

BOARD MEETING OVERVIEW

Bexley City School District

348 S. Cassingham Road, Bexley, Ohio 43209



NEXT MEETING - Regular Meeting - Monday, 4/19/10 - 6:30 p.m. - Cassingham Community Room

- Board Reports
- Report from City Council
- Treasurer's Report
- Keymaker Award
- District E-mail Management
- Staffing Report
- Montrose Report
- Public Comment
- Fundraising and Field Trip
- Classroom Sizes
- Other Items

The Bexley Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, 3/8/2010 at 6:30pm in the Cassingham Complex Community Room. All members were present except Student Rep Rebecca Carroll.

Board Reports

. Board President Joan Fishel noted the success of The Bexley Education Foundation's BRAVO! fundraising event, held 2/27/2010. The schools' visual arts specialists and others went out of their way to help students create art for the event's Silent Auction.

. The YouTheatre Elementary production of *Charlotte's Web* is this weekend, 3/12-14/2010.

. Board Member Craig Halliday said he attended the Tech Roundtable on 3/1/2010. The Tech Department has arranged several days during spring break when community volunteers and Lowe's staff will work on the district wide shelving project.

. Board Member Diane Peterson attended last week's BHS Course Selection Night. "It was informative and well run," she said. "I was impressed with the variety of curricula that is offered."

. Ms. Peterson, other Board members and Superintendent Mike Johnson attended a roundtable about education held in Bexley,

hosted by State Rep Nancy Garland and legislators. Ms. Peterson and Dr. Johnson also attended an Alliance meeting of local district representatives who discussed issues that have surfaced at the state level and how pending legislation will impact local school districts.

. Ms. Peterson reported from Partnership Council – teachers, administrators and a Board member – that met on 2/18/2010. The group discussed some internal communications efforts as well as snow day safety and policy. She noted that Bexley's snow day policy is posted on the district web site; it is apparently more specific than policies of many other districts. At Partnership Council, she also encouraged involvement by faculty in the fall levy campaign. The group's next meeting is in April.

. Board Member Marlee Snowdon reported that she has completed her tours of each of the district's schools. "I was really impressed by the staff members and great schools we have here," she said.

. Ms. Snowdon attended an informative Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) seminar on special education. She met with the Rec Board on 3/3/2010 where there was discussion of the federal grant the city has received to renovate Jeffrey Mansion's third floor. The Rec Board is looking to offer some tours and other activities that will be specifically targeted to Bexley's empty nesters.

. Ms. Fishel noted that the BHS basketball boys are still in tournament contention; they play DeSales this Friday at 6:00pm at the fairgrounds. The BHS Debate Team sent eight students to the state competition last weekend.

Report from City Council

Ben Kessler, Finance Chair of Bexley City Council, reported from the City of Bexley regarding a possible renewal levy. The city is determining

whether to go to the ballot this fall or not; discussion about numbers and legal issues is still at the preliminary stage. A 3.4 mil levy passed in the 1970's is collected at 0.607 mills and has been renewed every five years since then. The city does have the option, when it votes whether to renew the levy, to turn it into a replacement levy and add on additional millage.

Mr. Kessler pledged to do his part to open up better channels of communication between the city and the school district. Ms. Fishel noted her appreciation of his appearance at the meeting and expressed her desire to have regular meetings with Council. Both indicated the importance of the pending school district levy. Ms. Fishel noted that Dr. Johnson and Treasurer Chris Essman will meet with the district's Financial Accountability Committee on Wednesday, 3/10/2010 to discuss what kind of levy the school district will put on in the fall.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Essman presented the February financial report, showing that the district received its first half property tax settlement last Friday. "It was right on target," he said. The five-year forecast will be on the Board's April agenda and Mr. Essman expects to run some funding scenarios by the Financial Accountability group when it meets this week.

Mr. Halliday asked Mr. Essman about the total General Fund balance and how district expenses impact it throughout this year. Mr. Essman said that his month-by-month estimates of revenue from July through February are pretty close to estimates/projections; the expenditures are less than appropriations. The district's largest expenses, salaries and fringe benefits, are right on target. On the revenue side, the projected \$20 million is at about \$20.4 million. "We get a lot of money [from income tax and real estate tax settlements] in lump sums; this causes our balance to spike up and down. Our lowest balances are typically in December and June," he said.

