

**DECEMBER 16, 2019**  
**WILMETTE, IL**  
**REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Board of Education was held on Monday, December 16, 2019 at the Mikaelian Education Center, 615 Locust Road, Wilmette, Illinois. President Lisa Schneider-Fabes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Amy Poehling,  
 Ellen Sternweiler, Erin Stone

Members Absent: Mark Steen

Administrators Present: Kari Cremascoli, Ellen Crispino, Tony DeMonte, Heather Glowacki,  
 Katie Lee, Kristin Swanson

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Principal Aaron Dubnow introduced Harper Student Council students who spoke about helping community by leading events such as the Thanksgiving Food Drive and the Giving Tree Toy Drive. The students led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ARTWORK**

Linda Peritz's Highcrest students created the artwork in the Boardroom. Fifth graders created surreal self-portraits and delicious looking paintings in the style of Thiebaud. Sixth graders painted lush flowers in the style of Georgia O'Keefe.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

President Schneider-Fabes read an announcement requesting everyone be respectful of each other, only speak when called upon, and refrain from distracting behaviors such as such as loud conversations, cheering, clapping, or booing.

**APPROVE THE MINUTES**

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Ms. Stone, to accept the minutes of the November 18, 2019 Regular and Executive Session meetings and the minutes of the December 2, 2019 Special Meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted by **General Consent**.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Frank Zawrazky, New Trier High School student, requested a comment from administration regarding District 39's use of quiet rooms.

Lauren Litchfield, D39 parent, thanked the Board for the discussion of playgrounds. She noted the PTA is working hard and had raised \$8K but needs \$130K to replace the Romona playground equipment.

Sarah Squires-Doyle, Romona parent, thanked administration for the parent education sessions being offered. She also thanked Mr. DeMonte for the recent technology and physical health seminar. She was looking forward to the upcoming Anti-Defamation League event.

## **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Facility Development Committee (FDC) – Mrs. Sternweiler reported the committee received an update of progress on the Highcrest and Harper Construction Projects. Both projects are on time and under budget at this phase of construction. The Highcrest Learning Commons were substantially completed this past week and Board Members toured the space and were very impressed. The Regional Office of Education (ROE) issued permanent occupancy on Tuesday. The school will hold an official grand opening in January. Harper construction is on track for completion in August 2020, in time for the start of the new school year. The Board briefly discussed the Central renovation project, which set for completion prior to the start of the new school year.

The FDC discussed elementary playgrounds. The Board stated its interest in evaluating and updating playgrounds within the District. The Board felt this evaluation should be part of District-wide facility needs and possibly folded into the Strategic Planning process. The Board recognized that the Romona playground may need a timelier solution and may warrant an earlier replacement. The Romona PTA is currently fundraising for replacement equipment and the Board requested that the administration review the plans and progress of that effort, and return with ideas for how the Board might support and/or supplement their efforts. Administration will return to the Board in February with additional information.

Finally, the FDC discussed its recent Special Meeting with the Village of Wilmette regarding the Stormwater Project being planned to begin in April 2020 in the Community Playfields behind Highcrest Middle School (HMS). The Board and the Village had a very productive discussion. The Village presented additional information and the meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the many questions Board Members and administrators submitted. The Board recognized a benefit to the community to serve as good partners with the Village on this project, but also recognized their responsibility to ensure the safe, uninterrupted operations of a full educational program for students. Administrators and Board members reviewed the playfields project and timeline in-depth and discussed important needs, challenges, and issues including student safety, access, contingency planning, communication, field access, safe routes to school, educational impact, and ongoing planning efforts. The Board considered whether it would permit a temporary and permanent easement as described. The Board indicated a willingness to do so, provided the other concerns and issues related to the impact of the project could be fully addressed. Thus, the Village asked the Board to consider approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reflect willingness to partner in this way. The MOU was recommended for approval later on the agenda. An intergovernmental agreement (IGA) detailing the specifics of the easement, access, impact, and safety considerations would be negotiated and reviewed by the Board with final approval considered in February.

