

# SCHOOL BOARD NOTES



August 8, 2017

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## PUBLIC EXPRESSION

PTSA President Ronald Shubert urged the Board to consider reducing Grade 4 class size in next year's budget.

## ITEMS OF BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION

- Under the *President's Report*,
  - ➔ Superintendent Scott Martzloff reported that the time and format may change for this year's Summer School Graduation, which is scheduled to take place August 21. The New Teacher Orientation Breakfast is Tuesday, August 22 from 7:45-9:45 a.m., and Opening Day for Staff is Tuesday, August 29 at 8:00 a.m. Board members are invited to all events.
  - ➔ Members reported on their attendance to recent workshops including the WNY Education Law Conference sponsored by the Erie County Association of School Boards August 2 (Shawn Lemay, Teresa Leatherbarrow, Mark Mecca, Philip Meyer, and Suzanne Van Sice), and the NYS Summer Law Conference held July 20 in Rochester (Mary Beiger).
  - ➔ As discussed previously, the Board will hold three community forums in the upcoming school year as follows: Saturday, November 18, 9:00 a.m.-Noon at Williamsville East; Wednesday, January 31, 2018 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Williamsville North; and Saturday, April 28, 2018 9:00 a.m.-Noon at Williamsville South.
  - ➔ Mr. Lemay, Mrs. Leatherbarrow, Mrs. Toni Vazquez, and Dr. Susan McClary will attend an upcoming meeting between Dr. Martzloff and members of the WTA Executive Board.
- Under the ***Superintendent's Community Update***, Dr. Martzloff provided a brief update on summer programs as well as preparations underway for the new school year including faculty hiring and facility work at various schools. He made special mention of the athletic field projects at Williamsville South and East high schools, which are nearing completion. South has scheduled a grand opening of its new field complex Friday, September 15. The field opening at East is expected to occur later in September, date tbd.
- ***Hillary Weir*** was appointed the new Assistant Principal at Mill Middle School, effective September 18, 2017. Most recently, Ms. Weir was the Assistant Principal at Depew High School for one year, and the Dean of Students at Depew Middle School for four years. She also taught science for grades 7 and 8. "I'm excited to become a Mill Mustang," she said. ***Chris McDuffie***, a Physical Education/Health Teacher at Casey Middle, was named the Acting Assistant Principal at Casey, effective immediately. Mr. McDuffie has been at Casey for four years and previously taught at Transit Middle School for two years. He thanked the Board, Dr. Martzloff, and Casey Principal Peter Dobmeier for the opportunity.
- Under ***Finance***, the Board unanimously approved the 2017 tax levy and issued the tax warrant. According to Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Management Services, Mr. Thomas Matuski, the total assessed value of all properties in the district increased by 6.88 percent, allowing the \$120.4 million tax levy for 2017-18 to be distributed across a wider base. The growth was driven by the Town of Amherst's reassessment program. However, Mr. Matuski emphasized that the district did not benefit from the reassessment. "The district's tax levy did not change," he said. Amherst accounts for 89.5 percent of the district's tax levy. The school tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed value for Amherst property owners decreased by \$2.43 to \$16.79, a decrease of 12.64 percent. Tax rates for district property owners in Cheektowaga and Clarence also decreased by \$0.69 to \$16.75 and \$16.77, respectively.
- ***Class Rank*** – The Board tabled an action item that would eliminate the use of class rank beginning with incoming ninth graders (Class of 2021). A detailed overview of class rank and results from a survey administered to parents, students and faculty in 2016 were presented to the Board on June 13, 2017. The survey results indicated that a large majority of respondents supported the elimination of class rank. Mrs. Van Sice expressed concerns about implementation, asking that class rank be eliminated for all current high school students. Dr. Kurt Venator questioned the action altogether saying, "At this point, I'm not 100 percent in favor of abolishing class rank." He asked whether or not eliminating class rank would have a negative effect on students, particularly those applying to a SUNY institution, and what the district would use to replace class rank to best satisfy college admissions criteria. Dr. Martzloff referred to research data provided previously that shows fewer colleges are using class rank in making admissions decisions and, nationally, many high schools are moving away from class rank. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Anna Cieri shared information she obtained from another school district that successfully eliminated class rank some time ago and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Marie Balen reported on information obtained from college admissions officials about other factors they consider when class rank is not provided by a high school. A robust discussion took place and Mrs. Leatherbarrow made a motion to table the action until September, providing time for the district to gather additional information about the SUNY admissions process and further explore how best to implement the transition should the Board decide to eliminate class rank. "Ultimately, the Board's going to need to decide what's going to be best for the students of the district at all three high schools in terms of the potential elimination of class rank," said Dr. Martzloff.

