

Board Business



BOARD OF EDUCATION

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The Olentangy Local Schools Board of Education met during a regular meeting on December 8, 2009. The following information highlights some of the major items discussed and decided.

Board President's Report

Julie Wagner Feasel updated the community on some recent legislative matters such as the budget corrections bill, all-day kindergarten and the childhood obesity law. All three of these legislative initiatives could have negative financial implications for the district in the form of further state level school funding cuts and additional unfunded mandates.

Superintendent's Report

Wade Lucas, Ed.D. gave a quarterly update to the board regarding the district's budget reductions and cost-savings initiatives. In September, Lucas informed the board that the district had lost \$12.7 million in anticipated revenue due to changes in the state funding system also known as House Bill 1. In order to keep the district's promise to the community to make the 2008 operating issue last three years, the district's administration has made several staffing and programming adjustments that resulted in savings of \$7,055,853 over the next four years of the five-year financial forecast and \$798,849 in one-time only general fund expenditure reductions. Additional details related to the district's cost saving efforts are available online at <http://www.olentangy.k12.oh.us/district/finance/costsavings.html>.

Lucas also highlighted a few agenda items such as the employment of Justin Syroka as the principal at Cheshire Elementary School and the first reading of the credit flex policy. He also highlighted four good information items from around the district including the Transportation Department receiving a \$79,400 grant to make 14 buses more environmentally friendly.

Lucas' full report is available on the Superintendent's Blog at <http://olentangyschools.net/blog/superintendent/>.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Rebecca Jenkins asked each board member to contact Ohio Senator Harris to encourage him to pass the budget corrections bill before the end of the year. The fear amongst the legislature is that if this bill is not approved by both the Ohio House and Senate by December 31, 2009, then cuts to public education budgets may be necessary in order to balance the Ohio budget. Jenkins also informed the board that she expected to have an updated five-year financial forecast in January based on the updated enrollment projections and 10-year master facility plan that was approved in November.

Discussion Items Presentations

- **Presentation of Excellent with Distinction award by the Ohio Department of Education**
Mike Collins from the Ohio Board of Education presented the district with a banner marking six consecutive years of earning the state's highest rating on the State Report Card.

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Discussion Items - Presentations - *continued*

For the 2008-09 school year, this rating was "Excellent with Distinction." In addition to this high rating, the district met all 30 standards, increased the performance index to 105.1, met all Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals and Olentangy's value-added measurements indicate that students are receiving more than one year of expected growth in student achievement over one year of instruction time. Additional information related to this report card is available via the district's Web site at <http://olentangyschools.net/blog/topnews/?p=288>.

- **Community Service Awards Recognition of volunteers Dave King, Sue Mahler and Jane Martin**

The board presented Community Service Awards to three volunteers that have contributed more than 36 years of service to the district.

- Dave King was recognized for his 11 years of service with the Development Committee including nine years as the chair of that committee. During his time on the committee, the district grew from six schools to 20 today and completed three other major construction projects.
- Sue Mahler was recognized for her ten years of service as a PTO, Olentangy For Kids and Finance and Audit Committee Chair volunteer. The Finance and Audit Committee was founded in 2004 to assure that the district has the necessary financial resources to satisfy its mission, "to facilitate maximum learning for every student." Mahler has been the chair of this committee since its inception.
- Jane Martin was recognized for her 15 years of service as a PTO, Olentangy For Kids and Olentangy Education Foundation volunteer. For the past 12 years, Martin has served as the President of the OEF and assisted this organization in donating more than \$240,000 in grants and scholarships to the Olentangy Local School District.

- **Recognition of Board of Education Member Teri Meider**

Board of Education Vice President Teri Meider was recognized for her eight years of service as a Board of Education member. Meider's second term with the district will expire at the end of the month. During her time as a board member, the district grew from 6,740 to more than 14,900 students, earned the state's highest rating on the report card seven out of eight years, the passage of four ballot issues, the opening of 11 schools and the completion of three other major construction projects. Meider served as Vice President for the board during 2005, 2006 and 2009 and President during 2006 and 2007.

- **Recognition of Olentangy Liberty and Shanahan middle schools on receiving the SOAR Award for academic progress**

Olentangy Liberty Middle School Principal Gena Williams and Olentangy Shanahan Middle School Principal Penny Stires accepted awards on behalf of the students and staff members at their schools for earning the 2009 SOAR Award for High Progress Schools from Battelle for Kids. This honor is designed to recognize schools for academic progress in multiple grade levels and subjects during the 2008-09 school year. Earning this award placed these schools among the top 1.5 percent of the 783 schools participating in the SOAR program.

Reports

- **First reading of new board policy regarding Credit Flexibility**

The board conducted the first of two required readings related to a new Credit Flexibility policy. Credit Flexibility is a required policy that shifts the educational focus from "seat time" to performance. With the policy, students may earn units of high school credit based on an individually approved credit flexibility plan rather than spending a set amount of time in a classroom. A second reading of this policy is required in order for it to take affect and is expected in January 2010.

Action Items

- **Specific Human Resource Items – Certified Staff**

- Justin Syroka was approved as the principal at Cheshire Elementary School (CES) that will open for the 2010-11 school year. Syroka is currently the assistant principal at Wyandot Run Elementary School (WRES) and will begin his duties as the CES principal in January 2010. His full-time assistant principal position will not be filled. Instead the WRES and CES full-time assistant principal positions will be eliminated and current elementary school assistant principal personnel will be reallocated so that these administrators are providing services to multiple schools rather than one school. This adjustment of these two positions will save the district \$580,601 over the next four years of the five-year financial forecast.

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Action Items - Specific Human Resource Items - Certified Staff - *continued*

- The board approved an agreement for shared services and salary with Battelle for Kids related to the employment of Executive Director of Secondary Learning Mike Nicholson. Nicholson will be leaving the district to work for Battelle for Kids on a full-time basis at the end of the school year and will begin this transition process during the remainder of this school year. This transition will allow the district time to create a process to name Nicholson's successor and bring that person up to speed with many of his projects without jeopardizing this important workflow.
- **Approve courses of study**
The board approved courses of study in the form of curriculum maps for both Advance Placement Environmental Science and Personal Finance and Post-Secondary Planning. Some of the curricular highlights for the AP Environmental Science course include the study of earth systems such as atmosphere, global water resources, soil dynamics, the living world and population concepts. In Personal Finance and Post-secondary Planning, students will look at how to manage a life plan, design a career blueprint and manage personal transitions.
- **Approve contract for the purchase of school buses**
The board approved the purchase of nine 71-passenger school buses through the MEC Bus Bid process. This process allows Olentangy to combine its bid needs with other districts to create a larger, more competitive bid environment for all the schools involved. The discounted price as negotiated through this agreement was \$72,204 per bus.

Work session

The board conducted a work session where they planned to discuss six different topics. Due to the late hour of the meeting, district expenditure reduction efforts/pay-to-participate fees discussion item was moved to a future work session. No action was taken on any of these issues. The six original discussion topics were:

- Canine searches of our schools;
- Administrator compensation report;
- Scheduling of 2010 meetings;
- Board and Superintendent committees for 2010;
- District Expenditure reduction efforts and Pay-to-participate fees; and,
- Report on Capital Conference.

The Board of Education organizational and regular meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at the district's Administrative Offices, 814 Shanahan Road in Lewis Center.