School Finance Committee (SFC) – Mr. Cesaretti reported the School Finance Committee reviewed the five-year financial projections of the District as well as a draft of the capital funding spending timeline. These projections would be presented later on the agenda. The five-year financial projections were developed using Forecast5, which provided additional useful details and metrics. The Operating Fund Balance was projected to decline to just over 40% in FY24 and FY25. The fund balance decline was due to planned investments in construction and capital projects. In FY23 there would be an uptick in the fund balance due to the \$4.5M of Debt Service Refunding. District 39 has a goal of sustaining the overall end-of-fiscal-year operating fund balance at a minimum level of 40%. If the operating fund balance percentage is projected to rise above 65%, the Board passed a resolution to consider, at a public meeting, options related to fund balance.

The SFC also reviewed and discussed the 2020-2021 draft Student Fees, which were recommended for approval later on the agenda. Instructional materials fees were discussed at greater length, including consideration of the materials generally purchased through these funds. Instructional materials fees help offset the costs of consumable materials used by students. Some examples of these annual consumable costs include classroom consumables, curriculum consumables, student technology costs, and subscription services. These instructional material fees are not recommended to increase for the upcoming school year. The Board discussed the philosophical consideration of these types of student fees and the benchmarking conducted in previous years to compare these fees to those collected by neighboring districts. District 39 tends to fall within the mid-range of comparable districts in this regard.

Finally, the SFC discussed financial metrics and benchmarking along with identified peer groups for comparison purposes. The committee discussed types of metrics and benchmarking data the District would use in order to improve transparency and communicate financial status in a meaningful way. Administration plans to begin with a review of the various Forecast5 metrics presented last fiscal year and include a review of some additional metrics that are used as part of Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) financial profile. The committee discussed which peer groups to use for benchmarking and would continue to work with Forecast5 to explore drill down options for the District website.

Strategy – Ms. Stone reported on behalf of Mr. Steen who was not in attendance. The Board discussed and considered the research and sample Strategic Plan information that was gathered. The Board reflected upon the information they received, what they liked and did not like in the various strategic plan approaches and exemplars, and considered its desires for future efforts. The Board agreed with the administration's recommendation to request information from a wide range of consultants who might support the District in its future strategic planning efforts. This request would be done via a formal written letter and information would be broadly requested of a variety of firms commonly engaged in work for school districts. Dr. Cremascoli intended to send these requests in early January with submissions due by February 1<sup>st</sup>. The Board considered how to best evaluate these submissions. Following some discussion, the Board directed administration to review the proposals and recommend no fewer than two and no more than five firms to be invited for formal interviews. The Board anticipated interviews would be scheduled as early as late February, and would likely be conducted by a team of representatives from the Board as well as administration.

The Strategy Committee also briefly discussed the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with New Trier for a data study. New Trier is examining their assessment practices related to student placement and success of students within their leveling system. One of the primary purposes of this study is to determine if current assessments being accomplished in the elementary schools might provide sufficient, valid, and reliable predictability such that New Trier can eliminate a New Trier placement test. This is an idea and approach that each of the elementary districts advocate as an additional means for reducing testing time and making the placement process more connected to students actual curricular and educational experiences. The IGA would assist New Trier in this study and is being considered by each of the New Trier Township elementary sending districts.

### **Liaison Reports**

Community Review Committee – Ms. Lee reported the CRC met December 2<sup>nd</sup> and continued work on the topic *Strengthening Partners between Parents and Schools*. The members focused on drafting survey questions to gather information on current practices in other districts including the New Trier Township feeder schools.

