

NORTH ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

MARCH 19, 2008 –SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION

MINUTES

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

Board Absent: Mr. Pagone

Students in Attendance: Ms. Czerniewski; Mr. Hackett

Also in Attendance: Dr. Green, Mr. Lucas (Solicitor), Mr. Botti,
Mr. Gaertner, Dr. Hirsch, Mr. Hopkins, Dr. Steinhauer,
Dr. Wheat, Mrs. Ryan (Secretary)

MST in Attendance: Ms. Susie Bjalobok, Principal – Peebles Elementary School
Dr. James Bradley, Principal – Marshall Elementary School

The Board of School Directors of the North Allegheny School District convened for a **Special Meeting/Work Session** on **Wednesday, March 19, 2008** in the **Board Room** of the **Central Administrative Offices**.

SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION

Mrs. Bishop announced that at the conclusion of the meeting on February 27, 2008, the Board met in Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter with regard to an Administrative employee and items of potential litigation. The Board met prior to this meeting to interview candidates for Administrative positions. The Board will not meet in Executive Session at the conclusion of this meeting.

CALENDAR AND AGENDA

Mrs. Bishop reviewed the Agenda for this meeting and the Calendar for April 2008. The Board will be having Distinguished Achievement Awards prior to the meeting on April 16, 2008. There are no reports scheduled for April.

SPECIAL MEETING VOTING ITEMS

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

I. Assistant Principal – McKnight Elementary School

A motion was made by Mr. Shuckrow, seconded by Mrs. Boujoukos, to appoint Rachel Fields, to the position of Assistant Principal of McKnight Elementary School at an annual salary of \$79,500, prorated due to date of hire. The salary shall be adjusted annually as directed by the Administrative Compensation and Performance Plan. The effective date of hire shall be June 20, 2008.

Ms. Fields holds her B.S. in Psychology from Carnegie Mellon University and her M.Ed. in Educational Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. For the past two years, Ms. Fields has been employed by North Allegheny as a First and Second Grade Teacher at Peebles Elementary School. Prior to joining North Allegheny, she was employed by the Duquesne City Schools as an Elementary, Math, Science and Reading Teacher and served as the Middle School Science Department Head. Ms. Fields is certified in Elementary Education, and as a Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, and K-12 Principal.

II. Assistant Principal – Marshall Elementary School

A motion was made by Mrs. Boujoukos, seconded by Mrs. Grosheider, to appoint Amanda Mathieson to the position of Assistant Principal of Marshall Elementary School at an annual salary of \$78,500, prorated due to date of hire. The salary shall be adjusted annually as directed by the Administrative Compensation and Performance Plan. The effective date of hire shall be determined upon release of her present employer.

Ms. Mathieson holds her B.S. in Elementary Education and M.Ed. in Reading from Slippery Rock University and is pursuing doctoral studies at the University of Pittsburgh. She has served the Deer Lakes School District since 2004, first as an Instructional Support Coordinator, then as a Title I Math Teacher. Previous to that assignment, she was an Elementary, Math and Reading Teacher in the Greenville Area and Reynolds School Districts. Ms. Mathieson is certified in Elementary and Special Education and as a Reading Specialist, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, and K-12 Principal.

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

On behalf of the Board and the community, Mrs. Bishop extended a warm welcome to Ms. Fields and Ms. Mathieson and they received a round of applause

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Kelly DiBiasi – Franklin Elementary parent who informed the Board of serious concerns she had with children with food allergies, her young son among them, and related how food in the classroom

can be a danger, even life-threatening. She would like the Wellness Policy to be revised to include some of her suggestions.

Diana Radford – a nurse and parent of a young child who will be attending Marshall Elementary who also has multiple food allergies. She supported Mrs. DiBiasi in her sentiments and said that we need to promote health and wellness in our schools. With all the health issues that are beginning in our younger children, we need to be informed and proactive.

Mrs. Bishop commented that we will take their comments into serious consideration and discuss them with the proper personnel. Mr. Shuckrow thanked the ladies for speaking and caring and said that it takes courage to speak out and they are making a difference.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mrs. Bishop said that the Diversity Initiative began in 1992 at North Allegheny and the first Chairperson of this Committee was Dr. Marcia Martin, and she chaired this committee for a number of years. Dr. Martin was the former Principal at Carson Middle School and she breathed life into the diversity initiative here at North Allegheny and was responsible for much of the work that has been accomplished in this area. Dr. Martin retired in 2004 and recently passed away after a long illness.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mrs. Bishop asked everyone to stand for a moment of silence to honor Dr. Martin and the work she did in the District.

