

# NORTHVILLE BOARD BRIEFS

2007/08

June 10, 2008

## Board of Education Meetings

06/24/08	Old Village School
07/08/08	Old Village School

## Board of Education

Joan Wadsworth, President  
Libby Smith, Vice President  
Ken Roth, Treasurer  
Karen Paciorek, Secretary  
Judy Handley, Trustee  
Marilyn Price, Trustee  
Judith Wollack, Trustee

At a Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at Cooke School, 21200 Taft Road, Northville, Michigan, the Board took the following action:

- The Board received two communications: Email from Ms. Wendy Richardville regarding her concerns on Privatization and a letter from Ms. Diane Maier regarding her concerns on the proposed Sex Education curriculum. The Board has also received many phone calls and communications at their homes regarding the proposed Sex Education curriculum and privatization concerns.
- The Board approved the following consent agenda items: a) Minutes of the 5/27/08 Regular Second Meeting of the Board of Education; b) Donation of \$10,000 from Mrs. Alice Karoub, to Old Village School to support educational programming, music therapy and student equipment needs; c) Donation of \$500 from Knights of Columbus to Old village School to support student equipment needs, assemblies, and leisure recreational programs; and d) Bill Warrant & Payroll totaling \$2,542,848.46.
- Superintendent Rezmierski and President Wadsworth presented Certificates of Recognition to the following Eagle Scouts: Trent M. Clarkson and Peter Ehlert. Certificates were also given for the "Gold Award" to the following Girl Scouts: Robin Czerwinski, Jackie Turner and Joy Lerner.
- The Board awarded a contract to Ms. Alicia Parsons, new principal at Ridge Wood Elementary effective July 1, 2008.
- Northville High School students Amy Baditoi and Stephanie Hamel, along with Yearbook Sponsor Ronalee Henderhan, presented the 2008 yearbook to the superintendent entitled, "Note to Self." The Board donated their books back to the school for those students who could not afford to buy one.
- Six citizens spoke during the Citizen Comments agenda.

- Mr. Doug Curry introduced himself to the Northville community as a candidate running for State Representative for the 38<sup>th</sup> district. Mr. Curry is 60 years old, a U.S. citizen, and a resident of the district and Lyon Township for 30 years. He is a retired Physical Education teacher and has served as a Board Trustee on the South Lyon School Board for 25 years. He has a deep passion for Michigan and wants to get involved in Lansing. He claims to have the talent and desire and wants to look for solutions with a vision. Mr. Curry said that we can expect him to develop relationships with legislators and citizens and to find a common ground and put Michigan first. He will be going door-to-door visiting residents and sharing his concerns and will also come to school board meetings and city/township meetings quarterly to strengthen partnerships. His website is [curryformichigan.org](http://curryformichigan.org).
- Mr. Kevin Siegrist has three children in the district. Although he has not seen the curriculum (his wife reviewed it), he asked the Board to be cautious on moving forward to embrace it. He realizes that the

curriculum is now a requirement by the State Board of Education, but most families want a say on what their children are learning and how it is being taught to them.

