

NORTHVILLE BOARD BRIEFS

2008/09

September 9, 2008

Board of Education Meetings

09/23/08	Northville High School
10/14/08	Old Village School
10/28/08	Hillside Middle School
11/11/08	Old Village School
11/18/08	Meads Mill Middle School
12/09/08	Winchester Elementary
01/13/09	Old Village School
01/27/09	Silver Springs Elementary
02/10/09	Old Village School
02/24/09	Moraine Elementary
03/10/09	Old Village School
03/24/09	Thornton Creek Elementary
04/07/09	Old Village School
04/28/09	Ridge Wood Elementary
05/12/09	Old Village School
05/26/09	Amerman Elementary
06/09/09	Old Village School
06/23/09	Old Village

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 Old Village School, 405 W. Main, Northville, Michigan, the Board took the following action:

- The Board approved the following consent agenda items: a) Minutes of the 08/26/08 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education; b) Minutes of the 09/04/08 Special Call Meeting of the Board of Education; c) Approval of a resolution requesting funding under State Aid, Section 20 (8); d) Approval of the 2008/09 Board By-Laws; e) Approve a contract with Landscape Structures/Superior Play for a sum not to exceed \$15,925 for 660 square feet of safety surface for Winchester Elementary School’s playground; and f) Bill Warrants totaling \$1,834,360.53.
- Audit Report – 2007/08. The Board approved the 2007/08 Audit Report. This report will be on the district’s website in the very near future.
- NEA President Ann Cook addressed the Board on the following:
 - She stated that she preferred not to be here, however, the Board has left her no other choice. She said that she feels it is clear that the Board is not happy to have the NEA members present.
 - Ms. Cook reminded the Board that parents, students and community are our customers. She said the School Board, Administration and Teachers report to its customers. Ms. Cook said that the reason this district is so successful is because of the parents, students and teachers who come together and move forward collectively.
 - Ms. Cook stated that we don’t need to compare ourselves to other districts. She said they establish their own goals and put their best foot forward collectively. She noted that in her 25 years at Northville Public Schools, she has concerns that are reaching a “tipping” point.
 - She asked why the School Board had its attorney present a comparison of Northville Public Schools with another district that simply cannot compare to ours—and that district employs a member of the Board of Education? She asked the Board if we compare Northville’s test scores with this district. Ms. Cook added that NPS’ math/science/reading scores meet or exceeds 80%, so why does the District’s Negotiations Team want to bring this kind of negativity to the table? She asked if we want to compare ourselves to a district that scores in the 30%, 45% or 51.
 - Ms. Cook feels the district is lowering the bar at the bargaining table.
 - Ms. Cook said she reviewed minutes regarding

Overarching Goal of Student Learning where a Board member suggested Goal III (c) and (d) be eliminated at a time when this Board decided on a common calendar lobbied by the superintendent. Why do we eliminate a portion of the goal?