DIVERSITY REPORT

Dr. Green said it an honor to bring this report forward and all the work is reflective of the work that Dr. Martin contributed in all the years that she was part of the report. Dr. Green said it was fitting to make the recommendation from this moment forward that the committee be renamed in Dr. Martin's honor so that it becomes ***The Dr. Marcia Martin Unity/Diversity Committee***. Everyone was in favor of this tribute.

Dr. Green introduced the presenters for tonight's presentation: Dr. Timothy Steinhauer and Mr. Craig Slaubaugh. Other contributors to the report included Dr. Alice Hirsch, Dr. Arleen Wheat, Mr. Robert Devlin, Ms. Joy Ed and Mr. William Young. Mr. Slaubaugh drew the attention of the audience to the display of winning entries from the Annual Diversity Expression Contest, which was located at the back of the room.

Dr. Steinhauer indicated that diversity is deeply embedded in our processes and the school culture at North Allegheny. We continue to see growth and development in the area of Diversity with a full range of activities, strategies and results that signify that North Allegheny is being successful in its efforts.

Highlights of the report are as follows:

- Diversity continues to be an area of focus for the District and has a prominent position in professional development, publications, and student and staff activities.
- Administration and staff continue to improve their professional understanding and ability to address issues of Diversity.
- School District programs and curriculum reflect important Diversity issues.
- Student participation and submission of written works and fine arts design to the Diversity Expression Contest continues to demonstrate student interest in the area of Diversity. The quality of student art, music, poetry, multimedia presentations, and other forms of artistic mediums show high levels of artistic excellence.
- The Diversity Puppet Show continues to be an effective avenue to communicate with our young students regarding the relevance of Diversity in our District.
- The District continues to explore and develop increased Diversity opportunities for students and staff.
- Partnerships and collaboration with parents and the community are evident at the Building and District level.
- The recruitment and hiring of qualified minority administrative and staff candidates continues to be a priority for the District.
- The number of student incidents of harassment remains at a very low level. Administrators and staff have become effective in responding to reported incidents.

They also discussed the Next Steps. :

According to North Allegheny School District's School Board Policy #2560, "The North Allegheny School District shall establish and continually promote an educational environment that is enriched by its diversity. The District shall foster mutual respect and affirmation for diversity as it prepares all students to enter and participate in an increasingly global society."

To reinforce this policy, the Diversity Committee recommends the continued endorsement and support of the Diversity initiative. The following actions must occur in order to ensure that the Diversity initiative continues.

The District plans to:

- Offer the Diversity Expression Contest and associated activities for K-12 students.

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- Sponsor the Diversity Puppet Show for all District second graders and invite guests from surrounding School Districts.
 - Incorporate a Diversity theme at the annual District Opening Day In-Service
 - Communicate with the community regarding the activities of the School District regarding Diversity through newsletters and publications and consider new venues of communication.
 - Monitor differences in student academic performance based on gender on the various assessments administered in the District. Implement improved pedagogical strategies as appropriate to ensure comparable levels of high performance.
 - Explore additional avenues and venues for the recruitment of qualified minority administrative, teaching, and staff candidates. Continue to maintain a Minority Recruiter to assist with the District's efforts.
 - Enhance and expand the Diversity section on the School District's website.
 - Provide Professional Development opportunities for staff regarding Diversity.
 - Provide and expand opportunities for students and staff to participate in activities dealing with Diversity.
 - Provide School District Administrators and staff with training regarding the North Allegheny School District's Respecting Human Diversity Policy.
 - Maintain an up-to-date directory of Multicultural and Diversity resources for administrative and staff reference.

The presentation was concluded with one of the winning submissions of this year's Diversity Expression Contest.

“We really are all the same inside. Thanks for making NA a place where even a lion can be a tiger.” *Joey Feniello, 3rd Grade, McKnight.*

QUESTIONS WERE TAKEN FROM THE BOARD

Mrs. Grosheider commented on the hiring initiative and the fact that the hiring was going to begin earlier this year. This is something that she supports.

Mr. Devlin said last year we had the highest number of retirements and this year there are quite a few, mostly secondary, and we will need to have these vacancies filled. He intends to move forward with the postings right after spring break, instead of mid-May. That coincides with the Pittsburgh Area Recruitment Consortium next week in which he and Ms. Tammy Nelson, the Minority Recruiter, will attend. Approximately 1700 certified teachers attend this consortium and we will be in a better position to handle our vacancies and to hire the “cream of the crop.”

Mrs. Grosheider spoke about the Harassment Tracking Form and said the highest number of incidents appear in the category of “Intimidation.” She asked what intimidation entailed.

Mr. Slaubaugh reported that most of these incidents come from the secondary and it would involve repeated types of verbal harassment, bullying, or ongoing verbal or physical intimidation or threats.

