

NORTH ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

JUNE 18, 2008 – SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION

MINUTES

Board in Attendance: Mrs. Bishop, Mr. Hubert, Mrs. Boujoukos,
Mr. Cunningham, Mrs. Grosheider, Mrs. Ludwig,
Mr. Pagone*, Mr. Schwartzmier, Mr. Shuckrow

Board Absent: None.

* Mr. Pagone arrived at **8:04 p.m.**

Student in Attendance: Mr. Hamm - NASH

Also in Attendance: Dr. Green, Mr. Brungo (Solicitor), Mr. Botti, Mr. Devlin,
Mrs. Ed, Mr. Gaertner, Dr. Hirsch, Mr. Hopkins, Dr. Steinhauer,
Dr. Stropkaj, Dr. Wheat; Mrs. Ryan (Secretary)

Other Administrators: None.

The Board of School Directors of the North Allegheny School District convened for a **Special Meeting/Work Session** on **Wednesday, June 18, 2008** in the **Board Room** of the **Central Administrative Offices**.

SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION

Mrs. Bishop called the meeting to order at **7:32 p.m.** and all stood and recited *The Pledge of Allegiance*.

Mrs. Bishop welcomed our Student Representative from NASH, Andy Hamm. Andy was our Student Representative in his sophomore year, and Mrs. Bishop said it was good to see him return. The new NAI Student Representative is Lili Peng, who will be in attendance next week and we are all looking forward to meeting her. The Board and community welcomed Andy and wished him well in his duties for the upcoming school year.

Mrs. Bishop announced that the Board met in Executive Session at the conclusion of the last meeting on May 28, 2008 to discuss a personnel matter with respect to employee compensation and a professional services contract. The Board will be meeting in Executive Session at the conclusion of this meeting to discuss a litigation matter and a personnel matter with respect to an Administrative employee.

CALENDAR AND AGENDA

Mrs. Bishop reviewed the Agenda for this meeting and the Calendar for June, July and August 2008. This meeting is a Special Meeting/Work Session and the Board has a couple of items to approve. At next week's meeting the Board will be approving the 2008-09 General Fund Budget, among other items. In July, there will only be one meeting, which will be a combined Work Session and Regular Meeting on July 16, 2008. In August, there will be two meetings. The Work Session on August 20, 2008 will also be a Special Meeting/Work Session and the Regular Meeting will be on August 27, 2008, right before the start of school on August 28th.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

No Speakers.

SPEAKERS ON VOTING ITEMS

No Speakers

VOTING ITEMS

The following items were approved by the Board:

FINANCIAL REPORT

I. A.W. Beattie Career Center Debt Resolution

On motion by Mrs. Grosheider, seconded by Mr. Shuckrow, the Board approved adoption of the Debt Resolution as contained in the Official Minutes of this meeting.

Background Information

The "not to exceed" resolution authorizes indebtedness and a general obligation note in support of the A.W. Beattie Career Center bond issue. The bonds are to be issued July 15, 2008.

Before voting, Mr. Hopkins explained that tonight's resolution is a standard "not to exceed" resolution. Basically, this allows an institution to have a debt issue, approved, and be able to move forward and go to market without coming back to the institution for further approval. The variable that allows this is the bond interest rate. Current market rates, blended, are 4.3-4.5%. The not to exceed rate uses 5.25%. The NASD has used the not to exceed resolution in past debt issues.

Mr. Shuckrow said at prior meetings there was some confusion about whether the formula was the correct formula based upon the Articles of Agreement, and he wanted to be sure it has been clarified that the correct formula is in the resolution. He said that North Allegheny's proportionate share is by far the highest so due diligence is important.

Mr. Hopkins said all the numbers are accurate as stated in the resolution.

Mr. Schwartzmier mentioned that the numbers in the resolution are “not to exceeds” and the “actuals” are expected to be below that.

Roll Call Vote. Results: 8-Yes; 0-No. Motion Carried.

PROPERTY AND SUPPLIES REPORT

I. Bid Rejection – Stage Extension

Mr. Schwartzmier explained that this project will be re-bid and this item is for the official rejection of the initial bids.

On motion by Mr. Schwartzmier, seconded by Mrs. Boujoukos, the Board approved rejection of the bid for a stage extension at NASH.

