

March 17, 2015
PRESS RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Nancy J. Neuzil, Frankfort School District 157-C Public Relations Coordinator, 815-469-9235, njneuzil@aol.com

District 157-C March 16, 2014 Board of Education Meeting Recap

The regular Frankfort School District 157-C Board of Education meeting of February March 16 was called to order by Board Vice President Patrick Usher at 7:00 p.m. The Roll Call was taken and a quorum was present. No one signed up to speak during the Public Forum portion of the meeting.

The Board approved the open and closed session minutes of the regular meeting of February 9.

During the recognition portion of the meeting, the Board dedicated a plaque honoring the memory of former Board Recording Secretary Rosemary Georgen for more than 20 years of dedicated service to Frankfort School District 157-C. (See separate press release.)

In a written report, Grand Prairie Elementary School Principal Eileen Nelson reported on a number of programs throughout the school that took place recently and support the District's Strategic Plan goals for good student outcomes. Some of these included Hickory Creek Middle Student Council students joining in the Dr. Seuss celebration by reading to small groups of kindergarteners and first graders, P.A.W.S representatives joining Grand Prairie as a culminating activity celebrating student efforts to collect donations for their cause, participation in "Don't Quit Reading!" based on the Monarch Book nominees, and taking part in an American Sign Language activity, "Seussical the Musical." and "KYDZ On the Radio." Students also worked to raise awareness of CHARGE Syndrome, a health condition of one of their classmates. At the meeting, Assistant Principal Sharon Nepote provided information to the Board about the way Grand Prairie groups students for optimum learning in reading and math.

Chelsea Intermediate School Principal Kristin Simpkins updated the Board on the way Chelsea groups students for reading and math based upon assessments. She also reported that the school's Student Ambassadors met and created messages for the incoming second graders. One representative from each classroom in the building were asked to give feedback or input to administration regarding school rules or decisions. When asked about Writer's Workshop, 100 percent of the students said that this model helped them improve their writing skills, and that they knew strategies to use to make their writing effective. All of them said that they felt this was successful and that the school should continue to support students this way in the future.

Hickory Creek Middle School Principal Dr. Kevin Suchinski reported on ways that students are identified and grouped at Hickory Creek using formative and summative data. He also reported that the seventh grade elective preferences options sheet was recently sent home to parents/students. As in the past, students will have the opportunity to provide input on their preference for the six elective options. These elective options are semester long classes in the areas of music, technology, and art. In addition, students will have the opportunity to sign up for a year-long Spanish I class. The elective preference sheet is due March 23, 2015.

Director of Curriculum & Instruction Janet McClarence reported that the first week of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) testing went well and that the extensive teacher training that was conducted to proctor the test was beneficial in keeping things running smoothly. Board Vice President Patrick Usher thanked the administrators for their professionalism in getting the schools, staff and students ready for the new assessment which replaces the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) this year. Director of Technology Jake Nelson echoed that stating, "PARCC was a huge technology mountain and I couldn't be more proud of everyone involved in making the testing process go flawlessly." Mrs. McClarence also reported that plans have been formulated for all summer committees for teachers to work on curriculum. There will be an English Language Arts (ELA) committee, Math committee, Honors ELA committee and an Honors Math committee. Principals will work with their buildings to determine who will be attending summer work dates. In addition, the District has been accepted for the Lucy Calkins Summer Writing Institute where trainers from NY will be coming to work directly with fifty District 157-C teachers in writing on June 15-18. This training is solely funded through a Title I Grant.

Director of Special Services Jen Bajda reported that seven District students participated in their first Special Olympics gymnastics meet. In addition, she reported that several staff members participated in the Polar Plunge in Joliet last weekend, raising over \$4,000 for Special Olympics. Ms. Bajda also reported that she and District psychologists worked to develop a plan to provide parents with professional development on assistive technology tools their students may be currently using. A technology consultant from the Cooperative will hold a training session in April for students currently using Bookshare and Co-Writer. Bookshare allows individuals with print disabilities to access materials through text- to-speech and other accommodations to text. Co-Writer is a software program designed to help students write complete and correct sentences with very few keystrokes through word prediction.

Director of Technology Jake Nelson reported that in preparation for the District's new online registration program, the technology team completed the first import from InfoSnap. Four new students completed the registration using the new online form and the data was polished and imported into the District's PowerSchool web-based student information system. The team then made notes of the process and is currently working with InfoSnap to change a few last items before going live with a small sample of parents and then will open the site for Kindergarten registration.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Maura J. Zinni congratulated Board member Dr. Brian Sasso on being recognized by the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) for attending the IASB's Delegate Assembly which helps formulate the policies by which the Association is governed. Dr. Zinni also reported that after Board approval of the 2015-2016 Parent/Student Handbook, online registration will be implemented and letters will be sent to parents with registration instructions. The registration period will be from March 23 to May 15, 2015, for both returning and new students, including incoming kindergarten students. She reported that a group of parents volunteered to be in a pilot group and their feedback so far has been very good. She reported that Maryanne McGee, Registrar, has already begun using the online registration process for new students who have come in

during the last month and it has gone smoothly. Dr. Zinni also reported that the Band and Choral students performed extremely well at the competition over the weekend at Summit Hill Junior High, with many of them moving on to the state contest. Dr. Zinni stated, "We have a very supportive group of parents and our teachers and students are doing good work with our fine arts programs."

Assistant Superintendent Curt Saindon provided the Board with the Treasurer's Report. Board bills for March totaled \$ 2,054,441.77. Mr. Saindon said this is typical for February, and on the low end of the District's normal and expected range of \$2.0 to \$2.25M. He also reported that the District released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for technology leasing services in early March for Hickory Creek Middle School. He reported that he expects to bring a recommendation to the Board in April for both the purchase of this technology and the selection of a leasing services vendor to assist with this process.