Mrs. Grosheider asked if most of these happen at the middle school level, do these students understand the limits and does the Bullying Prevention Program that we have in place minimize these types of intimidation situations.

Dr. Steinhauer said the Bullying Prevention Program has helped to keep the numbers low. There have been only 14 incidents reported in this category in the middle schools, which is low compared to the number of students we have.

Mrs. Grosheider acknowledged that but said that even one is too many, so we have to minimize these incidents as much as possible.

Dr. Green said many of the incidents reported are name-calling, and this is being documented by our principals, and in some districts, these types of incidents are not even being reported. North Allegheny takes seriously all of these forms of harassment and keep records. With every incident, there is not only the reporting document, but there is an educational plan as well. Parents are notified in addition.

Mrs. Grosheider asked if there were any repeat offenders since there is an educational component attached to it.

Dr. Steinhauer said that out of the 29 total incidents, there were no repeat offenders.

Mrs. Boujoukos stressed the importance of keeping the kids connected in some extra-curricular activity as well as the educational component, particularly at the middle school level.

Mrs. Boujoukos thanked the Diversity Committee and the committee that is working on the Tracking Forms because they are both very important jobs. She also mentioned the Multi-Cultural Day at the Baierl Center for the secondary students and she asked that this date be advertised next year so that she could attend it in the future.

Mrs. Boujoukos also asked if a link could be added to the website so that these types of events could be advertised on the web, such as the Multi-Cultural Day, or some charity projects that are going on throughout the District that relate to diversity.

Mr. Botti said that the new website will be able to put this kind of information on its site.

Mrs. Ludwig asked if our coaches are being trained and instructed to handle incidents, like intimidation.

Dr. Steinhauer said that the Building Principal fills out the Harassment Tracking forms but they come from many sources.

Dr. Green said the entire District is trained, but the Principal fills out the forms.

Mrs. Ludwig mentioned that many teachers are particularly involved in getting the students involved in the diversity projects and she was wondering if there was a special way to thank those teachers.

Mr. Slaubaugh said at Dr. Green's Diversity Luncheon, teachers are invited and recognized.

Mrs. Ludwig asked about the status of the Multi-Cultural course.

Dr. Hirsch said that it is going well and there is much interest by the students. There are two sections currently.

Mr. Hubert asked if we had interaction with other school districts concerning diversity.

Mr. Slaubaugh said there is some interaction at the secondary level; at the elementary level, we have extended invitations to some schools in the surrounding districts to attend the second grade puppet show.

Dr. Green said twice a year, she meets with a group of people who are interested in diversity, and members are from surrounding school districts. One mentioned that they wished that other school districts had the same opportunities that North Allegheny does. Dr. Green, staff members and several Board Members also attended the Martin Luther King Breakfast at the Holiday Inn, and North Allegheny was the most represented district.

Mr. Shuckrow asked about the Directory of Resources that was in the report.

Mr. Slaubaugh said those agencies are available to our Building Administrators, Counselors, etc., and it is always being updated.

Mrs. Bishop commented that the most positive area was the minority hiring that took place last year, which was 10% of our new hires who were minority candidates. She is very pleased that we will begin our hiring earlier this year. On the Tracking Forms, she said clearly we are doing something right when there is a decline in the numbers. She also said it was amazing that 400+ students submitted entries to the Diversity Expression Contest, and that is impressive.

Mrs. Bishop thanked Dr. Steinhauer, Mr. Slaubaugh and all the members of both of the committees from the staff and community that since 1992, we have been accomplishing some very positive things.

The presenters received a round of applause.

RECESS

Mrs. Bishop called for a recess at *8:40 p.m.*

RECONVENED

The Board reconvened at *8:59 p.m.*

REVIEW OF BOARD FOLDER

The Board reviewed all items as contained in the Board Folder of March 26, 2008. There was some discussion by the Board Members.

During review of the **Financial Report**, Mrs. Bishop noted that Confirmation of our Assessment Appeal Process involves a change. We will be appealing properties this year but only those where the sale price exceeds the assessment by more than \$100,000. In the past year, our criterion was \$50,000.

Mr. Shuckrow thanked Mrs. Bishop and those who served on the ad hoc committee for the process in looking at the appeals and coming to a resolution. Included on this committee were Board Members, Dr. Green, Mr. Hopkins, as well as Maiello, Brungo & Maiello, who helped with the details of the appeals program.

Mrs. Boujoukos also thanked her fellow Board Members who took the time to serve on this committee because it was a devious issue last year and took a lot of hard work to reach a resolution. The Board Members who participated in this process were Mrs. Bishop, Mr. Hubert, Mr. Cunningham and Mrs. Grosheider.

