

**NORTH SALEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
NORTH SALEM, NY 10560**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, October 6, 2005**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the North Salem Central School District of North Salem, New York, was held on Thursday, October 6, 2005, in the North Salem Middle School Cafeteria. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. by Ms. Hublard Hershman.

**Board**

**Members:**

Douglas  
Giamundo  
Hart  
Hershman  
Martell  
O'Meara  
Palma

**Present:**

Ms. Carla Palma, President\*  
Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman,  
Vice President  
Ms. Norma Hart  
Mr. Paul Giamundo  
Ms. Marie L. Martell  
\*arrived at 7:00 p.m.  
**Absent:**  
Ms. Lisa Douglas  
Mr. John O'Meara  
Ms. Marsha S. Freer, District Clerk

**Also Present:**

Dr. Peter R. Litchka, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Michael Courtney, Assistant Superintendent for  
Curriculum and Personnel  
Ms. MaryJo Hauser, Assistant Superintendent for  
Pupil Personnel Services  
Ms. Sylvia Fassler-Wallach, Director of Finance  
Community and staff members

**Executive Session:**

At 6:48 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Hart, seconded by Ms. Martell and carried 4-0, the Board entered executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel and litigations. Ms. Hublard Hershman was appointed Clerk *Pro Tem* for this executive session. Mr. Jeffrey Kehl, Esq., legal counsel for the District, was present for this session.

\*Ms. Palma arrived at 7:00 p.m.

**Reconvene to Public Session:**

At 8:00 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Hart, seconded by Ms. Martell and carried 5-0, the Board reconvened to public session. Dr. Michael Courtney was appointed Clerk *Pro Tem* for the meeting.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Palma welcomed all present.

**Comments on Agenda Items:**

None were offered.

**Acceptance of Minutes:**

On a motion by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Ms. Hart and carried 5-0, the Board accepted the minutes of the September 7, 2005 Board of Education meeting, with the amendment that Ms. Hart was present for the meeting.

**President's Report:**

None for this evening.

**Board Member Reports:**

Ms. Douglas noted that the Audit Committee will be meeting Wednesday, October 12 @ 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Giamundo mentioned that Ms. Martell, Ms. Hauser, and he attended “The Role of the School Board and the Newly Authorized IDEA”. Ms. Hauser then gave a brief overview of the information that was presented at said workshop. The focus of the IDEA 2004 is to align IDEA with NCLB. Among the topics of discussion during the course of the workshop were Child Find; IEPs; and Transfer Students. Ms. Hauser stated that there are many changes with regard to IDEA; one of the main goals is to have IEPs become more specific and measurable, which she thought was a positive development.

**Superintendent’s Report:**

Dr. Litchka congratulated everyone on Homecoming. He stated that it was a fabulous event, and a wonderful outpouring of support from the community. He then extended his congratulations to Pat Cyganovich, Lisa Douglas, and Rita Driscoll, as well as all others who made this event such a success.

Dr. Litchka noted that later in the evening he would give an update on the mold issues, as well as a description of the steps that the District is taking in order to deal with these issues.

Dr. Litchka then spoke of his attendance at the NYSCOSS conference where he had the opportunity to attend a number of presentations and was able to bring back with him some contacts on turf fields. In addition he attended a number of long-range planning presentations and he commented that there were many good presenters at the conference.

The District-Wide Safety Team and the Crisis Management Teams met today with Mr. Brian Lane and Trooper Neil Merritt. There will be practice drills scheduled in the future.

At this point Dr. Litchka took the opportunity to introduce Ms. Jennifer Wilson, our new Director of Technology, who comes to us through the LHRIC.

Reminder that the next Board meeting is scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup> at Pequenaconck Elementary School, with a *Roundtable* discussion being held from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. in the Library.

