

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
525 SUNSET RIDGE ROAD
NORTHFIELD, ILLINOIS 60093
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MARCH 9, 2021
7:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

ROLL CALL: (7:10 p.m.)

Mr. Spaan called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and upon roll call, the following were present:

Present: Mr. Hayes, Mrs. Peterson, Mr. Welch,
Mr. Spaan, Ms. Alpert Knight, Mrs. Detlefsen

Absent: Mr. Subeck (Arrived 7:17 p.m.)

Also Present: Dr. Stange, Mr. Beerheide, Dr. Sukenik, Mrs. Dunham,
Mrs. Kiedaisch, Mrs. Styczen, Mr. Dreher

CONSENT AGENDA:

Mr. Welch moved to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Mrs. Peterson seconded the motion. The Board voted as follows:

Aye: Mrs. Detlefsen, Mr. Spaan, Mr. Hayes, Mr. Welch,
Ms. Alpert Knight, Mrs. Peterson

Absent: Mr. Subeck

Nay: None

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED

COMMUNICATIONS:

Superintendent Dr. Ed Stange reported three FOIA request from the
1.) SmartProcure requesting information on purchase orders and vendors,
2.) ABC7 News collecting data on student attendance and, 3.) Mr. Joe
Sutton requesting information regarding contracts for our communications
systems.

OLD BUSINESS:

Board Orientation Session

The Board discussed the logistics regarding new Board member orientation meetings noting that they wanted the meeting to be held in-person.

Strategic Planning Update

The Board discussed preparations for the next Strategic Plan, including timing, use of a facilitator, and reviewing the surveys to make sure we are asking the right questions. It was agreed that two Board members, Ms. Alpert Knight and Mr. Spaan, would assist Dr. Stange in the selection of a skilled facilitator.

NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Audience Comments

Dr. Stange read an email from community member Mrs. Bridget Kennedy stating her support for a full-day Kindergarten program that incorporated more creative play and Specials time.

5.2 Board Open Discussion

After a review of the quarterly newsletter's purpose, goals, and production, the Board agreed to move towards a biannual format, occurring winter and summer, starting with this summer's issue. Additionally, Board member Mr. Welch clarified that Board members are allowed, as private citizens, to endorse current candidates up for election, but that those endorsements should not be interpreted as official positions held by the Board.

REPORTS:

6.1 Return to School Task Force

Dr. Stange began by explaining that New Trier does not publish their aggregated district data collected from incoming freshman testing, and apologized for mistakenly implying that he had access to that data at the last Board meeting. Dr. Stange went on to report:

- When there is ambiguity regarding contact tracing or other matters related to exposure, the District will continue to err on the side of caution and be generally more thorough than the CCDPH requires us to be.
- Extending the day after spring break could make quarantine orders more likely. We will continue to ensure that we are following all guidance.
- The Task Force discussed how/if to allow outside visitors during the school day, including remote students. Not only does the spring bring activities that usually require parent volunteers, such as Bike Safety Week and Field Day, but the District would also like to offer remote students opportunities to safely interact with their peers if they so wish. The group agreed that executing these opportunities should be explored.
- Including lunch in the day will require additional hand hygiene measures. The group discussed how best to make sure that all students have sanitized their hands before and after lunch without causing backups in the bathrooms and shortened eating times. After referring to professional advice, it was agreed that teaching the students how to correctly and thoroughly use hand sanitizer was the preferred method.
- While the general consensus was that Sunset Ridge does not need to use tents outside, as they have adequate existing covered space for outdoor learning, it was agreed that Middlefork could benefit from the use of tents not only for protection, but also to delineate learning spaces.
- The Task Force agreed that it is appropriate to open the playgrounds for outdoor recess with the understanding that proper hand sanitizing will take place before and after use.
- Allowing opportunities for students to take mask breaks should still be encouraged if needed.

Dr. Stange noted that safety guidance offered to schools changes often and without warning, but that we continue to meet and exceed all recommendations. District 29 will continue to work with the Cook County Department of Public Health on contact tracing. The Board discussed whether or not the new guidance allowing for 3 feet between students would enable us to use the large gyms for PE. Unfortunately, the current schedule does not allow for each class to have its own time in the gym. Dr. Stange reminded the Board that optional testing will be available to the community after spring break at New Trier's Northfield campus, and offered to gather information on weekly saliva testing to determine whether or not that type of program would be a fit for our district. The next meeting is April 12, 2021, at 3:30pm.