- In other business, the Board:
  - ➔ Adopted the 2017-18 Meeting Agenda. Mrs. Leatherbarrow asked that a presentation on student discipline data be added to a meeting agenda next spring.
  - ➔ Appointed 2017-18 DASA (Dignity for All Students Act) building coordinators as presented.
  - ➔ Adopted revised Policy #7521, Students With Life-Threatening Health Conditions; also discussed changes to Policy #1340, Board-Staff Communications, as recommended by Mrs. Leatherbarrow. After some discussion, Board members requested that the wording of the policy be vetted by different employee groups as well as legal counsel and the Erie 1 BOCES Policy Division.
  - ➔ Approved the Annual Professional Development Plan as required by NYSED.
  - ➔ Set the annual non-resident tuition rates, as required by law. (*Note – Although the District does not accept private tuition paying students, it is required to set rates to determine tuition, which is charged for foster care students to the district of residence.*);
  - ➔ Adopted the district-wide and building level safety plans, as required by state law.
  - ➔ Approved an extension of the current security monitoring contract with Amherst Security Professionals, Inc. through 2023-2024. This security group, which is comprised of off-duty Amherst police officers, has been working with the district since 2007 to provide security services at the high schools during after-school hours as well as at various school and district events during the year.
  - ➔ Approved the purchase of a new online superintendent evaluation tool called SuperEval Module, available through Erie 1 BOCES.
  - ➔ Discussed class size in curriculum extension (CE) classes and requested that the class size breakdown in CE areas be included in a class size report to be presented in September.
- **Facilities Update** – Dr. Martzloff provided a brief update on the facility project work, saying all of the summer work is on schedule to be completed by the start of school except for some work replacing locker room floors at Williamsville North, which may continue for a short while after the school year begins.
- The Board accepted the following donations on behalf of the school district: \$500 from the Jacquie Hirsch for A.L.L. Foundation to Heim Middle School for a new Maker’s Space in the school library created in Jacquie’s honor; \$15,000 from South High alumni, William and Kathleen Oliver (Classes of 1967 and 1968 respectively) in honor of former South music teacher, Frank Del Russo, to purchase new instruments for the school’s Music Department; and a used car, valued at \$1,500, from Richard Silvestro to Williamsville East High School to be used as a shop car for Auto Tech classes.
- The Board accepted the resignation for retirement purposes of **Nancy Santa Cruz**, a teacher’s aide at Heim Middle School, effective July 28, 2017 after 29 years of service.

This Board of Education meeting will be televised on Spectrum News Channel 20 Saturday, August 12 at 7:30 P.M. and Sunday, August 13 at 1 P.M. Also, the meeting video is available for viewing anytime at [www.williamsville12.org](http://www.williamsville12.org) and on YouTube @ Williamsville Central School District.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS** (District Office Boardroom):  
 Tuesday, September 12, 2017 ♦ 7:00 p.m.

# 2017-18 GOAL-SETTING WORK SESSION

Following its regular meeting, the Board convened a goal-setting work session. Dr. Martzloff explained the annual process for developing District goals and reviewed those recommended for 2017-18. The Board also discussed and revised its goals for the upcoming school year, then reconvened in regular session to adopt both sets of goals. The 2017-18 District Goals were adopted unanimously; the 2017-18 Goals were adopted by a vote of 7-1-0 (*Meyer, No; Vazquez, absent*), as follows:

## 2017-18 BOARD OF EDUCATION Goals

### BOARD, DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Foster and enhance relationships while continuing to improve two-way communications with students, families, staff, and community stakeholders.

### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- Continually work to support student learning, creativity and engagement.

### STUDENT WELLNESS

- Support physical, mental and emotional needs of students by providing necessary, appropriate resources for wellness programs and initiatives.

### ADVOCACY

- Monitor and influence legislation at state and federal levels.

### BOARD EFFICACY

- Use technology to operate more effectively.
- Identify additional methods for increasing effectiveness.

### BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND FISCAL OVERSIGHT

- Create and oversee a fiscally responsible budget that upholds the mission and values of the school community.

## 2017-18 DISTRICT Goals

### DISTRICT

- Begin to gather feedback from Williamsville Central School District stakeholder groups in order to focus on priorities for the future in an organized and systematic way.

### INSTRUCTION

- Continue with efforts to expand and enhance the Williamsville Central School District instructional coaching model.
- Explore and implement enhancements to professional development models and opportunities for teachers, staff, administrators, and parents.
- Further develop and facilitate increased opportunities for student learning, creativity, and engagement at all levels of instruction.

### EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES

- Review and enhance special education programming and instructional practices to facilitate student learning within the least restrictive environment.
- Continue to expand wellness, social-emotional learning, and student health and safety initiatives.
- Further explore supports and structures to facilitate inclusive social systems and culturally responsive learning environments.

### TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

- Pending approval by NYSED, move forward with the implementation of the Smart Schools Bond Act and all associated elements.
- Further explore evolving technology infrastructure, security, professional development and staffing needs.

### HUMAN RESOURCES

- Leadership transition with the new Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, including the continuation of the positive culture of the Human Resources Office.
- Review and improve the hiring process for teachers and administrators.
- Review the changes in the structure of the extra-curricular activities including the selection process and pay schedule.

### NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT OPERATIONS

- Continue to provide management control and oversight of the 2015 Facility Improvement capital project and the 2015 Athletic Field capital projects so that the work is completed according to the approval plans and specifications.
- Implement the project work associated with the cooperative partnership between the District and the New York Power Authority for the energy savings initiatives as soon as the District receives approval from the New York State Education Department.
- Provide detailed financial information related to audit, reserve funding, and budget development that allows for the development of an appropriate budget for the 2018-19 school year that supports the Williamsville Central School District's education programs.
- Initiate a review of our professional services that may result in the issuance of Request for Proposals for specific services as selected by the District.