

BOARD NOTES:

November 10, 2020, Regular Board Meeting:

Consent Agenda: The Board approved the Consent Agenda, which included the minutes from the October 13th Regular Board Meeting and the monthly bills and salaries.

Communications: There were two FOIA requests this month from 1) Mr. Vince Espi requesting information on guest speaker contracts, and 2) SmartProcure requesting purchasing information. Superintendent Dr. Ed Stange shared that both Middlefork and Sunset Ridge Schools have again scored very high in the annual Niche rankings of schools nationally, and in Illinois, Chicagoland, and Cook County. These rankings can be found by searching our schools at <https://www.niche.com>. Dr. Stange also shared a copy of the latest fall Board newsletter.

Old Business: The Board revisited the list of guiding principles agreed upon at the Board self-evaluation that took place last July, noting in particular the need for a more developed orientation process for new Board members and ongoing analysis of Board procedures.

Audience Comments: Community member Mrs. Jackie Pick urged the Board to support the proposed IASB resolution advocating for safe storage gun laws in Illinois that would require gun owners to store firearms in a locked container if a person under 18 is likely to gain access.

Return to School Task Force Committee: Board member Ms. Amanda Alpert Knight reminded the Board that while it is responsible for direction regarding moving up or down the staged return-to-school plan, and other high-level decisions, administration remain in charge of modifications to daily procedures and practices. Dr. Stange reviewed the regional and D29 metrics, noting that we have so far been successful in preventing COVID-19 transmission in our schools. Cook County leadership has recently announced that they will not be releasing guidance for closing schools due to the virus, rather leaving the decision to go to remote learning to individual districts. Since metrics are rising at an alarming rate in the region, the Task Force brainstormed practical ways to beef up our mitigation practices, such as:

- Increased masking requirements
- Limiting the crossing of pods to absolutely necessary situations
- Maximizing space between desks
- Using alternative spaces in the buildings
- Limiting snack breaks to outdoor areas at SRS and the gym/cafeteria at MF, maintaining six feet of distance
- Maximizing fresh air flow by opening windows and dampers
- Using additional desk shields
- Other strategies involving the alteration of the physical space of classrooms and using portable air filtration units were discussed, but require more information before a decision can be made to implement them

The Board discussed whether or not it had the ability to determine for administration exactly what distance should be required between desks in the classrooms, ultimately agreeing that it did not have the professional knowledge to give a definitive answer. However, knowing that more students will be coming back to in-person learning after the winter break, efforts are being made now to make sure that all space in all classrooms will be maximized. The next meeting is December 7, 2020, at 3:30pm.

Finance and Facilities: CSBO Mr. Tom Beerheide walked the Board through the Post Issuance Tax Compliance Report. The Board approved the 2020 Tentative Levy. The next meeting is January 12, 2021, at 6pm.

Education Committee: Board member Mrs. Anne Peterson reported that administration presented a model for curriculum and program assessment that is more cyclical than we've had in the past. It allows us to be more methodical as we analyze each program, but doesn't limit our ability to be flexible and innovative. The next meeting is December 8, 2020, at 6pm.

Policy Committee: The Board had a second reading of and approved the District's Title IX policies and administrative procedures, which include 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. The next meeting is January 5, 2021, time TBD.

IASB: It was determined that Board member Mr. Scott Subeck would represent the District at the Annual Conference on November 20th. Mr. Subeck led a discussion of the resolutions up for approval at the conference. Most notably, the Board agreed to support advocating for improved gun storage, initiatives in pre-K teacher preparation to promote student literacy, the ability for schools to go fully remote on days which buildings are mandated for public use, and the ability for federal and state government to take a regional approach in response to national health emergencies. The Board also agreed to support the IASB's adoption of a new belief statement more grounded in equity and inclusion.

PTO: Board member Mrs. Anne Peterson reported that they continue to provide high-quality programs, the school directory will launch this week, the Northwestern Settlement House gift program is moving forward with a few modifications, and fundraising for the year with kick-off soon with a signage campaign. Additionally, PTO Gifts proposals are due this Friday and the group will meet in December to approve them.

NSSED: Board member Mr. Bill Hayes reported that their official name change, brought on by the adoption of a more integrated approach to services, was approved and will go into effect in July. They continue to be in a hybrid learning environment.

Northfield Park District: Board member Mr. Rory Welch reported that renovations to Clarkson Park are well underway.

Village of Northfield: Board member Mrs. Nancy Detlefsen reported that holiday lights are going up.

Foundation Fund: No report.

Administrative Reports:

Dr. Stange: Our reports indicate that more students will join the hybrid learning program after winter break, which effects how we arrange kids in classrooms. Plans are already underway to maximize our spaces and allow as much room between desks as possible. We are now fully staffed. MAP testing results indicate that we did see some measure of "COVID slide" in math, although not as significant as we had anticipated. Regardless, we remain prepared to meet every child where they are no matter what the impact.

Dr. Ivy Sukenik and Mrs. Jen Keidaisch: Staff are working at both schools to get fully prepared for remote learning the week after winter break. The day's schedule will be 5 hours long, have a mix of specials and core classes, and consist of full group, small group, peer, and independent work. Both principals will be walking parents through the technology required for remote learning to make sure everyone is prepared.

Ms. Emily Dunham: Plans are underway to provide staffing for the students joining our district in January who have higher level needs. The need for Student Services staff to cross pods continues to be a concern. While it is very limited, they are working on ways to remedy that.

Mrs. Sheri Styczen: The tech department continues to secure our systems, prioritize needs, and troubleshoot for students and parents.

Mr. Corey Dreher: We are still looking to fill one custodial position. We will gather information on modifying existing classroom spaces to accommodate more students. Tree replacement will take place in the spring.

Mr. Tom Beerheide: Kindergarten canopies will be repaired over spring break, and a 3rd grade bathroom will be converted to a staff bathroom over Thanksgiving break. The Business Office is considering opening an Amazon Business Account, allowing for deeper discounts, and making ordering and accounting more streamlined.

Recommendations: The Board approved the Closed Session Minutes from October 13, 2020. Also approved was the employment of Teaching Assistant Ms. Rosemary Prommer.

Official meeting minutes will be posted on the website following their approval at the December 8, 2020, Regular Board meeting.