Educational Foundation – Ms. Stone reported the Foundation met on December 11<sup>th</sup>. She noted Gripp Grant Brag Boards were posted at North Shore Community Bank and in the foyer of the District office. Trivia Night would be held on February 1<sup>st</sup> at St. Joseph's. Lab39 (formerly Science Olympiad) courses run from December 4, 2019 – February 6, 2020. The next meeting is on Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>.

Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) – Mrs. Sternweiler attended the Triple I conference in November and stated IASB members voted on resolutions. School Boards in Illinois voted against a proposed resolution that allows school districts to set school safety and protection policies that allow trained armed school teachers and staff. Mrs. Sternweiler stated 198 delegates voted in favor of the resolution and 249 voted against it. District 39 voted against the resolution. The resolution was supported mostly by rural districts with concerns about emergency response time and lack of financial resources. Another resolution was for state school safety grants to hire Student Resource Officers (SROs) or school security personnel, which was adopted, but by a small margin. She noted IASB delegates elected their new board and adopted additional resolutions relating to school districts.

### **Legislative Update**

Ms. Stone stated the General Assembly is currently in recess and returns on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **A. Written Communication**

Dr. Cremascoli reported the Board received written communication from Eli Rogers, D39 parent, regarding all District 39 kindergarten students having the opportunity to participate in a lottery to attend kindergarten enrichment at Harper and Central Elementary schools.

### **B. Administrative Announcements**

#### *Planning and Coordination with the Village of Wilmette*

Dr. Cremascoli noted, as was mentioned during the FDC report, the Board held a special meeting with the Village of Wilmette to discuss the Stormwater Project proposed for the Community Playfields. The Board is considering the specifics of an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to detail the aspects of an easement allowing access through the Highcrest Middle School parking lot and addressing the many safety, access, and educational impact issues presented by the project. In addition, the District learned this week about another project being planned by the Village to begin this summer on Central Avenue, in front of Central School. While there are no easements being requested for the Central Avenue project, there is substantial coordination required to ensure the safe, ongoing operations of Central School. The District will continue to collaborate with the Village on these upcoming projects.

#### *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Village of Wilmette*

Dr. Cremascoli stated there is an action item on the agenda to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the Village of Wilmette. The MOU recognizes the necessary partnership and collaboration required to ensure a safe, timely, and efficient stormwater project in the Community Playfields and allows the Board to convey its willingness to proceed with negotiations to solidify details of an intergovernmental agreement to provide for an easement through portions of the Highcrest parking lot, while also carefully planning to maintain operation of the School District throughout the Village project. The Board takes seriously its responsibility to ensure full and complete educational programs will be provided in a safe and efficient manner with minimal disruption and without additional costs to the District. With approval of the MOU, staff will proceed to finalize the details of an IGA to be presented for approval no later than at the February Board Meeting.

*Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with New Trier for Data Sharing Study*

Dr. Cremascoli stated the Strategy Committee reviewed the Intergovernmental Agreement with New Trier to support their data sharing study.

*Kindergarten Registration*

Dr. Cremascoli reported preparations have begun for the 2020-2021 school year. Kindergarten registration is scheduled to begin on Monday, January 13th between 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. and on Tuesday, January 14th from 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at all four elementary schools. All required enrollment forms are available at the elementary schools and on the District website. Parents were encouraged to print and complete forms before going to their home school.

For the 2020-2021 school year, families of students enrolled in Central or Harper School's half-day academic kindergarten program may choose to have their kindergarten child participate in the Kindergarten Enrichment and Enhancement Program (known as KEEP39) at their respective schools. KEEP39 is an optional, fee-based half-day kindergarten enrichment program that provides extended-day enrichment experiences to kindergarten students. In addition, the District is partnering closely with the park district and other local kindergarten enrichment programs to collaborate and support a variety of similar opportunities for kindergarten enrichment.

