

SCHOOL BOARD NOTES

September 12, 2017

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RECOGNITION

Mill Middle Science Teacher **Kenneth Huff**, was recognized for being named a national 2017 STEM Teacher Ambassador by the National Science Teachers Association and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Mr. Huff is one of only ten educators in the country to be selected for the role. Mr. Huff thanked the Board, teaching colleagues, school and district administrators for their continued support of his efforts to promote excellence in STEM education. Pictured from left are Mill Middle Principal Michael Calandra, Board President Shawn Lemay, Mr. Huff, and Superintendent Scott Martzloff.



Board Acknowledgements: Board President Shawn Lemay commented on a very positive opening day and thanked the board, the WTA, and Dr. Martzloff for opening the lines of communications again.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Williamsville Teachers Association President Michelle Licht shared a message from the WTA Executive Board about a recent meeting between the WTA, Dr. Martzloff, and four Board of Education members. Ms. Licht described it as “a positive, productive meeting that will return our district to its highly successful and collaborative leadership model”. The message was shared with all WCSD staff prior to school opening. One parent addressed the Board about eliminating class rank while another commended the district for making lower class sizes a priority at the elementary level and adhering to recommended guidelines.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION

- Under the *President’s Report*, it was announced that Dr. Bruce Fraser is the new Executive Director of the Erie County Association of School Boards. Also, Mr. Lemay will represent the Board as its voting delegate at the annual NYS School Boards Association (NYSSBA) Convention October 12-14 in Lake Placid, NY. Mr. Philip Meyers will attend the convention as alternate delegate. Mr. Lemay reviewed the recommended bylaw changes and resolutions to be voted on at the convention, specifically addressing three resolutions on which his position deviates from the NYSSBA recommendation. Board members expressed support and agreed to the proposed voting strategy on those three resolutions.
 - The Board will hold the first of three community forums from 9 a.m. to Noon on Saturday, November 18 at East High School.
 - Mrs. Judith Katz from the Erie 1 BOCES Board of Education provided a brief overview of the make-up and function of the BOCES Board. Before joining the E-1 BOCES Board in 1977, Mrs. Katz served 15 years on the Williamsville School Board. She is also a past president of NYSSBA.
 - Board members reviewed and amended the 2017-18 Board Goals implementation plans.
- Under the **Superintendent’s Community Update**, Dr. Martzloff provided a brief update on a successful start to school saying the year has begun for students in a very positive way. He reported that all class sizes are within board-approved guidelines and first-week transportation complaints were few.
- **Personnel Matters** – In a unanimous vote, the Board appointed Dr. John McKenna the new Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, effective November 1, 2017. Dr. McKenna joins the Williamsville administrative team from the City of Tonawanda School District where he is currently the principal at Fletcher Elementary School. Previously, he was an assistant principal in Niagara Wheatfield and a teacher in Niagara Falls City Schools. “We are thrilled and excited to have with us a true leader in the education world of New York State,” said Dr. Martzloff. “He has a wealth of knowledge and experience in the area of human resources and we gratefully look forward to him getting started soon.”



“It’s an outstanding opportunity and one I take very seriously,” said Dr. McKenna. “It’s an honor and a privilege to be a part of the Williamsville team. You have earned a stellar reputation for academic excellence across this region and across this state. This is the place where it’s done right. First and foremost, doing what’s right for kids.” Dr. McKenna recently moved into the district and his daughter is attending Transit Middle school.

Dr. McKenna earned his doctorate from the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy at SUNY Buffalo, a master’s degree in Educational Administration from Niagara University, and a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education and Exceptional Education from SUNY College at Buffalo. He is past-president of the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS) and former

president of the Committee for Identifying and Developing Educational Leadership (CIDEL), an organization dedicated to promoting and developing educational leaders.

