

BOARD NOTES:

October 13, 2020, Regular Board Meeting:

Consent Agenda: The Board approved the Consent Agenda, which included the minutes from the September 15th Regular Board Meeting and the monthly bills and salaries.

Communications: Superintendent Dr. Ed Stange shared that FOIA requests would now be presented at this time during meetings and formatted differently in the official Board meeting packets. There were two FOIA requests this month from 1) Kirkland and Ellis, LLP, requesting information regarding our Title IX policies and supporting documents, and 2) Patch.com requesting a recording of the September 15th Board meeting.

Old Business: The Board discussed the final draft of the proposed District 29 Dashboard, which is organized into three parts: 1) A landing page stating the District's mission, beliefs, and core information; 2) a Key Indicators page highlighting key quantitative indicators of District success, and 3) a page outlining our Strategic Plan goals and strategies that would track our progress toward completion. This dashboard would be accessible on the District's homepage not only as a place for current community members to engage more deeply in the District's plans, but also as a resource for prospective families as they consider Northfield in their homebuying process.

Audience Comments: Dr. Stange read four emails from District parents who had requested their communications be read aloud at the Board meeting. Mr. and Mrs. Ben and Cari Winkler requested the District not go fully remote between Thanksgiving and Winter Break, citing childcare issues and undue burden on families not planning to travel. Ms. Karmen Athanasakos expressed displeasure with the potential option of students coming home for lunch and then returning to in-person school, noting the difficulty for working parents. Mr. Charlie Pick expressed support for the District going fully remote between Thanksgiving and Winter Break, and requested that students who are participating in the Alternate Remote Learning Plan not be required to commit to the entire second trimester, preferring to reevaluate after the winter break. Ms. Tessie Gallagher expressed her desire to see students continue with in-person school rather than remote, citing SEL advantages and the allocation of taxpayer funds.

Board Open Discussion: The Board agreed that the opportunity to observe in-person classes was a terrific chance to see our talented staff in action. While the teachers may make it look effortless, their hours of behind-the-scenes work to make it happen day-to-day is greatly appreciated and recognized by all. The environment of calm and comfort each creates in their classroom only reaffirms what we already know, that our students are in the best of hands every day.

Return to School Task Force Committee: Board members Ms. Amanda Alpert Knight and Mrs. Nancy Detlefsen reviewed the COVID19 metrics the District uses as one resource in the decision to move ahead or back in our Return to School Plan. Noticing an increase in local and township test positivity and case rates, it is impossible to tell if it is a trend or a blip. But it is important to note that the current rates are consistent with what was being recorded in our first few weeks of opening in September. It is also important to note that any movement ahead in the plan will necessitate a break in the pod structure that the District has maintained until now. Mrs. Detlefsen guided the Board through the 3 options to move ahead, which were: 1) to continue the current hybrid plan, 2) to add lunch and one elective/specials class, or 3) to have students go home for lunch and return for in-person learning afterwards. After discussing the benefits and challenges of each, the Board decided to continue the current hybrid plan and watch the metrics for movement in order to anticipate moving forward.

Ms. Alpert Knight guided the Board through the six options regarding plans to mitigate risk during the holiday and break season. These included: 1) not changing the calendar and continuing as is, 2) implementing remote learning for three weeks between Thanksgiving and the start of Winter Break, 3) implementing remote learning for one week after Thanksgiving Break, 4) implementing remote learning for one week before Winter

Break, 5) implementing remote learning for 1 week after winter break, 6) implementing remote learning for three days before and one week after Winter Break. After exploring at great length the benefits and challenges of each scenario, and understanding that no one scenario would please all stakeholders, the Board directed administration to plan for three weeks of flexibility between Thanksgiving and Winter Break during which any student or teacher/staff member could learn/teach remotely should they need to due to travel to high risk areas or exposure to COVID19, and 1 week of remote learning for all after Winter Break.

Finance and Facilities Committee: Board member Mr. Scott Subeck reported that the District remains well stocked of PPE and sanitizing products. The Board discussed options regarding several dead trees on the Sunset Ridge property and replacement of the canopies over the doors that lead into the two kindergarten rooms from the playground at Middlefork. The Board approved the 2019-20 Audited Financial Statements. The next meeting is January 12, 2021, at 6pm.

Education Committee: The next meeting is November 10, 2020, at 6pm.

Policy Committee: Board member Mr. Rory Welch reported that the committee would now be meeting quarterly. The Board had a first reading of the District's Title IX policies and administrative procedures, including Board Policies 250 (Uniform Grievance Procedure), 265 (Title IX Sexual Harassment), and 265 (Administrative Procedures, Title IX Sexual Harassment). The next meeting is January 5, 2021.

IASB: Ms. Alpert Knight reported that The Annual Conference, held virtually this year, will take place on November 20th.

PTO: Board member Mrs. Anne Peterson reported that they are looking into book fair options and having several engaging virtual programs coming up for students across all grades. Additionally, they are more than tripling their Teacher Appreciation budget in order to support our staff and teachers all year long.

NSSED: Board member Mr. Bill Hayes reported that their rebranding name change to True North Education Co Op 804 is in progress, they are engaging in profile meetings with all member districts to review needed services, and they continue in a hybrid learning plan through November 2nd.

Northfield Park District: Mr. Welch reported that they have started construction on Clarkson Park with plans to complete by April 21st.

Village of Northfield: Mrs. Detlefsen reported that they have resumed their discussions regarding the proposed bike path on the east side of Happ Road.

Foundation Fund: No report.

Administrative Reports:

Dr. Stange: One district family that was engaged in the Alternate Remote Learning Plan has moved to homeschooling. We continue to advertise for one open Teacher Assistant position. Since the District is in the final year of the 3-year Strategic Plan, related action plans have been modified and implemented to work toward goal completion. The Board approved a Resolution authorizing the law firm Franczek P.C. to assist the District in any property tax appeals. This Resolution is approved triennially as a regular bit of Board "housekeeping." Dr. Stange thanked Mrs. Sheri Styczen for facilitating the streaming of the Board meeting.

Dr. Ivy Sukenik and Mrs. Jen Keidaisch: They met with the parents of our Alternate Remote Learning Program to gather feedback and answer questions, and started discussions regarding whether students would move to hybrid or continue remotely. Reading and writing workshop models are being implemented. Maternity substitutes are working/will be working soon in both schools. SELPAC meetings are starting up soon. Halloween is being celebrated at both schools in partnership with the PTO and room parents.

Recommendations: The Board approved the Closed Session Minutes from September 15, 2020. Also approved was the employment of three Teaching Assistants, Ms. Katharine Schmidt, Ms. Angelena Colón, and Ms. Monika Shah. The Resignation of Teaching Assistant Ms. Joy Kunny was accepted, as was administrative recommendations for the accommodations of Employees #16 and 17.

Official meeting minutes will be posted on the website following their approval at the November 10, 2020, Regular Board meeting.