

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

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Pequenakonck Elementary School
Multipurpose Room
Thursday, October 20, 2005
(Rescheduled from October 19, 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 20, 2005, at Pequenakonck Elementary School in the multipurpose room. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by Ms. Palma.

Board

Members:

Douglas
Giamundo
Hart
Hershman
Martell
O'Meara
Palma

Present:

Ms. Carla Palma, President
Ms. Lisa Douglas
Mr. Paul Giamundo
Ms. Norma Hart
Ms. Marie L. Martell
Mr. John O'Meara
Absent:
Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman,
Vice President

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**
Student Representatives Christopher DosSantos
and Leigh Smadbeck
Community and staff members

*Left at 10:00 p.m.

**Left at 11:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

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

Roundtable:

Ms. Palma stated that they had just concluded the PQ Roundtable; last time we had a meeting with our middle/high school parents. We learned a little bit about their concerns. Tonight we were able to meet with some of our elementary school parents and hear from both our teachers and administrators as to what is going on in these buildings. Ms. Palma stated that it was a very interesting discussion. She summarized the discussion by stating that they had talked about the stress involved and the continuation of understanding what our children are going through at the elementary school level as more and more tests are coming down the pike and some of the strategies that have been put in place to address those particular items. They also talked about arts and music in our schools, in education, which was also a theme discussed at the middle/high school level. They also discussed some of the social programs like D.A.R.E., which they used to have in the schools, and some of the other alternative programs that the administrators have put in place today to foster those same kinds of character building programs. Ms. Hart added to our student representatives that through the D.A.R.E. program, the high school students used to come to speak to the fifth graders and they miss that.

Recognition of School Board Members:

In honor of School Board Recognition Week, Student Representatives Christopher DosSantos and Leigh Smadbeck presented each Board Trustee, the Superintendent of Schools, and the District Clerk with a single yellow rose and a hand-written note. Leigh stated that on behalf of the students, faculty and administration, they would like to say thank you for all of the dedication and hard work being done to make our schools such a great place.

Student Reports:

The meeting continued as Student Representative Leigh Smadbeck presented her report on the activities going on in each of our buildings. Following her report, Leigh introduced Christopher DosSantos, who is the junior student representative for this year.

Recognition of School Board Members:

Dr. Litchka then mentioned that one of the reasons the gifts were passed out this evening is because next week, October 24-28, 2005, is School Board Recognition Week in New York State. Dr. Litchka took a few moments to recognize the Board by reading a Proclamation released by Governor George E. Pataki. As the Superintendent of Schools he thanked the Board for all the hard work they do in helping all of us to reach our vision and mission of the school District. Congratulations and on behalf of the administration and staff, thank you for all you do.

Comments on Agenda Items:

Mr. Andrew Brown was recognized. He said he noticed that there are now three (3) columns listed with regard to the Board meetings: Agenda, Consent Agenda, and Minutes. Mr. Brown asked for clarification, specifically on the Consent Agenda posted. He asked whether or not the Consent Agenda listed had already been completed or is it what is being proposed. Ms. Palma stated that the Consent Agenda is a new aspect to our Agenda, what it really does is it allows us the flexibility, as part of the regular agenda, but something that does not necessarily get finalized until pretty close to the meeting time and that is because there are things that are changing all the time. So they can publish the Agenda and post it ahead of time knowing that there are going to be personnel changes and things like that might not be updated until the last minute. So it allows us to really have kind of a quick addendum and be somewhat efficient by approving the Consent Agenda. Then it gets posted to the website after it gets approved. Additionally, Mr. Brown requested that the secretary strike the term "Turf Field" from the Minutes of the meeting, as well as future minutes and have it be referred to as an "Athletic Complex", so that the people do not think that they are paying four (4) times what they should pay for a field.

We are talking about spending \$2 million, and that is not just on fields, it is on fields, lights, tennis courts, parking, etc., all amenities that affect the school and the community and he feels that it is important that we project it that way. Ms. Palma suggested that it be called the "Sports Proposal" because at this point it is a proposal. The point is to say that it is not one item for the dollar; it is a proposal for a collection of items. That way we know the dollar value relative to a series of things.

Ms. RoseMaria DosSantos was recognized and rose, along with Ms. Joan Kruzykowski, MS/HS PTO Vice President, and Ms. Debbie Hendrie,

Recognition of School Board Members:

PQ PTO President, and stated that the Pequenakonck and Middle School/High School PTOs would like to extend their gratitude to the members of the Board of Education for their dedication, support, long hours, and commitment to those that we all cherish the most, and that is our kids. Thank you very much.

On a motion by Ms. Hart, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 6-0, the Board accepted the minutes of the September 14, 2005 Board of Education meeting.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Ms. Palma mentioned a couple of events that are upcoming: The Westchester-Putnam School Boards Association will be holding some events in their school district offices in White Plains. Ms. Palma noted that if people can attend, it is highly recommended. She also added that there is an event in Bedford as well. In addition, there will be a speaker on school issues that would be helpful. On December 3, 2005 in Elmsford, the New York State School Boards Association will be holding one of their education sessions, which works towards the credits that school board members who were elected last year are required to have. Some Board members who have attended in Albany, have already met some of those requirements.