- **Class Rank** – In a unanimous vote, the Board agreed to eliminate class rank in its three high schools, beginning with the current (2017) class of freshmen students. (7-0, *Teresa Leatherbarrow and Kurt Venator absent*)

Prior to the vote, Assistant Superintendents Dr. Anna Cieri and Dr. Marie Balen were joined by the three high school principals and two school counselors to provide additional information about how colleges view class rank as part of the admissions process and how students would be recognized for academic achievement in lieu of class rank. According to Dr. Balen, the majority of colleges, including those in the State University of New York system, do not require class rank. Rather, the colleges review students' grade point average, SAT and ACT scores, academic rigor, honors, activities and community involvement when evaluating acceptance. None of the schools that were surveyed penalize students for lack of class rank as a criterion. Citing their unique school cultures, each high school principal provided information on how student achievement is recognized currently. They unanimously recommended phasing in the elimination starting with 2017 freshman so that those students already in the class rank mode would have the opportunity to finish on the track they had begun.

Board members Suzanne Van Sice and Mary Bieger questioned the phase-in approach and wanted to expand the elimination of class rank to other grade levels such as sophomores and juniors. Mr. Lemay asked how student graduation speakers would be chosen when class rank was eliminated. Both South Principal Keith Boardman and North Principal Gary Collichio said the elimination of class rank would provide an opportunity for each school to create its own new tradition, involving students in the process. East Principal Anthony Scanzuso explained the long-standing tradition at East, which does not designate a valedictorian or salutatorian but rather opens up the opportunity to speak at graduation to all interested students.

- **Class Size Report** – Dr. Martzloff presented an elementary class size report (Grades K-6) with data collected as of August 24, 2017. The report shows that in all schools, all homeroom sections, class size is at or below board-approved class size ranges with none exceeding the top of the range. Member Philip Meyers suggested that the Board consider adjusting the elementary class size guidelines.
- **The 2017 Summer School Report** was presented. More than 1,900 students participated in the district's summer school programs, as follows: HS summer school program – 798; ES/MS summer program - 377 students; ENL Summer Academy – 106; summer music program – 485; HS Career Exploration Internship Program – 97; Reading Recovery – 15; Special Education Summer School Programs - 50. Dr. Martzloff and the Board thanked Mr. Andre Thomas, principal for the high school program and Mr. Corey Gray, principal for the elementary and middle school program for their leadership and dedication to students.
- In other business, the Board:
 - Appointed 2017-18 DASA (Dignity for All Students Act) district and building coordinators and the amended Code of Conduct to include the names of the DASA coordinators;
 - Appointed the lead evaluators for conducting and completing Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR) for teacher and principal evaluation as required by state education law;
 - Adopted the approved Annual Professional Performance Review Plan (APPR) as required by state education law;
 - Conducted first readings on one new and four revised policies as follows: New: #3115 – Website Accessibility; Revised: #7222 – Diploma or Credential Options for Students with Disabilities; #7240 – Student Records, Access and Challenge; #7530 – Child Abuse and Maltreatment; and #7670 – Impartial Due Process Hearings/Selection of Impartial Hearing Officers. Policy adoption is expected in October.
 - Appointed Ms. Moira Cooper, Esq. as the hearing officer for Civil Service Hearings (Sections 71 and 73), and appointed Mr. Jeffrey Librock as Acting Assistant Principal at East High School, effective August 28, 2017.
 - Reviewed the 2017-18 District Goals implementation plans;
 - Approved a lease agreement with Amherst Youth Basketball.
- **Facilities Update** – Dr. Martzloff updated the Board and the community on the completion of the athletic field projects at East and South high schools, as well as facility and capital project work completed at several schools over the summer. He thanked Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Management Services Thomas Maturski, Director of Facilities Keith Langlotz, and the contractors for their roles in overseeing the various projects and getting the work done in a timely manner.

This Board of Education meeting will be televised on Spectrum News Channel 20 Saturday, September 16 at 7:30 P.M. and Sunday, September 17 at 1 P.M. Also, the meeting video is available for viewing anytime at www.williamsville12.org and on YouTube @ Williamsville Central School District.

UPCOMING MEETINGS (District Office Boardroom):

Tuesday, October 17, 2017 ♦ 7:00 p.m.