6.2 Finance and Facilities Committee Report

6.2a Appointment of Assistant Township School Treasurer

After a brief discussion regarding the role of the Assistant Township School Treasurer Mrs. Detlefsen motioned to approved the appointment of Mr. Beerheide as the Assistant Township School Treasurer. Mr. Spaan seconded the motion. The Board voted as follows:

Aye: Mrs. Detlefsen, Mr. Spaan, Mr. Hayes, Ms. Alpert Knight, Mr. Subeck, Mr. Welch, Mrs. Peterson
Absent: None
Nay: None

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED

6.2b Approval of Amendment of Flexible Spending and Dependent Care Plan

After review of a new law allowing employees to carry over unused funds to the 2021-2022 school year, Mr. Welch approved the amendment of the Flexible Spending and Dependent Care Plan as presented. Ms. Alpert Knight seconded the motion. The Board voted as follows:

Aye: Mrs. Detlefsen, Mr. Spaan, Mr. Hayes, Ms. Alpert Knight, Mr. Subeck, Mr. Welch, Mrs. Peterson
Absent: None
Nay: None

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED

The next meeting is April 13, 2021, at 6pm.

6.3 Education Committee Report

Board member Mrs. Peterson reported that Director of Student Services Ms. Emily Dunham walked the Board through the intricacies of our Student Services and Special Education programs, providing an audit that highlighted areas of strength and opportunities for growth and improvement. The next meeting is May 11, 2021, at 6pm.

6.4 Policy Committee Report

The next meeting is March 24, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

6.5 External Relations

6.5a IASB

Ms. Knight reported on two notable House Bills that were recently approved by committee and moved to the chamber floor: 1.) HB 18, that changes the timeline for teacher evaluations from every two years to every three years and requires that the excellent or proficient rating is evaluated at least once every two years, and 2.) HB 21, that allows a school district to apply for a waiver to remove the cap on the number of days a retired teacher can substitute teach in the district without impacting the retirement status of that retired teacher. A House Bill to watch that was removed from the committee vote is HB 7, requiring consolidation of 25% of school districts throughout the state.

6.5b PTO

Dr. Stange reported that they have decided to hold one book fair for all grades through Barnes and Noble, allowing families to shop both online and in-person. As the intended date for their benefit arrives, they are very pleased with their ongoing fundraising efforts and count them as a great success, raising over \$40K! The next Parent Connections Committee will discuss gender identity and how the District supports students with Gender Identity Plans. Slating for next year's positions has begun.

6.5c NSSED

Mr. Bill Hayes reported they are preparing for their new brand rollout as True North Education Co-Op 804, to begin this summer, and their efforts to bring more services directly to districts continue. They are in the process of analyzing how they might consolidate services in select districts, meeting the service needs of all their member districts, and budgeting for those needs. Their CFO recently resigned and they are looking to fill that position. They are discussing their anticipated deficit and how they might use fund balance to offset it. Dr. Stange reported that the member superintendents have been meeting to discuss how projected expenditures are going to be dispersed through the districts, as it is unknown what impact the co-op's enrollment deficit will have on member districts going forward.

6.5d Northfield Park District

There was no report.

6.5e Village of Northfield

There was no report.

6.5f Foundation Fund

There was no report.

6.6 Administrative Reports

6.6a Enrollment Update

Dr. Stange reviewed the latest enrollment data noting that while we are still waiting for approximately 12 more families to respond to the third trimester enrollment survey, we can project that 93% of students at Middlefork and 96.9% of students at Sunset Ridge will be in-person. As we welcome more students to the in-person program, we are keeping them at 3 feet apart in classrooms, when possible, as per CCDPH guidelines. He also noted that there are 32 students registered for 2021/22 Kindergarten.

6.6b Staffing Update

Dr. Stange reported that we continue to interview for the 7th grade English Language Arts position.

6.6c Kindergarten Survey and Recommendations

Dr. Stange presented background information regarding the analysis and community survey related to the District 29 Kindergarten program. The Board discussed moving away from the graduated Kindergarten schedule and towards a full day, noting that the recent survey results pointed to a desire for a longer day that included more opportunities for play-based learning and added Specials classes like Art and Music. Taking into consideration that most children have now had a fairly complete experience with pre-school or daycare before coming to Kindergarten, the Board agreed that a full day program was appropriate and instructed Principal Mrs. Jen Keidaisch to explore scheduling options.

6.6d School and Department Updates

Mr. Beerheide: Spring property taxes are starting to come in and \$4.2M out of the approximately \$6M the District receives at this time of year has been collected so far. Our appeal for FEMA funding offered to schools to cover COVID expenses should be heard soon, which will hopefully result in around \$52K. We will soon submit applications for the second round of CARES Act funding. If there is a third round, we will again apply.

