy-Full Time Twelve Month Employees
4151.1	Personal Illness and Injury/Health and Hardship
4151	Attendance Patterns – Tardiness

- Approved the first reading of the following policies:

2120	Organization Chart
Job Descriptions	Substitute Teacher
	Teacher Assistant
	Guidance Counselor – Central School
	District Guidance Counselor

OTHER

- Approved the following members of the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum Committee:

René Rovtar	Superintendent
John Esposito	School Business Administrator
Karen Wetherell	Asst. Superintendent/Gillette School Principal

Jennifer Dawson
Rick Cimino
Jane Fragnito
Maureen Furlong
Terry Heidi
Bonnie Plotkin
Karen Nyquist
Lisa Scanlon

Millington School Principal
Central School Principal
Millington School Teacher
Millington School Teacher
Central School Teacher
Millington School Teacher
Board Member
Board Member

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Discussion of proposed revisions to 2009-2010 school calendar:

Proposal to change the November half days for parent teacher conferences from November 2, 3, and 4 to October 28 and 29 and November 10 and 11 (addition of one more half day to accommodate large class sizes). Action on the proposed changes will not occur until January, 2009.

The Board discussed this proposal. Dr. Rovtar was asked to investigate what the other sending districts are doing. She will also provide information regarding the number of student absences the district experiences that week.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Nyquist indicated that she recently attended a workshop on Asperger's Syndrome. She provided a copy of a training video which was obtained at the workshop.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mrs. Barbara, LHEA co-president, stated that the LHEA had discussed the proposed calendar revisions. The members feel that the proposed changes in conference days will not deter parents from taking the children out of school for vacations. She suggested that the conference days be scheduled where they are most convenient – during the week of the NJEA convention. If another day is needed for conferences, it could be added.

PRIVATE SESSION

Moved that the Board go into Private Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with the LHEA and contract discussion with the Board's architect. Disclosure of the above will be permitted following formal action by the Board at an open public meeting. Formal action is anticipated as soon as these matters are no longer of a confidential nature.

ADJOURNMENT

FUTURE MEETING DATES

January 12, 2009 – Worksession Meeting – Gillette Board Office – 7:30 p.m.
January 26, 2009 – Regular Meeting – Gillette Board Office – 7:30 p.m.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED AT ALL BOARD MEETINGS
THE BOARD BRIEF DOES NOT REPRESENT OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF
EDUCATION.**