

BOARD NOTES:

April 13, 2021, Regular Board Meeting:

Consent Agenda: The Board approved the Consent Agenda, which included the minutes from the March 9th Regular Board Meeting, the minutes from the March 22nd Special Board Meeting, and the monthly bills and salaries.

Communications: There were no FOIA requests this month. Superintendent Dr. Ed Stange shared a local media article profiling 7th grade Sunset Ridge student Logan Keeter and his recent accomplishment of reaching the Drive, Chip, and Putt National Finals at Augusta National Golf Club. Dr. Stange reported on the April 6th election results, which will bring new members Mr. Holt Zeidler, Ms. Abigayil Joseph, and Mr. Sam Dotzler on to the Board at the April 27th Special Board Meeting, at 5pm, replacing existing board members Mrs. Anne Peterson, Mrs. Nancy Detlefsen, and Mr. Bill Hayes.

Strategic Planning: Dr. Stange reported that after reviewing several strategic planning facilitators, two have been chosen as finalists. Interviews will begin in order to make a final selection.

Public Comment:

- D29 parent Mrs. Heather Corral addressed the Board in support of including LGBTQ+ subject matter in District 29's junior high health curriculum, noting its critical role as part of a well-rounded and inclusive SEL/health program.
- D29 parent Mrs. Erin Kaminsky expressed approval of the District's implementation of state and federal mandates dictating the inclusion LGBTQ+ subject matter in curriculum, equal access to facilities, and equity in support services, adding that honoring each child's differences benefits the community as a whole.

Dr. Stange read submitted emails as requested:

- D29 parent Ms. Carolyn Torres Kelley expressed support of the District's efforts to address gender identity concepts and foster open conversations during the school day, and the District's efforts to create an inclusive and empathetic environment that benefits all students.
- D29 parent Mr. Tasker Generes described the importance of instructing students in diversity, authenticity, and inclusion as part of developing crucial leadership skills, and noted that avoiding topics such as race and gender threatens student safety.
- D29 parent Ms. Sarah Generes expressed approval of the way the District is addressing gender identity and other LGBTQ+ topics during the school day, and urged the administration to provide parent education opportunities regarding gender identity and sexuality in order to help parents feel more comfortable.
- D29 parents Mr. and Mrs. Charlie and Jackie Pick expressed their support for the District's implementation of state and federal mandates and regulations regarding LGBTQ+ curriculum, facilities, and support services, noting that it benefits all children to understand and honor each other's differences.
- D29 parent Ms. Alison Basofin informed the Board of her support for the District's efforts to comply with state and federal laws and guidelines as they pertain to gender identity, noting the benefits of teaching students to be compassionate and empathetic towards their peers.

New Business: The Board discussed allowing facility rental opportunities to resume, agreeing no inside spaces should be rented yet and that protecting the field grass should be a priority. The Board instructed Dr. Stange to engage in a reevaluation of our field rental rates in order to be competitive. It was agreed that the District would hold off on any rentals for now.

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding gender identity lessons and existing supports for our LGBTQ+ students. Dr. Stange agreed that the District should improve communication around sensitive topics

such as gender identity in health lessons, understanding that curriculum often evolves in response to new mandates and researched-based best practices, and it is the District's responsibility to inform parents/guardians of that evolution. The Board recognized that giving parents/guardians information before sensitive topics are addressed in the classroom not only gives them a better opportunity to reinforce and support those lessons at home, but also an opportunity to make an informed decision on their student's level of participation if inclusion is optional. The Board discussed the ability of and Glenview Youth Services to implement recognized and researched best practices in adolescent health curriculum, and the validity and application of Federal and state law (e.g., Title IX). The Board reviewed the many methods available to the community to contact the Board with comments or concerns, and reiterated that it is a Board member's responsibility to forward any community member communication with specificity to other members prior to the meetings in order for informed Board discussion to take place during Open Session, as dictated by the Open Meetings Act. Dr. Stange informed the Board that the District is following all mandates, guidelines, and best practices that apply to our LGBTQ+ students, as dictated by the IL State Board of Education and confirmed by our legal counsel, and implored the Board to continue to support the District in offering age-appropriate health curriculum that includes LGBTQ+ topics as a way to promote empathy and compassion, educate and prepare students for high school, and create an inclusive and loving environment for students that are at risk for self-harm as they wrestle with emerging gender identity and sexuality questions and their accompanying social impacts.

Finally, the Board discussed the Board meeting calendar, with all future Finance and Education Committee meetings beginning at 5:30pm, and new committee members and officers will be announced at April's Special Board Meeting.

Return To School Task Force: Dr. Stange reviewed the local and regional metrics, noting an uptick that bears watching. The new full-day schedule is in full swing and students are handling it well with little issue. The Task Force discussed challenges and future considerations, but noted that not much can be planned for until anticipated official guidance for fall comes. An opportunity to install disinfecting UV lighting in the classrooms has been presented. However, it was decided that our existing practices are sufficient and the high costs do not outweigh the benefits.

Finance and Facilities Committee: The Board approved the following:

- The Long-Term Disability Insurance Plan Renewal, for which there will be no rate increase to the \$.163 per \$100 of covered payroll for the next two years
- The Sunset Ridge maintenance landscaping contract with Milieu Landscaping, with \$18,399 covering weekly mowing, spring and fall clean-ups, summer weeding, fall aeration, and fertilizer treatments
- The one-year contract with GDI Services to provide custodial services for both buildings at \$184,560
- A lunch price increase from \$3.75 to \$4.00 in response to rising food, packaging, and labor costs
- The one-year lunch service contract with Organic Life to provide food service to both schools

The next meeting is July 13, 2021, at 5:30pm.