President's Report:

One more item, if Board members who are on Citizens' Advisory Committees and are coordinating or chairing those committees, please send Marsha your meeting dates so that she can facilitate the compilation of a grand schedule so as we go to calendar over the next several months and topics, at least we will know which nights are already taken by other Board meetings and so forth.

Board Member Reports:

Ms. Hart noted that November 1st will be the first Fiscal Planning CAC meeting, and since we haven't started yet, anyone who is interested in joining, please feel free to sign up. Also, November 2nd @ 6:30 p.m. will be the first Policy Committee meeting. Ms. Hart asked if everyone was comfortable getting the minutes via email.

Ms. Douglas asked if it would be possible to get the CAC minutes put on line. Dr. Litchka said that if they could be emailed to Marsha, we could then get them put on the website.

Ms. Palma stated that there are a series of dates for the meetings of the Policy Committee. They will be meeting at least five (5) times during the year. Mr. O'Meara stated that they had the first meeting of the Technology CAC on Tuesday. The first thing is that the nature of the meetings have changed dramatically because we now have a very experienced technology person who works for the school who actually is going for input from other sources as opposed to very strong educational people looking for input from the technology department. First of all there will be some policy matters being sent to the Policy Committee that are being reviewed in detail, both existing ones and some needed additional ones. One thing that was discussed in detail at the meeting was the internet filtering that we have in place being replaced by another one come November of this year. It is a less expensive, more efficient way of doing filtering than we are using now. The other item was some discussion on trying

to get more community members involved. This meeting was held at 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon which allowed more staff to be involved, and would be more of an invitation to have some students to be there. The idea is to actually alternate the time of the meetings and announce what the topics of the meetings will be to

Board Member Reports:

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attract different groupings at different times. Dr. Courtney agrees with Mr. O'Meara that it was quite a different flavor to the meeting. One of the other issues that they touched upon was the necessity for a long-range plan for Technology.

Ms. Palma stated that the Long-Term Planning Committee is looking to start their first meeting on November 3. We are looking for participation, so anyone interested in participating are certainly welcome. A member of the audience asked if they had decided when they are going to meet yet.

November 3, December 1, January 5, February 2, April 6, and May 4 are the planned dates for the Long-Term Strategic Planning Committee.

The purpose of this committee is to look at the district's "big picture"; to really take into account the multiple five-year plans that we have, which are very good and very effective. We are not looking to change those, but what we are trying to do is develop a long-term approach to the district, where it is going, some of the long-term things that we should be addressing.

We have a five-year capital spending plan; we will be looking for a five-year financial plan; a technology plan; a busing plan and what we will be doing is to try and bring all of them together. We will look at things like what would be the tax rate over the five-year time span. The real key is to come up with a Long-Term Strategic Plan for the district. If anyone is interested, please step up and Marsha will add your name to the list or contact Ms. Palma.

Superintendent's Report:

Dr Litchka stated that we are reinvigorating the Health and Wellness Committee that used to exist on a formal basis, then became informal. With all the concern about air quality, it is time to resurrect it and make it a much more functioning committee. We are going to be calling it a Health, Safety, and Wellness Committee. It is going to be one teacher from each school, an administrator from each school, a CSEA person from each school, a custodian/maintenance person from each of the buildings. The Committee is going to be chaired by Kenneth Waldron and MaryJo Hauser. We are going to be talking about a lot of issues on a monthly basis. Letters are going out next week, and we will meet on a monthly basis. Our District-Wide Safety Team is up and running, we had our first meeting on October 6th.

Dr. Litchka, Dr. Bovino, Marie Martell, Pat Russell, Neil Merritt, Roberta Reiner, and Ken Waldron were there. Brian Lane, of BCL, a safety consultant through BOCES met with the team and they will be meeting again tomorrow. Basically, our goal for this year is to complete and update our SAVE Plans, that have to be approved on a yearly basis; setting up times for each of the buildings to practice for emergencies; ongoing assessments of the buildings; preparation for catastrophic events; possibility of having flip-charts in every classroom so that if there is a particular issue that all a teacher would have to do is flip to that page of the chart; recommendations for new health and safety policies as well as recommendations for safety improvements and the fiscal implications.

Tomorrow we are getting back together in the morning to plan some mock evacuations of this building and what we would do if we needed to get everyone out of the building and where we would take the students. We were supposed to have a mock tabletop disaster with the administrative team about how we would

Superintendent's Report:
(continued)

get the word out to everyone, but with everyone going in different directions tomorrow, we will have to follow-up with that at another time.

Last night a number of us had the opportunity to go to Anthony's Pier 9 where John Vassak was being awarded The Achievement Award for Teaching by the Mid-Hudson School Study Council. Once again Congratulations to John Vassak!