- Mr. Bob Doolittle has four children in the district ages 7, 12, 14, and 17. He said he and his wife want to be involved in the process and selection of materials in educating his children. He wants materials available that would promote “abstinence.” He is asking that many components of the material be stricken or modified to support “abstinence” as opposed to a “protection” philosophy. Mr. Doolittle said the portions that fall into the Human Sexuality Strand should advocate for “opt-in” instead of “opt-out” management techniques. He believes it is unfair for his child to “opt out” of a strand that is not required by the State and goes against his moral fabric of what he is teaching his children. Mr. Doolittle asked the Board to review materials again. He shared that he leads a group at church where he equips men on how to teach their daughters/sons sex education and would love to be involved in these teachings.
- Ms. Beth Locricchio has four children; one graduated, one is sophomore and a 4 and 6 year old. She is challenging the Board, before voting, to look closer at the material and the message it sends. Look at true “abstinence” programs. She asked what they would like their child to hear. Ms. Locricchio feels there is better curriculum out there than the one chosen by the Health Advisory Board (HAB). She is disappointed that the HAB did not take the suggestions that Dr. Nowak presented at the HAB public hearing. She reminded the Board that if you want to partner with parents, this would be a great opportunity to support traditional values and high moral standards that are instilled in their children already. Ms. Locricchio feels the curriculum provides the opposite and asked the Board to turn it down.
- Mr. Steve Locricchio is opposed to the proposed curriculum from HAB. He viewed the videos and found them appalling. He felt videos minimized “abstinence based” aspect that parents are looking to include as part of the curriculum. Mr. Locricchio believes the material implies that all teenagers are having sex. He believes the information regarding sexually transmitted diseases is inaccurate and needs to be updated. Mr. Locricchio brought his family to Northville because of its high academic standards. This program, he believes, is something that will lower moral standards, character and virtues. Mr. Locricchio agrees with the “opt in” aspect which would decrease peer pressure on those students that “opt out”. He concluded that he believes there are better programs out there, and Dr. Nowak had provided this information at previous meetings.
- Ms. Cristine Thomas has two small children; one in elementary. She said society, TV, and movies are pushing sex on their children. She said the videos do not delve into the emotional aspect when one gets involved sexually. Ms. Thomas said she teaches her children morals and that the message is out there that assumes a child cannot get through high school without having sex. She believes the Board underestimates the children and assumes that the students are all like-minded. This curriculum sends a message to children that it is okay or cool to have sex. She understands some parents will not address sex conversations with their children, but the curriculum needs to present facts. Ms. Thomas said there is nothing in the curriculum that protects their souls.
- Special Services Director Lynne Mossoian introduced Old Village Building Supervisor Art Fischer and OVS staff to summarize their 2007/08 School Improvement Goals. SXI Teacher Kathy Langham described the Severely Multiply Impaired Department Goal: “Students in SXI classrooms will increase their interaction with the environment as demonstrated by enhanced observable responses when involved in sensory activities.”; Dual Diagnosed (DD) Teachers Carrie Schade and Katie Grimm updated the Board on the progress of the DD Department Goal: “Students in the DD program will improve their pre-writing and handwriting skills as demonstrated in the portfolio and pre/post tests.”; and Speech Therapist Susan Oleson summarized the Severely Cognitively Impaired Department Goal: “Students in the SCI classrooms will increase their positive lunchtime behaviors as shown by improved use of utensils, decreased mishandling of food, and increased participation in lunchtime routines.”
- Cooke Building Supervisor Marilyn Bachorik demonstrated the use of simple technology in the every day instruction of SCI and SXI students. She said that all instruction fits well with their School Improvement and NCA initiatives. Ms. Bachorik also acknowledged that the Dual Diagnosed department was included in the technology initiative. She and Occupational Therapist Donna Case described

scenarios in which students demonstrate that they have learned to use technology to accomplish an objective. They distributed handouts and showed a brief video. Through a grant from the Northville High School Boosters Club, the students are doing commercial laundering designed by Wayne State Engineering students. Trustee Pollack reported that her niece's experience at Cooke has been remarkable and how she has improved over the years. She complimented the staff and bus drivers who are wonderful and caring with these students.

- The Board approved that Tuesday, September 2, 2008 is the official start date of the 2008/09 schol year.
- The Board approved the State Aid Anticipation Note in the amount of \$10,000,000 in anticipation of State Aid.
- The Board moved to close the 1997 Debt Fund and transfer its assets to the 2005 Refunding Issue #1, and to close the 2001 Refunding Issue and transfer its assets to the 2005 Refunding Issue #2.
- The Board awarded a contract to Royal Roofing for replacing the roof at Main Street School.
- Below are more public hearing comments from citizens:

Dr. Nancy Couch Nowak is a parent of an 11<sup>th</sup> grader. She presented a three-page document listing her concerns and corrections to the HAB Committee's May 5, 2008 minutes and corrections to the 5/29 Public Hearing minutes. (Attachment 1) She shared that 21% of parents would oppose this teaching approach of Sex Ed, because it includes the teaching on condoms and contraception. She believes the percentages would double that would oppose the curriculum tools because they are weak in teaching "abstinence." Therefore, she would like the Board to stop and reconsider the proposed curriculum. Dr. Nowak said parents who have seen the videos and binder are upset, because they do not feel it is right for their child. She believes the details of some of the group exercises would be uncomfortable for her let alone with young males in the class. She talked about the risk categories with HIV and the misunderstandings of the "No Risk" factors that might confuse students into thinking the "No Risk" might be acceptable behavior.