For Information

The District will be soliciting bids for this project in early June 2008.

Mr. Botti said that he originally bid a free-standing stage and the bids that came in did not have the correct specifications so it is necessary to reject these bids and re-bid the project.

Roll Call Vote. Results: 8-Yes; 0-No. Motion Carried.

PRESENTATION ON FOOD SERVICE CONTRACT

Mr. Botti gave a brief presentation of the food service contract which is requested for approval on June 25, 2008. He introduced **Mrs. Jaimie Nichols**, Purchasing Supervisor, who assisted in the preparation of the presentation and who was available to answer any questions.

Mr. Botti gave a timeline for the RFPs. Proposals were due by April 1, 2008 and after presentations by some of the vendors, the RFPs were evaluated and the field was narrowed to eight vendors. A site visitation was made by the District and three food service management companies were invited to conduct presentations. The presentations were evaluated by a committee and were evaluated on a variety of criteria as outlined in the RFP. Metz included a guaranteed return of \$40,000, and an upgrade to the NASH servery of \$150,000. Because the contract is for one year, with four possible one-year renewals, the School District cannot accept funding guarantees of greater than one year.

The recommendation is to enter a new contract with Metz and Associates.

It is also the recommendation to increase lunch prices. At the Elementary level, prices will increase by 15 cents to \$1.85; at the Middle School level, prices will increase by 25 cents to \$2.15; and at the High School levels, at NASH and NAI, prices will increase by 15 cents, to \$2.15.

Questions from the Board

Mrs. Bishop thanked Mr. Botti, Mrs. Nichols, and all those involved for their due diligence on this voting item and for keeping the Board involved as the process unfolded.

Mrs. Boujoukos said she understood the necessity for the increases in the lunch prices because of all the increases in food, such as bread, rice and pasta, cheese and milk, so we are justified in these increases.

Mr. Shuckrow asked about the upgrades at the high school.

Mr. Botti said that currently there are four separate entrances, with four separate lines to serve. The two outside doors will become the entry doors and the two middle doors will become the exit doors. It will be an open floor plan, with no railings, and it will resemble a food-court-type concept and a center island that is a salad-and-fresh-vegetable bar. Students will choose what they want and the cash registers will be at the exit doors.

This will be a voting item next week. **The Board** thanked everyone who was involved. **Mrs. Bishop** said it was a very competitive process for the vendors as well as our staff members and much time and effort was spent by all who participated.

REVIEW OF BOARD FOLDER

The Board reviewed all items as contained in the Board Folder of June 25, 2008. There was some discussion and clarification on items that were included.

During review of the **Curriculum Report**, Mrs. Bishop introduced **Mr. Matt Roberts**, Curriculum Coordinator at Beattie, who was on hand to answer any questions about a voting item next week on the Distance Learning Chinese Course, which will be offered to our students in grades 9-12 for the fall of 2008. It will be a pilot program and could possibly become part of our Program of Studies. The course curriculum will follow the model used by the Confucius Institutes across North America.

Dr. Green commented on the Madarin Chinese Course. What is being asked to be approved is the course itself, or the curriculum, but there are still logistics that will need to be worked out over the summer. This course is not going to involve the students that we are currently sending to Beattie, but it will be open to 9th -12th grade students who are part of NAI and NASH, who will be given this opportunity to participate in the Madarin Chinese Course through Distance Learning. They will be getting one credit for this course, even though it is not part of our Program of Studies at this time. It will be considered a Pilot Program for this school year and the Administration is asking for the Board to approve the Curriculum.

Questions were posed to Mr. Roberts, the Curriculum Coordinator at Beattie.

Mrs. Bishop said that as an individual who studied Chinese and lived and worked in China and conducted business in a Chinese-speaking environment, she was very intrigued with this program. She spent a considerable amount of time looking at the curriculum and was favorably impressed with what is being offered. She asked how we learned about this curriculum

Mr. Roberts said that Pitt has been involved and the Confucius Institute as well. They are two separate entities with Pitt being a host site for the Confucius Institute. The instructors are Confucius Institute instructors from Wuhan University in China, and the curriculum has been developed through Wuhan University, the University of Pittsburgh, and Beattie.

Mrs. Bishop asked if there would be different levels of this course offered to the students.