The Board heard a report from Board Vice President Patrick Usher on the Lincoln-Way Area Special Education District 843 Advisory Board meeting of February 10 and March 10 and the Governing Board meeting of February 24. The Board heard a report from Board Member Cari Ann Mills on the most recent Family School Partnership and Frankfort Education Foundation meetings.

There were no Freedom of Information Requests.

In discussion, Dr. Zinni updated the Board on the plans to finalize programmatic services for the District's Gifted program. Prior to the recommendation for the updating of this program for the District's highest achieving students, a detailed review of the current research on gifted education was completed, an Everest Gifted parent survey was conducted, principal feedback was gathered regarding the educational needs currently trending in the district and interviews with the current gifted teacher were completed. The updates to the program for the 2015-2016 school year will allow for more students to be served on a daily basis rather than a weekly basis, without adding any additional staff. The program will include Honors or Advanced level English Language Arts programming for grades 3-8 and Math Enrichment for fourth and fifth graders. Students will be identified based on an eligibility process that includes performance on both national and district assessments. The district website will be updated soon to include the new eligibility criteria and program details. Parents of eligible students will be informed in June of their child's placement.

In discussion, Dr. Zinni updated the Board on the Teacher Leader proposal that was discussed by the Board in February. She reported that during the February 27 Institute Day all staff heard a presentation regarding the Teacher Leader proposal. Staff were then invited to participate in a survey to provide feedback regarding this proposal. Of the 60 participants, 56 stated they believe this position would benefit the district. Based on research, the study of successful programs in other school districts and the survey results, Dr. Zinni requested that the Board allow the district to recruit four Teacher Leaders to serve full-time in this capacity next year, with two serving a two-year term and two serving a three-year term to allow for consistency within the Teacher Leader cadre and promote a trainer-of-trainers model. Board Vice President and high school teacher Patrick Usher stated, "This is an outstanding proposal and four Teacher Leaders is a good starting point and a good number for

collaborating with each other. The biggest frustration I have as a teacher is the demand on my time. Let's be at the forefront and have people come here and watch our model." The Board reached consensus that the new position should go forward with four Teacher Leaders as a two-year pilot beginning next school year, with training to be ongoing beginning this summer.

In discussion and in compliance with the State statutes, Hickory Creek Middle School Assistant Principal April Mahy provided the Board with information on updates to the 2015-2016 Parent/Student Handbook. The Handbook Committee was comprised of Mrs. Mahy as Chair, administrators Chelsea Assistant Principal Doriane Woods, Hickory Creek Assistant Principal Sean Rhoads, and Grand Prairie Assistant Principal Dr. Sharon Nepote, teachers Eric Kraatz, Cortney Feil and Jennifer Rayola and parents Michelle Blakely, Cindy Blau and Karen Johnson. The committee reviewed and recommended changes in order to more clearly define specific areas that required adherence to current policy concerning discipline and those mandated by the State.

In discussion, Assistant Superintendent Curt Saindon updated the Board on the District's initial expense projections for the 2015-2016 school year. As more information becomes available this spring regarding expenses, Mr. Saindon will share it with the Board as the District formalizes and finalizes the tentative budget and prepares for its presentation in June.

The Board took action to approve the payment of bills as presented.

The Board took action to schedule a special meeting of the Board of Education for the reorganization of the Board following the election. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 29 at 7:00 p.m. at Grand Prairie Elementary School, 10482 West Nebraska in Frankfort.

The Board accepted the resignation of Dr. Kevin Suchinski, Hickory Creek Middle School Principal, effective June 30, 2015 as presented.

The Board accepted the resignation of Jeremy Kenny, Full-Time Paraprofessional at Chelsea Intermediate School, effective February 24, 2015 as presented.

The Board accepted the resignation of Kathleen Spiller, Special Education Teacher at Chelsea Intermediate School, effective at the end of the 2014-2015 school year, as presented.

The Board accepted the resignation of Bernadette Schmitt, Part-Time Lunchroom Supervisor at Grand Prairie Elementary School, effective March 13, 2015, as presented.

The Board approved the employment of Jennifer LaMantia-Page as a Full-Time Paraprofessional at Chelsea Intermediate School for the 2014-2015 school year contingent upon the receipt and evaluation of employment documentation required by District 157-C and the Illinois State Board of Education.

The Board accepted the Intent to Retire of Felicia Bysina, Full-Time Resource Teacher at Chelsea Intermediate School, effective at the end of the 2018-2019 school year, as presented.

The Board adopted the resolution authorizing notice of dismissal of non-tenure certified staff other than final-year probationary teachers at the close of the 2014-2015 school year.

The Board adopted the resolution authorizing the honorable reduction of teachers (certified) at the close of the 2014-2015 school year.

The Board approved the Teacher Leader position and job description as a two-year pilot to be implemented for the 2015-2016 school year as presented.

The Board approved the Parent/Student Handbook 2015-2016 as presented.

The Board went into Closed Session to discuss appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance and/or dismissal of specific employees; student discipline; student residency; student issue; reclassification of employees; and pending litigation.

The Board returned to Open Session and took action to accept the findings and conclusions stated in the Student Residency Hearing Officer's Report dated February 18, 2015, and that the two students identified therein are proper residents of the School District for the 2014-2015 school year.

The Board adjourned the meeting at 10:45 p.m.

The next regular District 157-C Board of Education meeting will be held on April 20, 7:00 p.m., at Grand Prairie Elementary School, 10482 West Nebraska Street in Frankfort, Illinois.