**Discussion Items:**

**Introduction of Citizens’ Advisory Committees to the Community**

At this point in the meeting, the Board of Education broke out into groups for discussion in order to provide community members the opportunity to sign up for participation on the various Citizens’ Advisory Committees. The seven (7) Citizens’ Advisory Committees for the 2005/06 School Year are as follows: Communications, Facilities and Fields, Fiscal Planning, Kindergarten, Long-Range Strategic Planning, Middle School, and Technology.

**Tax Apportionment**

Ms. Sylvia Fassler-Wallach gave a presentation on “Tax Apportionment Review 2005-2006.” Her presentation covered the following:

- funding of school expenses
- the mechanics of appropriately assessing tax on all residents of the North Salem Central School District
- calculating the tax rate

**Discussion Items:**

### **Tax Apportionment** (continued)

Ms. Fassler-Wallach presentation included, but was not limited to the following: the funding of budgeted school expenses for 02/03, 03/04, 04/05 and 05/06; STAR exemptions; school taxes and property taxes, school tax based on home with fair market value of \$500,000; equalization rates to be used to apportion 2005-2006 taxes, the impact of equalization rates; and district apportionment-tax levy by community.

Dr. Litchka commented that we need to think out of the box; consolidation of towns to create economies of scale. He noted that there are rules in New York State to do this; taxpayers cannot afford the continued increase in tax rates. We are the only budget in town that people vote on. If we want to change the system, we have to remember that 95% of the people in the legislature get re-elected to office. People need to start listening. Lobby groups have only limited effectiveness. Ms. Palma stated that the notion of consolidation was brought up five (5) years ago, but it was determined that the expense ratios would in fact go up. Savings through consolidation is accrued by the closing of facilities due to declining enrollment. Then Mr. Giamundo commented that we could continue to depend on our lobbyists, but he suggested that we sit down with the Town Board representatives to come up with a game plan. Mr. John White thought that it would be a good idea to have a joint meeting. The data brought forward that evening could be used to help us in our planning process.

### **Forum on Block Scheduling**

Dr. Cyganovich presentation was entitled "Extended Learning Time Block Scheduling." Dr. Cyganovich stated that the purpose of her presentation tonight is to introduce the concept; gather information and feedback; set the course together; and to announce further meetings to be held. Dr. Cyganovich said that they have designed two (2) forums on block scheduling in order to get feedback from the community. One is scheduled for October 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. for high school parents and the other one is scheduled for October 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. for middle school parents.

Dr. Cyganovich covered the following topics during the course of her presentation: Extended Learning Time Block Scheduling: *What is it? Why do it? What will it look like?* She explained what a few different scenarios could look like when using block scheduling. At the end of her presentation, she discussed some concerns, as well as opportunities of block scheduling. Before concluding Dr. Cyganovich also answered the following questions: *What have we done so far? What are the next steps?*

Dr. Cyganovich commented that changing the amount of time is not enough. We need to use different instructional strategies, which was reinforced to us in Dr. Marcia Tate's workshop.

Mr. Giamundo said we remember about the need to diversify strategies in light of individual's limited attention spans. Ms. Hublard Hershman said that she had seen examples in her visits to Croton-Harmon and Hasting high schools of changing teaching techniques every twenty (20) minutes.

The Board members had various questions which were posed to Dr. Cyganovich during her presentation. Among these questions were the following:

Ms. Hublard Hershman wanted to know how many students have classes during their lunch hour.

Ms. Palma asked if there were any schools that implemented block scheduling within the last two (2) years.

Ms. Hart asked why Somers did block scheduling only in their middle school.

Ms. Hart asked where we could get more evaluation research on the success of block scheduling in terms of increasing student achievement.

Mr. Giamundo commented that Pleasantville had it for five (5) years and went back to a regular schedule and that we certainly do not want to do that.

Dr. Litchka indicated that in Pleasantville new leadership and lack of staff development were two (2) of the factors that led to this decision.

Dr. Litchka stated that generally speaking, you are always going to have people both for and against block scheduling, but from his previous experience, he stated that innovation creates great enthusiasm and renewal among teachers.

