

BOARD MEETING OVERVIEW

Bexley City School District

348 S. Cassingham Road, Bexley, Ohio 43209



NEXT MEETING - Regular Meeting - Monday, 6/28/10 - 6:30 p.m. - Cassingham Community Room

- In the Know Recognition
- Board Reports
- Financial Report
- Retire/Rehire Opportunities
- Family and Engagement Policy
- Health Insurance Costs
- Library Course of Study
- Report from Cassingham
- Job Descriptions and Supplemental Positions
- Readings of Policies
- Other Items

The regular meeting of the Bexley Board of Education came to order on Monday, 5/17/2010 at 6:30pm in the Cassingham Complex Community Room. All members were present.

In the Know Recognition

BHS librarian and faculty adviser Mike Nolan introduced the members of his academic quiz team, In the Know (ITK): Sirrus Lawson Bourne, Daniel Peck, Evan Soll, Adam Soll, Amelia Brownstein, Jacqueline Morgan, Tori Delap, Ella Winters, Hallie Dolin, Charlie Mezsaros and Sam Meizlish. The team played an abbreviated 10-minute round against the Board members, with the Board falling in defeat with a score of 12-7.

Superintendent Mike Johnson and Ms. Fishel recognized Mr. Nolan and the team members with district awards. They also honored BHS student Raina Huang for winning a national design competition sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bexley Middle School student John Winters who recently competed at the state National Geographic Bee.

Board Reports

. Board President Joan Fishel introduced Georgia Sutter, Bexley High School Student Council President-

elect, who will serve as Student Representative next year.

. Ms. Fishel attended the recent Partnership Council, which focused on the issue of communication: the group has decided to meet five times next year, instead of four. She said she was thrilled at the Bexley Education Foundation's selection of BMS's Dr. Linda Kelley as 2010 Educator of the Year.

. Board Vice President Craig Halliday reported from the Technology Roundtable, noting upcoming training sessions and opportunities for volunteers to help with the Lowe's shelving installation project. On the radar for the summer are projects such as the migrations to Windows 7 and Exchange 2010, replacement of Maryland and Montrose computer labs and others. The school district's Chicken Watch web site has been accessed from 72 different countries around the world

. Board Member Carol Fey said that she and Board Member Diane Peterson attended a meeting hosted by area legislators (the two Bexley Board members were the only representatives from all the school districts invited). She mentioned new state legislation concerning Healthy Choices for Healthy Children that will require 30 minutes of physical activity a day for each child plus reporting to the state.

. Board member Diane Peterson elaborated on Ms. Fey's report, noting that some of the items in the original bill have been altered or delayed.

. Board Member Marlee Snowdon attended PTO Council last month; she noted that the Education Appreciation Banquet is next Wednesday, 5/26/2010 at Capital University. The Bexley Rec Department meeting indicated that pool membership sales are going well; the Rec Department is considering charging a lower rate for members' guests than is currently required.

. Ms. Snowdon noted that a committee of residents is currently looking at what Bexley can do to offer healthier food options; she plans to meet with the group this week.

. Ms. Sutter said that BHS has scheduled a new event, a Senior Walkout. Students are collecting

school supplies for an orphanage in Iraq at their annual last day cookout.

Financial Report

Treasurer Chris Essman said the district has received the April income tax settlement; it was about the same as April 2009. He noted that the district receives four settlements each year representing revenue from the School District Income Tax, with the largest one being in July. "Historically the July settlement is usually about half of the year's collection," he said.

He also reviewed assumptions contained in the Five-Year Forecast, including a very slow recovery of income tax revenue as the actual income tax revenue received in 2009 was \$1.5 million below projection. The forecast also assumes that (1) the state will cut Bexley's revenue by 10 percent in fiscal year 2012 and that Bexley will lose 5 percent of state funding each year after FY12; (2) a base increase for teachers at 1.85 percent in FY2011; and (3) a projected base salary increase of 1.5 percent for the future, rather than the 3 percent forecast in the past. "The actual salary amounts will be negotiated the same as they have always been," he said.

Later in the meeting, Mr. Essman presented several possible fall levy scenarios, based on various millage amounts. The Board discussed aspects of the budget situations presented by the various amounts.