Mrs. Styzcen: Supported by recent initiatives, we are diving into our digital resources in order to tighten our privacy measures. We are striving to be fully transparent when it comes to our technology contracts, and will not work with outside companies if they do not comply with new privacy guidelines. A new mandate regarding privacy measures is expected in July and we expect to be ready with procedures already in place.

Dr. Sukenik and Mrs. Keidaisch: In response to recent repeated “Zoom bombs” by what it suspected to be the same person, we have increased safeguards and are working with Northfield Police to prevent future incidents. Our Social Justice Committee is making great strides and are looking towards more engagement and development opportunities for staff that can help inform our

Strategic Plan and SEL programs. Both schools are looking forward to welcoming more in-person students, and are working on developing effective lunch and recess protocols.

Mr. Dreher: The heating system in the 6th grade wing continues to be a problem. We have experts from not only the construction and architectural firms we used when the building was built, but also representatives from the manufacturers working on the problem and we are assured that a solution will be found with no cost to the district. Required radon testing took place at Middlefork and all levels were well below recommended rates. Unfortunately, the warmer weather has awoken a few bees in the Middlefork gym, and we are working with Orkin to address the problem early before it becomes worse. It is likely that there is a nest in the wall, and Orkin is using a powder-based solution that the insects will carry back to the hive in order to have a bigger impact. We are working with Northfield's licensed arborist to see if some of our trees along the fence line can be saved without the expense of replanting.

CLOSED SESSION: At 9:17 p.m. it was moved by Mrs. Detlefsen and seconded by Mr. Hayes that the Board enter into closed session to discuss the closed session minutes of the February 9, 2021 meeting; to discuss the release of closed session minutes and the destruction of the verbatim record; to consider information regarding employment, compensation discipline, or dismissal of specific employees or legal counsel; to discuss the placement of individuals in special education programs or matters related to individual students; to discuss potential litigation; and to discuss collective bargaining. The Board voted as follows:

Aye: Mrs. Detlefsen, Mr. Spaan, Mr. Hayes, Ms. Alpert Knight, Mr. Subeck,
Mr. Welch, Mrs. Peterson
Absent: None
Nay: None
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED

**RESUMPTION OF
OPEN MEETING:**

Upon resumption of the open meeting at 10:15 p.m., the following recommendations were made:

10.1 Approval: Closed Session Minutes – February 9, 2021

Ms. Alpert Knight moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mrs. Detlefsen seconded the motion. The Board voted as follows:

Aye: Mrs. Detlefsen, Mr. Spaan, Mr. Hayes, Ms. Alpert
Knight, Mr. Subeck, Mr. Welch, Mrs. Peterson
Absent: None
Nay: None
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED

10.2 Release of Closed Session Minutes and Destruction of Verbatim Tapes

Ms. Welch moved to approve the release of closed session minutes and destruction of verbatim tapes as presented. Mrs. Peterson seconded the motion. The Board voted as follows:

Aye: Mrs. Detlefsen, Mr. Spaan, Mr. Hayes, Ms. Alpert
Knight, Mr. Subeck, Mr. Welch, Mrs. Peterson

Absent: None

Nay: None

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED

10.3 Resignation of A. Over

Ms. Welch moved to approve the resignation as presented. Mrs. Peterson seconded the motion. The Board voted as follows:

Aye: Mrs. Detlefsen, Mr. Spaan, Mr. Hayes, Ms. Alpert
Knight, Mr. Subeck, Mr. Welch, Mrs. Peterson

Absent: None

Nay: None

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED

10.4 Request for Non-resident Enrollment

After no motion was made to approve the request for the non-resident student enrollment, Mrs. Detlefsen moved to deny the request. Mr. Welch seconded the motion to deny the request. The Board voted as follows:

Aye: Mrs. Detlefsen, Mr. Spaan, Mr. Hayes, Ms. Alpert
Knight, Mr. Subeck, Mr. Welch, Mrs. Peterson

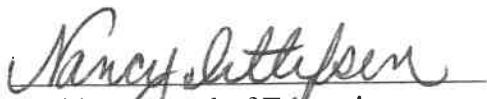
Absent: None

Nay: None

THE MOTION TO DENY THE REQUEST WAS
APPROVED

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Mrs. Detlefsen and seconded by Mr. Hayes to adjourn the meeting at 10:19 p.m. All were in favor.


President, Board of Education


Secretary, Board of Education

Approved 13 April, 2021