Ms. Sharon Guilfoile has three children. She recognizes the different between "abstinence only" and "abstinence based" programs and knows that an "abstinence based" program should include risk prevention information for students who engage in high-risk sexual activity. She challenges anyone to review this program in its entirety and conclude that it is an "abstinence based" program. Ms. Guilfoile said that given the vast number of inappropriate and harmful activities and lessons in this curriculum, she asks the Board to consider whether the developers of this curriculum have the children's best interest at heart or do they have a different agenda. She believes this curriculum should not be the basis for our Sex Ed program even if an extensive list of inappropriate, harmful, and misleading materials are removed. She would like the Board to find another curriculum where a student would not need to "opt in" or "opt out."

Ms. Valerie Yamine had to leave the meeting due to child care issues. She wrote on the "comment" card that she is opposed to the proposed Sex Ed curriculum and is in favor of an alternative "abstinence only faith-based" option. She opposes the current video on "abstinence" and found it to be the weakest, out-dated, and shortest video giving this most crucial message of "abstinence" as an "un-cool" appearance. Ms. Yamine recommends a more current, up-to-date strong "abstinence" video.

Ms. Susan Hawksford has 4 children in district; 2 have graduated. She asked her 15 year old daughter how she would feel sitting in a Sex Education class with her peers. Ms. Hawksford said her daughter responded that she would be uncomfortable in a co-ed class. She said parents aren't blind to what is happening in this world. Kids are choosing abortions and different life styles that are not normal choices. This type of curriculum contradicts values.

Mr. Paul Widzinski has a degree in Education and is an attorney. He has lived in Northville for 20 years and has three children; 2 will be affected by this curriculum. Mr. Widzinski said he is struck by the

outstanding educators (based on presentations tonight) and the outstanding students that received awards tonight (Eagle Scouts, Girl Scouts, students serving on the NHS Yearbook Committee) and he said none of these kids came from promoting Planned Parenthood. He said the Northville community is one that lifts people up and he encourages the Board to make a decision that reflects the value of the community—not those of any Planned Parenthood or NEA/MEA advocacy group. He says the Northville community is the backbone and they are looking for the Board's support to adopt a curriculum that promotes "abstinence" and long-term committed relationships. Mr. Widzinski agrees with the gentleman that spoke before (Bob Doolittle) about not stigmatizing our children that choose to "opt out" and prefers the option to "opt in."

Mr. Daryl Rice has four children and does not support proposed Sex Ed curriculum. He supports "abstinence only" and stated that the use of safe sex practices are exercises that encourage pre-marital sex. He believes the district needs to support "abstinence" and all homework assignments that support that program. Mr. Rice says he hopes the Board has the courage to make the right decision.

Ms. Nancy Rice said she is listening to all the comments and basically there is no one here tonight who agrees with the proposed Sex Ed curriculum. She said our standards for right and wrong keep diminishing, and we seem to be succumbing to the pressure of just allowing what seems to be culturally accepted. She wants the district to teach "100% abstinence" to encourage mental and physical well being. She believes kids want to succeed and asked the Board if they would want their children to take the class. Ms. Rice said there is nothing good about encouraging kids to shop for a condom, putting one on an ornate object, let alone the spread of disease and the chance of an unwanted pregnancy. Having experienced casual and unmarried sex could tear the family apart and create a mental and emotional breakdown of the children.

Mr. Stuart Smith has three children in the district. He does not support the teaching of how to engage in sexual activities. He and his wife support the teaching of "abstinence" and teaching the biology of the body but not the "how to" side of having sex. Mr. and Mrs. Smith believes the choice to have sex is a moral issue not to be taught by the school. They believe there is an epidemic going on with drugs, sex and misinformation. He believes that learned imaging and ideas planted in people's heads have a life-long impression that affects beliefs, values and actions.

Ms. Liz Vallespir has four boys. She believes the Sex Education curriculum buys into and reinforces dysfunctional and corrupt views of sexuality that builds social and personal problems in the long term. She cited that some of these problems range from anxiety and depression to inability to form healthy and lasting relationships to abortion, suicide and divorce. She believes that these failures affect personal lives and that of our nation as a whole. Ms. Vallespir asked the Board to search their hearts and minds and consider which seeds they aspire to plant in our precious youth and reject this curriculum and demand something better for the Northville students.

