

BOARD NOTES:

February 9, 2021, Regular Board Meeting:

Consent Agenda: The Board approved the Consent Agenda, which included the minutes from the January 7th and January 12th Board Meetings, and the monthly bills and salaries.

Communications: Dr. Stange shared a FOIA request from the IL Retired Teachers Association soliciting information on how many District 29 teachers are retiring this year, of which there are none so far.

Old Business: The Board discussed the logistics regarding new Board member orientation meetings. These take place before new members are seated in order for them to be well informed when their term starts. The Board reviewed several consultants as possibilities for Strategic Planning facilitators. Director of Technology and Innovation Mrs. Sheri Styczen reviewed our practice of charging a \$55 technology fee, proposing that we discontinue it in favor of charging for repairs and replacements as they arise. The Board concurred.

Public Comment: Community member Mrs. Bridget Kennedy and Mrs. Rosemary Wormley each contributed an emailed statement in support of moving towards safe, full in-person instruction.

Board Open Discussion: The Board discussed moving towards a biannual, rather than a quarterly, community newsletter. Board member Mrs. Anne Peterson agreed to provide a written summary of the newsletter's history, goals, content patterns, etc., in order to better guide the discussion.

Return to School Task Force Committee: Board member Ms. Amanda Alpert Knight opened the discussion by commending the staff, administration, and families on their collective efforts towards our success, noting that we should all be very proud of what we have accomplished thus far. Superintendent Dr. Ed Stange reported that the Task Force reviewed regional and local metrics, recognizing the steadily improving trends. District 29 continues to work with New Trier Township districts on creating a vaccination site at New Trier's Northfield campus. While some area districts have been able to negotiate "deals" through local contacts, our group is working through a public application process with authorities and pharmacy companies. Dr. Stange was happy to report that approximately 90% of our staff have received, or will in the next two weeks, at least one dose of the vaccine. The Task Force reviewed our mitigation strategies, understanding which ones could be loosened or tightened. Their recommendations were:

- Temperature checks will be discontinued, although staff will remain on site for arrival to assure that students are approved for attendance
- Desk shields will be kept in place
- Face masks will continue to be required
- Face shields will be allowed but not required

The Board discussed the logistics of moving towards a full in-person school day. There are many factors that inform that decision, such as metrics, vaccination rates, mitigations, recommendations from CCDPH, and the Collective Bargaining agreement with our teacher's union. Some considerations moving forward are:

- The logistics of having PE, lunch, and other specials given space and capacity limitations
- The need to provide a duty-free lunch and planning periods for teachers, as per the Collective Bargaining contract
- Understanding how instructional minutes are being used most effectively during a day that may require several breaks or transitions

The Board agreed that our goal is to move towards a full day of in-person school as soon as possible in an environment that is safe for both students and staff. Considering vaccination rates and weather, and understanding that conditions can change, it is most likely that District 29 will extend the in-person day after Spring Break. The next meeting is March 8, 2021, at 3:30 pm.

Finance and Facilities Committee: The next meeting is April 13, 2021, at 6pm.

Education Committee: The next meeting is March 9, 2021, at 6pm.

Policy Committee: The next meeting is March 23, 2021, at 9am.

IASB: Dr. Stange reported that there is some debate from the public over their new Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.

PTO: Mrs. Peterson reported that they have found a new vendor for their school supplies orders, the annual Book Fair will be held before spring break at/through Barnes and Noble, and their benefit fundraising efforts are still going strong with 193 families participating.

NSSD: Board member Mr. Bill Hayes reported that the impact on other districts of the intergovernmental agreement between Districts 27, 28, 30, and 31 to provide their own early childhood services continues to be studied. NSSD is looking at future enrollment to understand what adjustments will be needed. They are applying for grants to help cover their approximately \$500K in COVID19 expenses, as they are not eligible for CARES Act funds. Additionally, their facilities review is underway.

Northfield Park District: No report.

Village of Northfield: Board member Mrs. Nancy Detlefsen reported that the Village has approved zoning amendments that would allow cannabis dispensaries within village limits in very specific locations.

Foundation Fund: No report.

Administrative Reports:

Dr. Stange: We are sending out a parent survey soon to collect information on how many students will be in-person or remote at the trimester. Enrollment remains steady, with 87.1% in-person at Middlefork and 87.8% in-person at Sunset Ridge. We continue to interview for the Network Manager/Data Security Specialist position.

Mrs. Keidaisch: Dedicated Dolphins are working on a Family Fun Book as a fundraiser benefitting several local non-profits. Everyone is very happy with the safe additions of in-person Specials! Crossing pods is going well, and we are better able to do evaluations and meet individual needs. Staff is finalizing plans for approaching Institute days, looking to focus on social justice activities and collaboration time.

Dr. Sukenik: SELPAC met and discussed screen time and the Netflix production The Social Dilemma. The environment at SRS has been very student centered. Students are being encouraged to build on their own ideas and flex their voices! We are working with the 8th grade chairs to create opportunities to celebrate our 8th graders.

Ms. Dunham: For the past 2 years, in partnership with NSSD, we have operated a Structured Learning Environment classroom (SLE) for area students who are higher needs with significant disabilities at Middlefork. In looking at enrollment for the 2021/22 school year, we see that we will have enough District 29 students who qualify for those services to enable us to create a class made up of just D29 students. After discussion, the Board recommended the District hire an SLE teacher, while continuing to draw on NSSD supports. Additionally, we are wrapping up our student assessments with NSSD, and providing more teacher training in working with English Language learners.

Mrs. Styzzen: The Innovation Team has been incredible, with a special shout out to Jacquie Kotula! The Innovation team meets with curriculum teams every 2 weeks to better understand how they can be supportive.

Mr. Dreher: The heating system is scheduled to be fixed next week, weather permitting, and many companies will be taking part in a deep dive to figure out what caused it. We are working with our legal team to make sure we are covered for any expenses.

Mr. Beerheide: FEMA has now said they will be reimbursing districts for COVID19 expenses, of which our share is around \$52K. The delay in property tax payments will not affect us. Our food service and transportation expenses are down this year, as we are not using those services.

Recommendations: The Board approved the Closed Session Minutes from January 12, 2021. Also approved was the end-of-year resignation of Ms. Adrienne Handelman.

Official meeting minutes will be posted on the website following their approval at the March 9, 2021, Regular Board meeting.