Mr. Roberts said that Chinese II is being developed for the students who began this past school year with Chinese I. The long-term goal is to have a six-year curriculum, at which time it will become a grades 7-12 curriculum. The focus now is on grades 9-12.

Mrs. Boujoukos thanked Dr. Green and the Administration for moving forward with this curriculum and said that it was far-sighted. It is the way of the future and it is an example of giving our students 21st Century skills. It is a language that will be extremely important in the world and will be done in a technological way that we have not tried before, and she is proud of our efforts.

Mrs. Boujoukos asked how many students would be involved next year.

Mr. Roberts said that five districts have said that they will participate and 98 students have indicated that they will sign up for this course.

Dr. Green said that up to 30 students from our district could be supported for this program, if they can adjust their schedules to participate.

Mrs. Grosheider said that in going through the curriculum, she noticed that the course was being taught in 70-minute segments and asked if this is how it will continue.

Mr. Roberts said they are currently looking at that and the 70-minutes was the default number in the curriculum map but they are determining and re-evaluating the topics and the time required for each over the summer.

Mrs. Grosheider said that this is a good thing to do and it is a strategic look ahead.

** Mr. Pagone arrived at this time at 8:04 p.m.*

Mrs. Bishop asked about the success of this year's Mandarin Chinese program at Beattie and how the students are assessed.

Mr. Roberts said they did a mid-year assessment for the students who were enrolled this past year, and during the second half of the year, there were more students enrolled who came from the Gifted Program. They did several assessments that were aligned to the actual Standards and then they did a final assessment at the end of the year. They felt it was successful. They did a survey of all students involved and got feedback from them as well as from the Administrators and the various schools involved, and all comments were positive. Approximately 18 out of the 25 students involved will return this coming year for Chinese II.

Mrs. Ludwig said she is grateful for the possibilities and this is a tremendous opportunity to push Distance Learning. She would like to observe a class someday. She asked if the one credit is the way the course will continue.

Mr. Roberts said that the one credit earned is something that is determined by Beattie. The course meets every day for two semesters, and it is currently set at one credit.

Dr. Green added that Mr. Roberts worked with her on our Goals and Objectives format that our Board is used to seeing and she thanked him for that. She is sure that he would welcome visitors to observe the course and he welcomed Dr. Hirsch earlier this year.

Dr. Hirsch said that she was very impressed with the classroom situation. The instructor was excellent and he spoke Chinese throughout most of the class. Students were truly immersed in the language, and since he was from China, the pronunciation was perfect. She liked the materials that he was using and the level of instruction was appropriate for the students. She was very impressed with the students' response and their interaction. The technology was very good and was a very positive experience.

Mrs. Bishop asked in a Distance Learning atmosphere, how well can the instructor hear the students' speaking and hear their pronunciations, etc. and Mr. Roberts said he equates it to an open window—it is that clear. The microphones are good and the students can hear and be heard. The instructor has the capability to zoom in on students to see what they are writing, so the technology is very impressive.

Mrs. Ludwig commented that at this point, the cost is free, but it actually costs Pitt quite a bit. As this program progresses, we need to be watchful and, if it is a value, be ready to support it.

Mrs. Bishop, on behalf of the Board, thanked Mr. Roberts for being with us, and thanked Dr. Green, Dr. Hirsch, and Dr. Steinhauer for bringing this forward.

Legislative News

Although there was no **Legislative Report** at this meeting, there was important legislative news that Mr. Shuckrow shared.

This week, the Pennsylvania Senate approved legislation, by a vote of 48-2, that would prevent the State Board of Education from adopting its proposal to establish 10 high school exit exams, **the GCAs**, by requiring that any changes to the statewide requirements for high school graduation be established by an act of the General Assembly. The bill is currently in the House and it is unsure of whether it will pass. Mr. Shuckrow suggested, and the Board agreed, that we once again contact our state legislators to oppose the GCAs and a letter will be drafted this week to show the unity and solidarity of our Board on the importance of opposing the GCAs.

SPEAKERS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No Speakers.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Bishop adjourned the meeting at **8:54 p.m.** The Board met in Executive Session to discuss a litigation matter and a personnel matter with respect to an Administrative employee.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Mary Ryan, Secretary
North Allegheny School Board