*Parent Education Series and Upcoming Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Event*

Dr. Cremascoli stated the District has many parent educational presentations and events planned throughout the school year for parents and residents. Postcards were mailed out to inform community members of these events. On December 18<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Wilmette Junior High School, the District would host an educational presentation on "Allyship in the Face of Hate" for members of our school community. The ADL would engage in conversation about how to help children promote allyship when confronted by hate. The session is open to the community. Information is on the District website.

Mr. Panzica noted the educational series offered by the District in the past have always been good programs, however, the programs have not been highly attended. He asked if administration worked with PTA/PTOs to encourage more participation. Dr. Cremascoli noted she attends regular meetings with PTO/PTA presidents and meets with the smaller PTA/PTO groups at the schools. She continually mentions upcoming events to encourage families to attend the presentations. Mr. Cesaretti asked if the District could post the ADL presentation on YouTube on the District website. Dr. Cremascoli explained that different presenters have rules regarding video-taping and the District also wants to be sensitive to recording participant conversations and questions, but agreed that recording and posting presentations, when possible, would be considered for the future to allow parents to access them at their leisure.

## **C. Annual Business**

### **1. Five-Year Financial Projections**

Dr. Cremascoli stated annually following the District's audit, an updated five-year projection is prepared. The operating fund balance to expenditure ratio is projected to remain just above the minimum goal of 40% in the combined operating funds through FY25.

Mrs. Crispino stated five-year projections use key economic indicators, historical actuals, and program changes to create projections of future revenues and expenditures. She reviewed assumptions built into the five-year projections. The assumptions included a property tax revenue increase based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus new property growth

estimated at \$16M. She noted levy collections are projected at 99% based on prior years collections. She said additional revenue assumptions include evidence-based funding, corporate personal property replacement tax and federal aid which remains flat. State mandated categorical grants include four payments each year from the state.

Mrs. Crispino reported the Operating Fund Balance is projected to decline to just over 40% in FY24 and FY25. The fund balance would decline due to the District's investment in construction and capital projects. The projections include income related to the Debt Service Extension Base and Debt Certificate Refunding in the Operations & Maintenance Fund of \$4M in FY20 and \$4.5M in FY23 to fund planned capital projects. The financial projections indicate that the District is able to maintain the current quality of education, as well as sustain the operating fund balance above 40% of the operating fund budget through FY24-25.

Board members discussed reserve levels, revenues being tied to CPI increase, and expenses increasing faster than CPI revenue.

## 2. 2020-2021 Student Fees

Dr. Cremascoli stated the Board approved some select fees in October due to early registration deadlines. The remaining student fees are submitted to the Board for approval with the exception of lunch fees, which will be submitted later in the year after the Nutrition Committee submits its recommendations.

Mrs. Crispino stated the Instructional Materials fees for next year remain flat. She noted that for families' convenience and for District processing efficiency, the District is combining small payments parents are required to make throughout the year with the Instructional Materials fees. These small charges include books, magazines, recorders, assignment notebooks, physical education locks and uniforms.

Mrs. Sternweiler was unaware of incorporating the fee for 7<sup>th</sup> physical education uniforms noting some families hand these down from sibling to sibling. Ms. Stone said the only fee she had an issue with was the non-optional instructional fee. She stated with the exception of the gym locks and gym uniforms, books to be annotated, assignment notebooks, and recorders, the bulk of instructional fees pay for the daily instruction that makes up public education. She felt these costs should be covered by taxpayers and tax dollars. She stated she would vote against approval of the 2020-2021 Student Fees. Mr. Cesaretti respected Ms. Stone's position and appreciated a healthy debate regarding how the law views public education. He stated he would vote for the motion as he would not know how the District might absorb the \$700K expense toward education.

## 3. Long Term Enrollment Projections

Dr. Cremascoli stated this is an annual report. Overall, District 39 long-term enrollment projections demonstrate stable enrollment, noting a 10-year peak in 2015. Since 2015 there has been a slight decline as larger classes moved through the 5-8 campus. Excluding the impact of KEEP39, the District projected slight declines through 2024. KEEP39 is anticipated to have a positive impact on enrollment but without having firm registration numbers it could not be included in long term projections.