- Ms. Cook said we have lowered the bar by suggesting that entry-level teaching salaries be 10% less than existing salaries. She asked who will come to this district. Who's left? She informed the Board that she had permission from the member who resigned to bring before the Board the reason why he resigned. She said the reason he resigned is because he no longer wished to work in an environment where teachers are not appreciated. She said don't think the NEA doesn't know that the Board portrayed his resignation due to NEA driving him away. Ms. Cook also had discussions with a new hire that didn't want to work in Northville, but he actually got another job in Farmington. She said the bar is raised in classrooms and in the district, yet at the bargaining table it is lowered.
- Revenue showed a surplus of \$680,000 with 150 new students entering the district. The NEA recognizes the finances in Michigan and the economy, but we have a Foundation Allowance increase, incoming students and surplus funds. She has discussions with other superintendents who say in order to keep relationships strong, you have to take care of your people. Ms. Cook said they are hopeful about the revenue sources that they brought to the Board and district. She also stated that the goals questioned earlier would not be eliminated but be approved as submitted. Ms. Cook said that if the district can save hundreds of dollars by turning off light bulbs and reducing the number of refrigerators, then perhaps the Board can consider additional days off for teachers to help cut operating costs. Ms. Cook said she welcomes responses and hopes the district will raise the bar and continue to have conversations.
- President Wadsworth thanked Ms. Cook and the teachers for coming tonight. She said that teachers are always welcomed to come to Board meetings, and that's why the Board moved the meeting downstairs to make it more comfortable for all parties. Ms. Wadsworth said she has great faith in the negotiations process and believes we will get an agreement at the table. Ms. Wadsworth said she appreciates Ms. Cook bringing ideas forward and looks forward to reaching closure.
- Ms. Wadsworth also said that even though this isn't the best venue for responding, she would share a few comments. She also responded to Ms. Cook's concern about the information the Board received from the Wayne/Westland School District. Ms. Wadsworth shared that the data was not an attempt to compare Northville to Wayne- Westland. Any suggestions that they bring to the table is not an "end all," but data that perhaps can shed some light for purposes of conversation that both sides can consider. Ms. Wadsworth also responded that it's not surprising that our two groups would have different views of what is best for the future of the district. Our Board looks at the numbers in one way and your Association looks at numbers in another. Through this process, we share ideas where we can reach agreement. Ms. Wadsworth said she has respect for the faculty in this district. She asked the NEA not to be angry because we have different points of view. With the surplus of \$680,000, Ms. Wadsworth compared that to a household budget noting that many people do not spend all they have. Ms. Wadsworth noted that the enrollment numbers have changed; the district only enrolled 77 new students not 150. (Ms. Cook replied that the 150 number is the figure they had from administration of the latest enrollment figures.) Ms. Wadsworth said she has the most current enrollment figures that she just received tonight—and it's only 77 new students.
- Ms. Wadsworth also said the Board is being conservative in their spending because they want to make sure after the November election that the state may not be as generous with the funds (\$56 per student). I'm sure the Association is thinking why can't we take \$56 x the number of students and then add the surplus and go from there. However, the Board does not look at it that way, but she respects how the NEA looks at these numbers differently.
- Ms. Wadsworth addressed Ms. Cook's question regarding goal III saying that Ann wasn't in attendance at the 8/26/08 Board meeting, but they decided not to eliminate goals III (c) and (d), but chose to go through the Northville Education Foundation. She also stated that the district does consolidation through Wayne RESA in terms of purchasing as well as other areas. It is not an attempt to suggest that the district is not serious about saving money and looking for new sources of revenue. She reminded the NEA that if they have data points to bring to the negotiations process, then please bring them.

- MEA Executive Director Laurie Moore said she had no intention of speaking to the Board tonight, but she doesn't believe in bargaining in public. She asked why Detroit Public Schools was excluded in the auditor's presentation about fund balance and averages from fund balance. She stated that the average expenditures for instructional services were 61%. What was it throughout the state? Ms. Moore questioned that the auditors said 90% of funds come from state but the first chart showed 14% from taxes.
- President Wadsworth said Detroit Public Schools was not included on fund balance and deferred to Business Director Street as to why. Mr. Street replied that Detroit Public Schools is excluded because it is a large district compared to others in the state. Ms. Wadsworth said they can check about the 61% of General Fund being spent in classrooms, salaries and benefits and ask what is the state average. Mr. Street replied that Northville's 61% was similar to other Wayne County districts that are in the upper 50% or 60%. He also said that despite the fact that the state establishes the Foundation Allowance, they only pay a portion—14% comes from the 18 mil non-homestead property tax.
- Teacher Tom Silak questioned why the auditor presented state-wide averages for fund balance, minus Detroit Public Schools, but then the Board only selects certain districts for pupil allotment. He doesn't understand why in one case the Board compares state-wide averages and in others, they choose select districts?
- President Wadsworth responded that the Board compares Northville to other districts with comparable scores, e.g. Birmingham, etc. When the Board looks at fund balance, they look at state-wide averages because fund balances vary widely. She said she'll be happy to get more data on fund balance and they will also look at state-wide per pupil fund balance. Ms. Wadsworth said that Northville's fund balance is lower than many other districts. If we compare statewide, it would be higher than state averages. Dr. Rezmierski stated that it is the practice of the district to compare to those districts surrounding us and then expand. Ms. Wadsworth said she will get that information to the NEA. The Board approved the 2008/09 District Goals after a lengthy review by Superintendent Rezmierski. President Wadsworth concluded that she likes the Overarching Goal concerning Student Learning and feels these goals are manageable and challenging. She also apologized for her response to questions posed earlier in the meeting concerning Goal III (c) and (d). President Wadsworth's comments reflected discussion at the committee and whether these goals were necessary as they are being done through the Foundation and as part of the district's practices. She clarified that these goals are included in the 2008/09 District Goals.

Meeting/Events	Date	Time	Location
Victorian Festival	09/12-13/08	All Day Events	Parade at 6 p.m.
Instructional Services	09/16/08	7:00 p.m.	COA 302
Policy	09/16/08	8:15 p.m.	COA 302

Treasurer Roth informed administration that Parks & Recreation Commission meets Thursday to discuss a temporary Skate Board Park at Hillside Middle School. There has been discussion from Parks & Recreation Director and Assistant Superintendent Bolitho regarding this request. There will be a more in-depth discussion at the October Administrative Services Subcommittee.

Meeting adjourned 8:30 p.m.