Mr. Michael Scorzo has six children; 2 at Winchester and 1 at Meads Mill; 2 at Northville High School. He would like to see the boys and girls segregated in the class.

Ms. Vira Conley (Attachment 2) has a son in elementary school. She expressed that she supports the idea of teaching Sex Education but is opposed to some of the material that will be used to teach the subject. Ms. Conley believes the "abstinence" message is weak and inconsistent. It portrays high-risk sexual activity among high school teens as common and expected behavior. She referred to a video, "Sex Smart for Teens," that shows a bunch of cool high school kids who talk about their sexually transmitted diseases. The "abstinence" video was produced 16 years ago and is not as alluring as the Sex Smart video and the kids are not as cool-looking as in the other video. Ms. Conley finds it troubling that the small group breakout activities, e.g. HIV Risk Level activity, where students are told how to avoid having your parents find out that you are getting medical care. She is asking the Board to reject the

proposed Sex Education material and look for better quality material or modify the proposed Sex Education material. She also asked that since Dr. Nowak took the time to identify ways to improve the quality of this material that if the Board decides to modify the Sex Education material, then contact Dr. Nowak to allow her to continue her analysis and develop recommendations/

At this time, Secretary Karen Paciorek wanted citizens to realize that the Sex Ed curriculum was not developed by the Northville Board of Education, but is a State development program. She reiterated that the Health Advisory Board is a committee comprised of citizens and staff to allow for a variety of input in determining the Sex Ed curriculum. The audience responded that they knew the curriculum was not developed by the Northville Board of Education.

Ms. Sarah Bechler has three children. She said that Sex Education is not required by the State, but HIV/STDs are required to be taught. She is opposed to the curriculum as it stands. Ms. Bechler would like the Board to embrace parents' comments. She cited Governor Granholm's initiative that parents are the primary sex educators. Ms. Bechler has viewed the four videos, attended both Public Hearings and recently reviewed the 2006 public survey results. Although Ms. Bechler did not have the full questions that were asked of citizens, she cited a portion of questions. 1) Parts and how they work? 300 random families were chosen to participate. 2) Changes that will happen to your body? 3) Importance of family communication? She wondered how we can support a video that says do not do this or parents will find out. 4) How to say no!. Ms. Bechler says this sounds like "abstinence." 5) Where do babies come from? 6) Economic impact? 7) Abstinence. This category received the highest response. 8) How do you get HIV/STDs? Ms. Bechler said this is a serious subject. She felt the proposed videos were flippant, and information not accurate. 9) Contraception – received the lowest percentile asking whether it should be taught. She said there was nothing in the survey about demonstrating how to use condoms. Parents are appalled at students being shown how to use a condom. 10) Sex crimes. If we took time to do survey to see what community had to say, why did HAB approve and move forward with curriculum before any of Public Hearings were conducted? Ms. Bechler also stated that she attended an HAB meeting where a comment was made by Cheryl Jones, HAB member, that these people (the ones complaining) think they represent the entire community.

Mr. Paul Bechler is opposed to Sex Education curriculum as it currently is outlined. He would like to explore better options. Mr. Bechler said he received an email from Mary Kay Gallagher clarifying that the primary curriculum under consideration is from the Michigan Department of Education and Community Health Program. Mr. Bechler says we teach about drugs and alcohol and how to be safe, but we are not teaching them to not drink or do drugs. Curriculum implies that we know teens are going to have sex so we will show them how not to have problems. He wants the Board to take a firmer stand and teach Abstinence.

Mr. Jeff Gibbons did not speak but wanted to know what hours are available to view videos. (Ms. Jelics gave Administrative Assistant Karen Waltz the name and phone number to call Mr. Gibbons with the viewing dates.)

Dr. Barbara Soyster has a daughter who is a freshman at Northville High School. She directed her comment at President Wadsworth saying that Joan made a comment tonight on what Old Village/Cooke Schools do and how the staff spends time thinking about what they want a child to learn and how to achieve it. She then asked the Board to do the same thing with the proposed Sex Ed curriculum—what do you want the children to learn and does it accomplish your goals? Dr. Soyster says using alcohol and drugs raises the chances of teens indulging in sex. Teens don't learn how to look at themselves—they say the sex just happened. She feels strongly that teens don't know how to manage relationships and build emotional connectedness. She feels the curriculum does not teach the students to look at themselves and manage relationships so they can connect with their boyfriend or girl friend. Dr. Soyster said that at the 5/22/08 HAB public hearing, there was a woman (Ms. Helen Crown) who said that Ann

Arbor Schools was successful in a model based on a “faith-based” option. Dr. Soyster agrees that we need to present contraception and STDs.