"We've been off the ballot for six years, so a lot of folks are new to the community and don't understand how this works," noted Ms. Peterson. "Our levies fund all programs. The school district is a people business and salaries are a large percentage of our district costs. This levy money is essential to operate Bexley City Schools at the level we are operating at now. We want these schools to remain strong."

Mr. Essman clarified that the collection process for the 2010 levy would begin in 2011. The county's next property tax appraisal is in 2012. Mr. Essman noted that from the 1970's until 2004, Bexley operated on a three-year levy cycle. In 2004, Bexley passed a school district income tax issue. The

district usually seeks enough millage to stay off the ballot for at least three years. In the past, he pointed out, Bexley's new levy requests have been higher than all of the numbers under consideration now. Mr. Essman recommended that the levy amount should be set at one of the top three numbers (6.5, 6.7 or 6.8 mills).

Board members then discussed the merits of proposing one of the three. "We have been managing the district's finances in a prudent manner; now it's a matter of looking at the amount that gets generated here," said Ms. Fishel.

Mr. Halliday suggested that, with a fund balance of \$14 million, "We should keep this as low as we possibly can. I just got a call from a constituent asking why we are not cutting spending, especially

when we will not be able to fund our operations beyond 2013 even with the millage we're requesting. There are plenty of people in our community who are much worse off than they were two years ago. We should

pass the lowest amount possible and see how the economy shakes out."

Ms. Peterson moved to set the levy amount at 6.5 mills. Ms. Fey said she would prefer a higher amount, to safeguard the district's financial situation. But she understood that, given current economic times, to choose the higher level might jeopardize passage.

Ms. Fishel noted how careful the district has been with its spending, in particular, carefully monitoring attrition of staff; negotiating contracts that benefit district finances; and prudently negotiating the teachers' contract. "I don't want to discount our ability to do more of this in the next few years," she said.

"Administration is going to have to continue to be aggressive in these areas," agreed Ms. Peterson. The Board unanimously passed the resolution placing a 6.5 mills levy on the November 2010 ballot.

Retire/Rehire Opportunities

Dr. Johnson noted that Dr. Anne Hyland, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Cassingham Principal Barb Heisel have indicated that they are

"This levy money is essential to operate Bexley City Schools at the level we are operating at now." - Diane Peterson

interested in a retire/rehire arrangement, whereby they would sign a terminal, one-year contract for 2010 – 2011 with a 10 percent reduction in salary

“This gives us a chance to review how we operate the school district and get the best candidates possible; it also would allow us to save some money,” he said, noting that a resolution on the agenda would set a special meeting for consideration of the arrangement.

“We’ve been lucky to have these wonderful administrators – Dr. Hyland, Dr. Zwick and Ms. Heisel. We’ve been blessed too with the dedication on your part and we thank you,” said Ms. Fishel.

Family and Engagement Policy

Dr. Johnson requested that the Board and community members suggest possible candidates for an ongoing committee, the Civic Engagement Committee that is required by state law to support activities in this area. “In our district we have a structure in place, such as the social/emotional and multicultural supplemental positions who will participate on this committee,” said Dr. Johnson.

The school district must submit this plan to the Franklin Country Children’s Services. The policy focuses on children in crisis and students who may drop out of school. “It pertains to the services we offer to make sure every child is successful in the school district,” explained Dr. Johnson.

Health Insurance Costs

Dr. Johnson reported that the district is looking at a 24.6 percent increase in health insurance premium costs for next year. “We have worked with our broker to try to negotiate a lower premium from current health insurance supplier, Medical Mutual, and have been unsuccessful,” said Dr. Johnson. When the district put the contract out for bid, the only company meeting all of the requirements was Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Their increase for similar plan is about 9.4 percent.

Administration is bringing employees together Tuesday, 5/18/2010 to discuss whether to switch to the new supplier. The school district’s employee agreement includes terms so that the two parties split the cost. “If we remain on the old plan, it will cost \$995 a year more for family coverage,” he estimated.

Library Course of Study

Dr. Anne Hyland, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, brought this document to the Board’s attention, introducing Debbie Ballinger, Maryland’s librarian, as the leader of the team that developed it. “The course of study is centered on our standards and the 21st century skills,” Ms. Ballinger explained, noting that the library is the information center of each school. She highlighted research included in the document that has been ongoing since 1990. The research connects library services with student achievement. “It validates what we do,” she said.