Ms. Hart asked if there were any uses of distance learning technology in this new type of scheduling. Dr. Cyganovich commented that she was unsure of the answer to her question.

Dr. Litchka stated that block scheduling helps students who struggle because they are able to connect more deeply with adults.

Ms. Hart said that most of the research that she has read showed greater success in larger districts. Dr. Cyganovich stated that there is tons of data on the effects of block scheduling on discipline, graduation rates and academic achievement and you can find support both for and against block scheduling.

Ms. Martell said we have to remember that our kids are adolescents not college students. Mr. John White said that this would obviously give teachers more time to complete lessons. One community member wanted to know if the teachers had been polled and Dr. Cyganovich answered no, but that the faculty had been engaged for over two (2) years. Some staff members were in favor, some were not, and others remained in the middle.

When asked by a parent how the restless students are addressed, Dr. Cyganovich stated that teachers typically review their instructional strategies based on the types of learners and attention spans of their students.

We have worked over the last two (2) years with Nancy Letts on varied instructional strategies. Dr. Litchka said that kids react differently in different contexts. Block Scheduling allows for different types of learners and promotes greater student engagement. In answer to one question raised by a parent as to whether or not we would begin block scheduling in the high school and middle school at the same time, Dr. Cyganovich commented that we would commence the middle and high school at the same time. In fact, it will probably be easier for our younger students.

Ms. Hart wanted to know how we would evaluate the success of such an initiative. Dr. Cyganovich responded that Dr. Courtney would be looking for a neighboring university to help us conduct the evaluation next year.

**Discussion Items:**  
(continued)

Mr. Giamundo wanted to know if we should do more team visits. Mr. William

Dahl said that the new schedule scares him a bit, but it is also exciting. He then stated that he is in agreement with Dr. Cyganovich to move forward on this initiative, let's stop spinning our wheels. Mr. Andrew Brown asked if we have staff development money to support it. Dr. Cyganovich said we do have monies dedicated for staff development. When asked by Ms. Martell what high-performing districts are using block scheduling, Dr. Cyganovich responded that Bronxville has its own version of block scheduling. It is normal for people to be anxious, change is difficult. Ms. Martell would like to hear feedback from all stakeholders, including the students.

In summary, Ms. Palma stated that the Board would like the following information with regard to block scheduling: the number of students at the middle/high school that have classes in place of lunch; schools that have initiated block scheduling within the last 2-3 years; evaluation methods; an explanation as to why Pleasantville dismantled block scheduling; a survey of academic achievement.

Mr. William Dahl stated that our administrators are educational leaders, one way or another let's make a decision and move one. We know this is not a panacea. Ms. Palma stated that it would be critically important to have teachers support this initiative. Mr. Giamundo commented that we certainly do not want to push it on the faculty. Dr. Litchka noted that block scheduling would have a significant financial impact on the budget.

#### **Update on Mold Issues**

Dr. Litchka informed everyone on what has taken place thus far with regard to the mold issues in the buildings: Tuesday and Wednesday companies came in and took down the sheetrock in the library. They then did a thorough cleaning and put the wall back up. The carpets were cleaned, as well as the upholstery. Air testing will be done within the next week at both the middle/high school and PQ. After doing some checking, it was determined that the fan is working properly. We will be doing roof scanning to locate areas of inappropriate flashing. We are being very aggressive in taking care of this issue. The nurse has not received many complaints. At our next Board meeting will have more information to share with you. In spite of our warranties, fixing the roof may require additional funds. Ms. Palma said we want to know the budget implications in the event that fixing the problem necessitates multiple year repairs.

#### **Adoption of School Lunch Budget for the 2005-06 School Year**

We will want to fix our ovens and purchase another oven for \$5,000.00. We will be using the money from our vending machines. Ms. Palma commented that we need to remember our goal is to make a profit. We need to know if we will continue to operate at a deficit. Ms. Palma then mentioned that we may need to think about raising prices for food. Ms. Fassler-Wallach said that the Board will be updated once the plan is complete.