Keymaker Award

Dr. Johnson and Ms. Fishel recognized Bexley High

School junior Denzel Clark with the school district's Keymaker Award. Mr. Clark responded to and came to the aid of a fellow community member in need, thus bringing honor and distinction to the Bexley City School District. Mr. Clark had previously been honored by the Bexley Police Department.

District Email Management

Paul Ross, Technology Director, spoke to the Board about the issue of email verification. Until some best practices were recently implemented, the district was receiving about 100,000 email messages a day, with only about 2,000 of those identified as legitimate. Putting the new security best practices in place has meant that some parent emails are being bounced back from the district due to the security measures put in place (for example, some Road Runner senders who are not using secure authentication are getting bounced back). Senders using servers such as Gmail, Yahoo, Web mail, are generally secure and authenticated. Mr. Ross referred Board members to the district web site for help with troubleshooting.

Staffing Report

Bexley High School's enrollment is expected to drop this fall and the school district will take advantage of staff attrition and retirements to adjust to that drop, reported Dr. Johnson. To date, the Board has accepted the retirement of four BHS faculty members. "Last year, we were supposed to drop by 35 students and we added one student, so it really depends on what happens," he said, noting the complicated master schedules at both BMS and BHS. "It is increasingly difficult to handle the enrollment drop by attrition because we are a small district and we offer a full program with a wide array of courses."

Dr. Johnson said that staffing remains fairly stable at the elementary level. Next year, Montrose will drop to two sections of first grade; several grade levels are at 52 students, which will necessitate a review when actual enrollment numbers are available.

"I was really impressed by the staff members and great schools we have here." - Marlee Snowdon

The superintendent plans to post three kindergarten teacher positions this week to handle the all-day program that begins this fall. In most cases, the district's half-time teachers will apply for the full-time positions. Dr. Johnson expects to wait until final kindergarten numbers are in place before hiring additional staff for more sections. He reminded the Board that Bexley typically has 3,000 applicants for every K-3 position. "I am confident that from our original pool, we will be able to find qualified persons at the eleventh hour, if that becomes necessary," he said about kindergarten staffing. He noted the BEA's flexibility in allowing for these positions to be filled with a one-year appointment, so that the district can review last-minute hires after one year.

Montrose Report

Montrose Principal Quint Gage introduced the school's presentation. "Montrose is a warm and inviting place, it feels like a family," he said. "The classrooms are very child-centered and we look at social and emotional needs as well as education." He spoke of how the school embraces the arts, citing recent examples, such as visiting the Chihuly exhibit at Franklin Park and doing improvisations activities with Opera Columbus artists.

He said that his staff is highly professional -- "at the top of their game" -- and noted how welcoming they were to him in his first year. "What our teachers do on a daily basis demonstrates both the art and science of teaching," he said. "They work to make our classroom experience the best it can be. We focus on learner outcomes; how can we make students perform the best they can?"

Linda Hodge, third grade teacher and Teacher Leader, spoke about Montrose's best practice, IMPACT Literacy K-6. Twelve staffers volunteer time to be part of the school's Literacy Team and have helped define the school's relationship with OSU. Montrose formerly worked with Ohio State in the Literacy Collaborative for the

primary grades. Now, as an IMPACT Literacy K-6 school, the Montrose staff meets regularly with OSU literacy experts for ongoing, high quality professional development sessions focusing on comprehensive literacy instruction.

Ms. Hodge reviewed progress made since her last report to the Board: (1) currently, four teachers are trained on the Leveled Literacy Intervention program; (2) the school has established a framework for successful professional development, including direct contact with OSU experts and shorter Guided Meetings among the staff; (3) Montrose is working with teachers K-12 to vertically align its processes.