Mr. DeMonte reported last year the District anticipated a slight enrollment decline, which occurred as the District enrollment decreased by 20 students. The projected enrollment forecasted last year for the 2019-2020 school year was estimated at 3,457 and as of September 30<sup>th</sup> District 39 enrollment was 3,465. Mr. DeMonte said the slides indicate an overall descending trend since 2008. As of 2015 the District had experienced a 5.3% decline in student population. There has also been a reduction in students living in rental properties. Annual home sales have been consistent for the last six years with building permits for new residential construction remaining stable.

Mr. DeMonte noted District 39 monitors kindergarten and first grade enrollment closely. Kindergarten enrollment has been lower due to District 39 not offering a full day program. Central and Harper Kindergarten enrollment will yield additional students as the new Kindergarten Enrichment and Enhancement Program (KEEP39) will be offered for the 2020-2021 school year. He stated K-4 schools are projected to have slight to moderate declines. Harper and Central indicate slight declines while Romona and McKenzie remain stable. Overall, by 2024, the District is projected to have a decrease in enrollment of 239 students. He noted this projection does not include KEEP 39 students. He also stated the reduction of 239 students spread over all grade levels would not have a drastic impact on the District.

Board discussion ensued regarding how the projections are made, enrollment forecasts impacting space and staffing needs, mobility rate, and if the District could obtain information on how many District 39 students are enrolled in private schools to assist with enrollment projections.

#### 4. 2020-2021 Draft School Calendar

Dr. Cremascoli stated the proposed draft school calendar is presented for review. Per past practice, the calendar aligns with Township holiday schedules. Following the Board's review and any additional input, the 2020-2021 School Calendar would be presented for approval by the Board at the January Board Meeting.

### **D. Board Policy Review**

#### 1. Third and Final Reading of Education Policies 5:120, 5:125, 5:130, 5:150, 5:170, 5:180, 5:185, 5:190, 5:195, 5:200, 7:20 and 7:180

Dr. Cremascoli noted changes suggested at the October and November Board meetings were considered and policies were revised where appropriate. Policy revisions also reflect the updated model policies provided by the IASB PRESS service. At the December Committee of the Whole meeting, the Board discussed the use of pronouns in policies. Similar to the statement of inclusion and denouncement of actions of hate, Board policies should reflect these same principles.

Dr. Glowacki said as policies are reviewed/revised, there would be little to no use of pronouns, rather reference to the subjects will be utilized (for example, "the student" and "the staff member" rather than "he/she.") The pronouns were revised in these policies as well.

Dr. Cremascoli noted a statement acknowledging the District's intent to continue to amend pronoun use in policies would be posted on the website after it has been drafted and reviewed by the Board. Policies would be updated individually during the revision process.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Consent Agenda**