Mr. Cunningham said that he will be supporting this item this year. Last year he was opposed to our assessment system. This year, they looked at raw data from MBM, and there were some shocking examples of inequity between assessed value and market value. Under the current County system, some of those shocking properties would not be reassessed and in fairness to all the taxpayers, the Board felt that these inequities needed to be addressed. This was the work of the ad hoc committee and he hopes the Board will support this resolution.

During review of the **Student Activities Report**, Ms. Czerniewski thanked everyone who attended the Spring Musical, *Bye Bye Birdie*, and said that it was a huge success. The Music in Our Schools Chorus Concert will be held at NASH on April 1, which includes elementary, middle and high school Chorus members. On April 4, the Senior Banquet will take place on the Majestic Gateway Clipper and they are all looking forward to tickets that will be sold soon for that event. The Chorus, Band and Orchestra are going to Orlando from April 9-13 and they will visit Disney World. On April 5, NASCO is hosting Harm's Way Bracelets, in which all the Student Council members from NASH, NAI, CMS, IMS and MMS will be making bracelets for the troops in Iraq.

Mr. Hackett reported that school spirit is alive at NAI. For St. Patrick's Day, the students decorated the main hallway at NAI with green shamrocks and they covered the walls with the names of every student. After each student found their name, it was put in a box and entered for a drawing. The Drawing and Painting students were given an opportunity to draw their own interpretation of a tiger

and hang it in the main hall. There were 32 paintings that were hung and the 10th graders will walk the halls and observe the work of their peers and vote for their favorite painting. They call it the "Tiger Walk" and this will become a yearly tradition at NAI. The one picture chosen will remain on the wall and other winners will be added each year and they will call it "Tiger Hall."

During review of the **Superintendent's Report**, Dr. Green gave her Good News Report and said how proud we all are of the impact that Mr. Woten has made in his role as the 2008 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year:

★ **Mr. David Woten**, the 2008 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year, has continued to accumulate awards and honors as a result of his recognition by the Governor. He has had, and will have, opportunities throughout the year to be a positive voice for education on behalf of all teachers across the state. To date, they include the following:

- Being chosen to receive the 2008 Slippery Rock University Young Alumni Award on April 19
- Being featured in the Duquesne University Alumni Magazine
- Receiving an invitation to be the keynote speaker at the Milliken Family Foundation Educator Awards on March 10
- Receiving an invitation to be the guest speaker at Slippery Rock University for the TEACH Program on April 5
- Receiving an invitation to be a guest speaker at the Governor's School for Education at Millersville University on July 12
- Being chosen for a feature interview with the *Post-Gazette* during the week of March 10

Additional good news that Dr. Green had to report was on the recent ASCD Conference she attended over the weekend in New Orleans which included Mrs. Maureen Grosheider and Mrs. Barbara Hutchinson, all three of whom were presenters. Their presentations were very well attended and very well-received as they spoke about the Board/Superintendent Relationship and the Board/Administration/Federation Relationship in relation to high achievement at North Allegheny. Dr. Green was extremely complimentary of the outstanding work that Mrs. Grosheider and Mrs. Hutchinson did at this conference, and Mrs. Grosheider said the same was true of Dr. Green.

A member of the U.S. Department of Education in the Office of Blue Ribbon Schools was in attendance. After the presentation, she commented that our whole school district exemplifies what a Blue Ribbon School should be.

Dr. Green said that it was a reaffirming feeling and Mrs. Hutchinson did an outstanding job because she spoke not only as the President of the Federation, but also as a teacher, and she spoke about what North Allegheny means to our teachers. Ms. Hutchinson's speech was worthy of great applause. Dr. Green said that Mrs. Grosheider did an outstanding job as well, and she was proud of them. Because of the positive relationships that we have in this District, Dr. Green was invited to participate with the Albert Shanker Institute affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers. The Institute wants to do research-based best practices and they will be taking a look at what North Allegheny does. They are personally coming to North Allegheny to interview Dr. Green.

Mrs. Grosheider said the conference was very interesting and she was amazed at how many Board Members were in the audience. There were many people that they met who are planning to follow-up with them because there is a need for the information that they imparted on collaboration. It was clear that people were looking for the kinds of information that they conveyed at this conference. People were impressed with our Strategic Plan Process, the Action Plans, and how we approach things and evaluate them. Dr. Green provided a CD of their PowerPoint presentation that they can take back to their own districts. It was a great opportunity for North Allegheny to put our name on the map.

Other sessions that they attended provided them with valuable resource information which they will share with the Administration.

SPEAKERS

There were no speakers who came forward to address the Board on any topic.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at **9:39 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Mary Ryan, Secretary
North Allegheny School Board