Dr. Jerry Drake has six children; four have graduated from Northville High School. He viewed the videos and feels the message is inconsistent and the material is mediocre. Dr. Drake said that the current videos infer that pre-marital sex and multiple partners are acceptable as long as we use safe methods such as birth control and condoms. He believes this is sending the wrong message to our children and hampering their ability to maintain relationships and commitment when they enter into adulthood. Dr. Drake concluded that he felt uncomfortable viewing the videos and cannot imagine what his children would feel like watching those videos.

Mr. Steve Lomske has a daughter at Northville High School. He asked his daughter if she would be uncomfortable in a Sex Education class with boys discussing various content materials. She responded that she would be very uncomfortable. His daughter then asked him who was Deep Throat. He explained to her about Watergate situation. She told her Dad that they saw a movie in History class entitled, “Dick,” and it was a comedy of Richard Nixon. Mr. Lomske rented it and found it to be crude. He went into detail about two 14-year old girls who got side-tracked in the White House and were performing acts that had sexual connotations and was demeaning to women in general. Mr. Lomske asked if this is the level being taught in our schools now—there is no way citizens should put Sex Education curriculum into the teachers’ hands. He would like to know why this movie is being shown in a history class. Mr. Lomske said we need to police what’s going on in our children’s classes and oversee this curriculum.

Ms. Sandy Drake did not address the Board but put her thoughts on the card. She said the “opt-out” is not an acceptable option. She knows our kids do not live in a bubble, but they are still affected indirectly by this curriculum. She also stated that in 2000/01, hundreds of parents spoke out against similar messages and information being taught in the Biology class. The standard of the community has not change in our minds. Excellence is the motto of our school, and she wants to work together to change the Sex Ed curriculum.

Ms. Shirley Shirock asked not to speak, but wrote that she is here tonight to support the many parents speaking out for a different Sex Education curriculum. She knows some of you through her son and trusts that, as parents, you will take tonight’s comments to heart. She said she struggled in her spirit when her kids felt awkward “opting out” due to peer pressure, but I didn’t know what was being taught. Ms. Shirock said it is a huge challenge to combat the culture’s messages and challenges our kids to purity and save themselves for their life partner. Her kids have accepted their values but we didn’t feel the school curriculum worked with us.

Mr. Scott Vogel did not want to speak but wrote that the Sex Ed curriculum is not 100% “abstinence.” He is a parent of a 15, 13 and 11 year old in Northville. He believes that sex education is the primary responsibility of the parent. He also feels the district does not need to teach students about moral issues or birth control. Mr. Vogel knows that there are better “100% abstinence” and up-to-date curriculum out there than what is being offered.

Ms. Cathy Vogel did not want to address the Board but wrote asking the Board to consider alternatives such as Family Life Education (FLE) used by Loudoun County Virginia Public Schools.

Ms. Mary McKay spoke against the privatization of employees in Teamsters Local 214 (Food Service, Custodial and Transportation employees). She said that these employees are valuable and part of the Northville family that overlooks the schools and their children. Ms. McKay refers to the Mission and Vision Statements where Administration reports that staff is connected to community and works in close partnership with community. If the Board chooses to privatize, you are going against your own values and sending a message that the staff is not important and can be replaced with lower paying employees.

Ms. McKay reminded the Board that statistics claim that lower pay produces a high turnover rate. She is upset that the parents have not been given the opportunity to present how to save the district money nor to register their concerns. She asked that the Board not make any decisions about privatization at this time.

- The Board moved into Executive Session for purposes of negotiations at 10:00 p.m.

<b>Meeting/Events</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Policy	6/17/08	7:00 p.m.	COA 302
Instructional Services	6/17/08	7:15 p.m.	Old Village Gym (1 <sup>st</sup> Floor)
Ad Services	6/03/08	8:15 p.m.	COA 302

Meeting adjourned at 11:36 p.m.