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Ms. Stone, to approve the personnel report dated December 16, 2019, which included educational support personnel full-time employment of Shelley Miller, effective December 4, 2019; Emily Monto, effective December 2, 2019; Jay Ok, effective December 11, 2019; Molly Petray, effective December 2, 2019; Seth Rosenbaum, effective December 2, 2019; temporary employment of Maria Burwell, effective November 13, 2019; Genevieve Wert, effective January 21, 2020; licensed resignation of Kristin Bishop, effective November 22, 2019; educational support personnel resignation of Herbert Estrada, effective December 13, 2019; Brendan Igoe, effective November 20, 2019; tenured leave of absence for Elizabeth Foley, from approximately June 1, 2020 to the end of the 2019-20 school year; Kathleen Pollard, from approximately April 6, 2020 to the end of the 2019-20 school year; Employee 11620, from May 12, 2020 to the end of the 2019-20 school year; licensed request from sick leave bank for Employee 12456, grant 30 days from WEA sick leave bank; approve as third and final reading of Board of Education Policies 5:120 Ethics and Conduct; 5:125 Personal Technology and Social Media; Usage and Conduct; 5:130 Responsibilities Concerning Internal Information; 5:150 Personnel Records; 5:170 Copyright; 5:180 Americans With Disabilities Act; 5:185 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA); 5:190 Use of District Electronic Networks and Technology Equipment; 5:195 Teacher Duties and Qualifications; 5:200 Terms & Conditions of Employment and Dismissal: Teachers; 7:20 Harassment of Students Prohibited; and 7:180 Preventing Bullying and Other Aggressive Behaviors: approve the accounts payable for bills listed between November 19, 2019 – December 16, 2019 in the following amounts: Educational Fund \$347,839.10; O&M Fund \$326,753.80; Debt Service \$723,671.25; Transportation Fund \$163,439.21; Capital Projects \$1,046,655.00; Tort Fund \$224,509.00; total all funds: \$2,832,867.36: approve the manual checks issued between November 19, 2019 – December 16, 2019 in the following amounts: Educational Fund \$585,045.42; O&M Fund \$3,017.34; Transportation Fund \$135.57; total all funds: \$588,198.33.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Amy Poehling, Ellen Sternweiler, Erin Stone, Lisa Schneider-Fabes; voting “nay” – none; absent – Mark Steen:

**Motions Carried.**

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Sternweiler, to approve the 2020-2021 Student Fees.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Amy Poehling, Ellen Sternweiler, Lisa Schneider-Fabes; voting “nay” – Erin Stone; absent – Mark Steen:

**Motion Carried.**

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Ms. Stone, to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Village of Wilmette.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Amy Poehling, Ellen Sternweiler, Erin Stone, Lisa Schneider-Fabes; voting “nay” – none; absent – Mark Steen:

**Motion Carried.**

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Ms. Stone, to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with New Trier for Data Sharing Study.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Amy Poehling, Ellen Sternweiler, Erin Stone, Lisa Schneider-Fabes; voting “nay” – none; absent – Mark Steen:

**Motion Carried.**



## **CONFERENCE ITEMS**

### **Old Business**

Mr. Panzica contended the New Trier IGA would shift philosophy away from high stake testing. He wondered about testing conducted at other schools, such as Loyola. He felt the District needed to be aware that some students do not attend New Trier and represent those schools as part of the community.

Dr. Cremascoli noted the IGA was a request by New Trier. If Loyola requested that information the District would certainly consider that request as well. She noted each school's placement exam is different and serves a different purpose. She acknowledged many students attend local private schools. Regarding a shift away from high stakes testing, Dr. Cremascoli shared additional perspective on testing and the somewhat isolated, single-day "high stakes" nature of the high school placement exam, which stands in contrast with many of the other "high stakes" tests that students take and which remain important indicators of future success, including examples of college admissions tests.

### **New Business**

None

### **Good and Welfare**

Ms. Stone said she had attended her first Triple I conference which she found very satisfying. She enjoyed engaging in discussion with other districts. She also noted she attended the 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual Music Festival at New Trier. She stated the musicianship was phenomenal. She said the reason the New Trier music program is strong is due to the District 39 music program being strong. District 39 should be proud.

Dr. Cremascoli commended the amazing 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science Olympiad team who placed 5th in the invitational among 22 teams. She also congratulated Coach Valerie Morse.

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Ms. Stone to adjourn to executive session to discuss collective bargaining, special education and personnel.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting "yea" – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Amy Poehling, Ellen Sternweiler, Erin Stone, Lisa Schneider-Fabes; voting "nay" – none; absent – Mark Steen: **Motion Carried.**

The meeting adjourned to executive session at 8:24 p.m. and returned to the regular meeting of the Board of Education at 9:45 p.m.

Being no further business, Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by, Mrs. Poehling, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education. It adjourned at 9:46 p.m. by **General Consent.**

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President

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Secretary