Education Committee: The next meeting is May 11, 2021, at 5:30pm.

Policy Committee: The Board had a first reading of Policy 706 (Use of Educational Technology: Student Data Privacy and Security). The next meeting is June 3, 2021, at 9am.

IASB: Board member Ms. Amanda Alpert Knight reported that a concerning bill, HB 7, has passed the House and is on to the Senate for a vote. This bill calls for the creation of a commission that would identify any district that is less than 1000 students and 2 schools or less as required to hold a referendum to consolidate in the next general election. This amounts to 25% of school districts across the state, including District 29.

PTO: Board member Mrs. Anne Peterson reported they kindly and generously voted to fund a new audio system for Middlefork School from extra funds not spent due to COVID19. They are looking forward to the New Family Ice Cream Social, the Book Fair, and Teacher Appreciation Week. School kit orders have opened,

and they are still looking to fill a few open positions on the Board. It was generally decided to not do a virtual Family Fun Fair, but to wait until next year when it is more likely a large event will be possible.

NSSED: Board member Mr. Bill Hayes reported that they look forward to implementing their full-day schedule 5 days a week starting on April 19th. They have an approximately \$1.2M budget shortfall--\$350K caused by extra COVID19 expenses, and \$850K due to a decline in students during the pandemic. They plan on addressing this shortfall by passing on a 1.5% increase to member districts (\$350K) and dipping into fund balance to cover the rest (\$850K). They continue to do a search for a new Chief School Business Official.

Northfield Park District: Board member Mr. Rory Welch reported that Clarkson Park is on target to be completed at the end of April, with a Grand Opening Scheduled for June.

Village of Northfield: No report.

Foundation Fund: No report.

Administrative Reports:

Dr. Ed Stange: Current Kindergarten enrollment stands at 35. We are interviewing finalists for the 7th grade ELA position. Middlefork School Principal Mrs. Jennifer Kiedaisch led a discussion on the staffing and program needs involved in moving to a full-day Kindergarten program. It was agreed that increasing Music and Art minutes, taking out Spanish, and adding Computer Science and Drama would be the best route. As a result, staffing would be impacted in the following ways:

- Art—increasing from a .5 Full Time Employee (FTE) to a .7
- Music—increasing from .5 FTE to .7 and adding Drama responsibilities
- Computer Science—incorporated into Mrs. Johnson’s (Library) responsibilities
- Spanish—1st and 2nd grades would get more Spanish instruction

The Board discussed the option of offering a “refresh” program for the 2 weeks before school starts for any student that wants academic review in preparation for the new school year. Focusing on ELA and Math, it would be offered from 9am-12pm, 5 days a week, for all grades K-8. Dr. Stange intends to send out a survey to parents/guardians to gauge interest and determine staffing needs. The program would free, as it would be covered by CARES Act funds.

Mrs. Jennifer Kiedaisch: Thank you to the community for the smooth transition to an extended-day schedule. Students are rising to the occasion and not having any trouble following instruction. It is exciting to be on the playground! Bike Safety Week is approaching, with all road tests scheduled to be outside, and our remote 3rd graders have been invited to join if they would like. The required IAR state tests are next week and the MAP is next month.

Dr. Ivy Sukenik: 4th and 8th grade is scheduled for the IL Science Assessment soon along with the IAR. Most remote students are opting out of the IAR. SELPAC is discussing the film “The Social Dilemma” at their next meeting. Everyone is working on plans for end-of-year transition events and graduation celebrations. The magnetic poetry board is finally installed and students are going to create new words for it. The process for hiring the new 7th grade ELA position is well underway, with 2 finalists chosen out of 38 applicants.

Mrs. Emily Dunham: We have not had success finding needed psychology interns to address our needs. Instead, it is recommended that we hire an additional full-time psychologist, understanding that the position will be reevaluated on a yearly basis for need. The Board agreed. Teachers with Special Education training will take part in the proposed refresh program in order to prevent regression in students who receive services.

Mrs. Sheri Styzcen: Our new Network Manager has jumped right in and is doing very well. The Innovation Team is evaluating our digital resources and reviewing our budgets. Everyone is getting ready for the IAR testing, which requires all hands on deck.

Mr. Corey Dreher: Sunset Ridge's HVAC system is finally running properly again. We intend to get a summary from all involved parties of all problems encountered and their solutions in order to maintain a complete record.

Mr. Tom Beerheide: FEMA has requested additional information in order to fulfill our application for reimbursement of COVID19 expenses. If the results are not to our satisfaction we have the option to appeal.

Recommendations: The Board approved the Closed Session Minutes from March 9, 2021. Also approved was the employment of Mr. Ryan Czok (Network Manager/Data Security Specialist), a Leave of Absence for Ms. Anna Nikolopolous (Teaching Assistant), the retirement of Middlefork School Nurse Mrs. Anne Mertes, the multi-year contract for Mr. Corey Dreher (Director of Buildings and Grounds), a Resolution to allow service credit for military service, and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and the SREA.

Official meeting minutes will be posted on the website following their approval at the May 11, 2021, Regular Board meeting.