Introducing a video clip of staffers interacting with Shelly Straub, OSU literacy expert, she noted that, last year, OSU professionals came out four times to work with teachers. This year, budget cuts have dictated that staffers use available funds in a different way. Montrose has worked to make sure

that the professional development sessions with OSU are not just inspiring, "short-lived shots in the arm," but that they have lasting impact. She described how all staff members come prepared and ready to share for Guided Meetings and sessions with OSU professionals: "We all make the best use of the half-day that we can." The third and final session with OSU for 2009-2010 is set for late April.

"When you talk about reading, it does not happen magically. The art and the science have to work together," said Ms. Hodge. "The staff continually works on what they can do in a particular moment to make that student a better reader, writer or thinker for today and every day thereafter."

"We are constantly looking at our data to make sure that what we are doing is having an impact on our students," she concluded. "The best professional development practices have to be visible every day in the classroom." She encouraged the Board members to visit Montrose and see these practices in action in the classroom.

"The staff continually works on what they can do in a particular moment to make that student a better reader, writer or thinker for today and every day thereafter." - Linda Hodge

Public Comment

Ed Nyhan introduced himself as a current resident whose four children went through Bexley Schools. He brought up the Board's yearly appointment of Bexley Public Library Trustees and research that he has done concerning this body.

"The bottom line is that, now that residents know where our library funds come from and virtually all come from public monies, I would ask for some transparency, accountability and fairness with how these significant funds are managed," he said. He suggested that most people don't know there is a Board of Trustees for the library that is appointed by the Bexley Board of Education. "It is very important, with a new levy and new director, that we change the approach for electing people to the Board of Trustees. Everyone should have the opportunity to apply for that position," he added.

"You have valid concerns that I share," said Ms. Snowdon. "I would like to bridge some of the traditional gaps between our boards and make this a different kind of relationship than we have had in the past. I look to shed some light on this."

Fundraising and Field Trip

The Board approved fundraising activities at Montrose for the Terry Black Outdoor Learning Center and for BHS's junior class. Ms. Snowdon noted that Kim Kirtland, who is spearheading the Montrose fundraising, has run into an issue with her school's lack of nonprofit status. "How do we support schools with fundraising for projects that the school district budget cannot afford?" she asked. "It's reasonable for people donating money to a public project to expect to have a tax exempt letter," added Ms. Fishel.

The Board also okayed an extended field trip for French students in spring 2011. Ms. Peterson thanked BHS teacher Dr. Barb Romanczuk for placing the French field trip on the agenda a year in advance. She confirmed that the trip is indeed open for all students, grades 9 – 12.

Classroom Sizes

Ms. Fey, noting that she had toured Montrose and Cassingham, commented on the differences in

style and type of space in various classrooms. Conceding that some of the variation is because of the buildings' historic construction, she asked whether the physical space has any impact on class sizes and number of children in each class. Dr. Johnson said that, in the 1950's when Maryland was built, 750-800 square feet per room was the standard size of classrooms. Now, the style of instruction is different and the standard is closer to 1100-1200 SF. When Montrose was renovated in the 1990's, the district allowed for 930 SF in each classroom. The issue of its smaller room sizes has not come up at Maryland, because class sizes there have typically been smaller. Ms. Fey asked that administrators keep these facts in mind as they review class sizes. "We have class size policy because we feel strongly as a district that smaller class sizes are optimal," noted Ms. Fishel.

Other Items

. Ms. Fishel commended retiring staff members Sharon Anderson and Dean Chappelle. "He has always made himself available to students," she said of Mr. Chappelle's activities with student clubs. Ms. Snowdon praised Ms. Anderson's understanding and knowledge of the Maryland Elementary community.

. A revised school calendar was approved, changing a staff workday to Election Day, 11/8/2011 rather than the previously scheduled 11/1/2011.

. The Board approved the proposed Communications Plan with minor changes. "I am happy to see this coming through. Communications is always critical; the plan addresses everything and is still flexible," said Ms. Peterson. Ms. Fishel asked that the plan be posted to the web site, in the section where Board policies are housed.

BOARD REPORTS

Maryland Elementary School - April 2010
Cassingham Elementary School - May 2010
Technology Department - July 2010

The official minutes of the Board Meeting are on file in the District's Board of Education Office.