#### **Action Items:**

##### **Consent Agenda-Personnel Actions**

On a motion by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Ms. Norma Hart and

carried 5-0, the Board approved the Consent Agenda as stated, in accordance with the following:

*Appointments*

**Instructional**

**Natalia Forte**, emergency conditional appointment, long-term substitute teacher, replacing Rose Arnold, at the per diem substitute rate, beginning on or about October 20, 2005

**Non-Instructional**

**Maria Kucer**, appointment as substitute teacher and/or substitute aide, effective October 7, 2005

*Resignations*

**Non-Instructional**

**Ellen Watson**, resignation from position as Clerk/Typist and Registrar, effective at the close of business on November 1, 2005

**Approval of the Recommendations of the CSE/CPSE**

On a motion by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Ms. Martell and carried 5-0, the Board approved the recommendations of the CSE/CPSE.

**Acceptance of the Treasurer's Reports and the Extraclassroom Activity Reports of July 2005**

On a motion by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Ms. Hart and carried 5-0, the Board accepted the Treasurer's Reports and the Extraclassroom Activity Reports of July 2005.

**Adoption of the School Lunch Budget for the 2005-06 School Year**

On a motion by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Ms. Hart and carried 5-0, the Board adopted the School Lunch Budget for the 2005-06 School Year as presented.

**Establishment of a Healthy Cafeteria Choices Fund**

On a motion by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Ms. Hart and carried 5-0, the Board approved the establishment of a Healthy Cafeteria Choices Fund.

**Acceptance of Donations to the Healthy Cafeteria Choices Fund**

On a motion by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Ms. Hart and carried 5-0, the Board accepted the donations to the Healthy Cafeteria Choices Fund in accordance with the following:

Douglas and Kristin Sherman - \$1,000.00

Robin Greenwood - \$4,000.00

Tom and Pam Grossman - \$5,000.00

**Action Items:**

(continued)

**Approval for the Inclusion in the Curriculum**

On a motion by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Ms. Hart and carried 5-0, the Board approved the following for inclusion in the curriculum:

Financial Literacy for Teens by Chad Foster and Misty Elliott, ISBN #0-9644456-3-8, for use in Economics 12 and the O.P.T.I.O.N.S. Program  
Forensic Science 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (2005) and Forensic Science Laboratory Manual and Workbook, ISBN 0-8493-2747-4, for use in the Forensic Science Curriculum

**Comments on Items not on the Agenda:**

Mr. Brown asked if we can get the STOP sign fixed at the high school; students seem to ignore safety when they race out of the parking lot. He also commented that Homecoming was great. He noted that he hopes that fixing the roof will not interfere with the new turf fields.

A parent rose and was recognized to say that Homecoming was great; it was nice to have lights on the field.

There was also a comment from a community member that the quality of the cable video is lacking. Mr. Giamundo said that Cablevision should be contacted in order to address this issue.

Mr. Giamundo noted that the Turf Fields Sub-Committee would be conducting their first meeting Tuesday evening in the District Conference Room.

Ms. Hublard Hershman wanted to assure the public that the Board always looks at the whole pie when it comes to the district budget and would also seek balance in the music and art areas as well as athletics.

**Old Business:**

None at this time.

**New Business:**

None for the evening.

**Motion to Enter Executive Session:**

The Board did not need to re-convene into executive session for this evening.

**Adjournment:**

Seeing no further business, on a motion by Ms. Hublard Hershman, seconded by Ms. Hart and carried 5-0, the Board adjourned the meeting at 11:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

(Minutes accepted at BOE meeting on  
December 7, 2005.)

---

Marsha S. Freer, District Clerk

---

Dr. Michael Courtney, Clerk *Pro Tem*