Report from Cassingham

Sonja Hutchison, Teacher Leader at Cassingham, spoke about the school’s International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB-PYP) evaluation scheduled for the fall. The school has been an IB World School since 2007 and must periodically go through a review. The process includes Cassingham staff considering each of the IB standards, commenting on them and reporting progress. Board members and administrators also complete parts of this survey. The school’s IB steering committee (one classroom teacher from each grade level) then develops a five-year plan, including items on which the school will improve and show progress.

Ms. Hutchison introduced Intervention Specialist, Amy Oswald and several students, who presented information about Cassingham’s involvement in a project to study and help with efforts to save endangered blue and gold macaws. Ms. Oswald noted the project’s curriculum connections at various grade levels, such as fifth grade’s study of biomes. She said that videos pertaining to these efforts, being produced with a Bexley Education Foundation grant, are expected to be completed next year and remain as a resource available at the school.

In answering the Board members’ questions about the fall 2010 IB evaluation, Ms. Hutchison noted that she has recently been trained as an IB site evaluator. “IB sends three people from the Western Hemisphere who go through each of the 116 items. We have to show elements of each standard and how they’re being met and the evaluators make a report to the Office of the IB Americas,” said Ms. Hutchison.

“It’s so clear that one of the best benefits from a best practice is the introspection that you as a

staff give to what you do every day. To me, it's the height of professionalism," said Ms. Fishel. "I give you kudos for doing that. Sometimes its painful, but it's so obvious that it pays off. I applaud you for this process."

Mr. Halliday asked how two supplemental positions under consideration by the Board – the building personnel for international/multicultural and social/emotional – work with Cassingham's IB program. Ms. Hutchison noted that the learner profile from IB – "what we want our students to become" – includes components of "international-mindedness."

Job Descriptions and Supplemental Positions

The Board reviewed several job descriptions on the agenda, including those for Director of Special Education and Psychologist. Dr. Hyland answered questions about the performance responsibilities included and the Board approved the descriptions.

When the Board turned to the review of multiple supplemental job descriptions, Mr. Halliday questioned several, including the building international/multicultural and school climate personnel. "These are so open ended and vague that we're hiring people to do jobs and we can't tell them what they are responsible for," he said. "I don't know that, for example, we need to be employing another faculty member at the Middle School, in addition to a very hands-on principal, to be monitoring school climate," These positions are not necessary for a district this size."

Ms. Fey indicated that in a district of Bexley's character, "keeping these issues at the fore is crucial." She said that the more general descriptions are necessary because the positions require flexibility. In response to Ms. Snowdon's question, Dr. Hyland noted that the state has standards pertaining to school climate and that some of the supplemental positions address those standards.

"We need to show between now and November that we are doing everything we can to reduce expenditures," said Mr. Halliday. Ms. Fey countered that these are two areas that should not be cut. Ms. Fishel reminded the Board that the building level school climate positions represent a savings over the district personnel previously serving in this capacity. "Craig makes a good point about accountability," she said. "This is an excellent

discussion, but I think these are structured so that we can make adjustments to them as we go along."

Members also discussed several of the supplementals that support leadership in curriculum, instruction and professional development and report to the Director of Curriculum. They considered delaying implementation until the district has reviewed how the Director of Curriculum and Instruction position will work in the future.

The Board later approved the supplemental position hires, as well as the descriptions for various supplemental positions.

Readings of Policies

Board members and administrators discussed language in the proposed graduation policy related to Intervention plans and "credit recovery" for students at risk of failing. "We don't want to confuse issues, in terms of how things work now," commented BHS Principal John Kellogg, answering Board members' questions. Administration will clarify language regarding how the high school helps students succeed and bring the policy back for a third reading next month.

The policy on Student Fees, Fines and Charges was approved for a first reading, with clarifications to come on Student Activity fees.

Other Items

- . The Board approved several PTO fundraisers for the Middle School and Montrose; it also approved field trips and gifts to the district.
- . The Board set a special meeting for 5:00pm on 7/6/2010.
- . Members approved the revised Five-Year Financial Forecast and a contract with Direct Energy Business.

BOARD REPORTS

Special Education - June 2010
Technology Department - July 2010

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