We are always hearing how middle schools are not doing well across America, but not here in North Salem. On the last assessment from May of 2005, 94% of our students scored at level 3 and 4, which is an increase of 12 percentage points from the previous year and a 35% increase since 2001. Twenty-seven (27) percent of our 8th grade students last year scored at Level 4, which is mastery, which is more than doubled from the year before and an increase of 12 percentage points since 2001. Of the 96 students who took the assessment, zero (0) performed at level one, and only six (6) students out of 96 were at level two (2).

How does this compare with our neighboring districts, the region, etc.? The percentage of students achieving at levels 3 and 4 was 77% in Putnam-Northern Westchester BOCES; 63% in Rockland; 71% in Southern-Westchester BOCES; 56% across the state and 94% in North Salem. The percentage of students achieving at Level 4 in the same region was 18% in Putnam-Northern Westchester BOCES; 14% in Rockland; 20% in Southern-Westchester BOCES, and 27% in North Salem.

On November 22nd at 7:00 p.m. we are going to have a celebration of our renovated Auditorium. The event will run from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. with refreshments being served following the event. This will be a way to thank the Board, the Advocates for the Arts and the Halloran Foundation for doing such a terrific job plus all of you out there who bought seats for the auditorium. This has been a terrific community effort.

Dr. Litchka stated that he had some good news to share with everyone!

Dr. Cyganovich received an email last night congratulating the North Salem Middle/High School for being nominated for the 2006 Blue Ribbon Award for High Achievement in Middle Schools. The Commission of Education, Richard Mills, will be submitting our school to the U. S. Department of Education for this award. We will be receiving official written notification from them and we can then begin the application process. North Salem was one of nineteen (19) middle schools out of the more than 700 across the state that were nominated by the Commissioner to the United States Department of Education as a Blue Ribbon Middle School, which was all based on our achievement in the grade 8 assessments. Congratulations! Ms. Palma stated that this certainly is a wonderful honor; kudos to everyone involved!

One issue that Dr. Litchka wanted to share with the Board is that he received a letter from the County Executive that he wants to pass legislation in Westchester County to not have sales tax on home heating oil, natural gas, coal, wood, and propane tanks for the period of December 1, 2005 through February 28, 2006, due to the cost of energy. He wanted to know if school district Superintendents

Superintendent's Report:
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were interested in this. While Dr. Litchka thinks this is a noble idea we would get \$2,343.00 less in revenue for the year, which is not a lot of money but again it is shifting the burden of educating from one group to another group. Dr. Litchka is not in favor of supporting the legislation. The Board is in favor of supporting the County Executive's legislative proposal.

**Update on No Child Left Behind and Improving Student Achievement –
*Dr. Michael Courtney***

In 2001-02 the starting point for NCLB in terms of the reporting index was set across the state based on the lowest district in New York State. The expectation across the state is that within a twelve-year increment of time all students will be proficient. Annual objective targets are set every year across the state based on all of the schools and those targets will be changed every three years. As long as you are above the "AMO" as it is called, every year, and that keeps raising, you are considered a school or a district in good standing. And we are in fact a district in good standing.

As you know, this year we are having the addition of tests in grades 3-8. In 2007-08 they are going to start to include completion tests in the high school.

Professional Development Plan - *Dr. Michael Courtney*

The goal of the Professional Development Team is To improve the quality of teaching and learning and to meet the learning needs of students.

Their objectives are as follows:

- Base on teacher needs
- Tie to student achievement
- Align with New York State Standards
- Articulate across grade levels
- Provide for participation in planning

The members on the Professional Development Team are: Michael Courtney, MaryJo Hauser, Pat Cyganovich, Roberta Reiner, Dorothy Breslow, Jay Krass, Kit Vilkas, Lynda Vincent, Jean Brickman, Ginny Strauch, Catherine Bannon, and Laura Brosnihan.

Some of the activities of the Professional Development Team include:

- A. September 1st: Workshop with Dr. Marcia Tate
- B. September 2nd: Introduction to the Technology Help Desk
- C. September 6th: Teacher assistants, aides and clerical staff
 1. Technology (smart boards, excel spreadsheets, and PowerPoint)
 2. Student Discipline and management
 3. Business procedures

Professional Development Plan - *Dr. Michael Courtney* (continued)

- D. November 3rd and February 8th:
 1. PQ: Picture Books, Technology Infused Classrooms and Collaborative Groups
 2. MS/HS: Teaching in Extended Learning Blocks, Technology Infused Classrooms, Understanding by Design, The Research process and Collaborative Groups

**Presentations/Discussion
Items:**

Presentations/Discussion

Items:
(continued)

3. Both schools would send teachers to BOCES for training about grades 3-5 testing
- E. Replace April 4th with April 18th: Tentative full-day training with all faculty from 12:00 Noon to 6:00 p.m. with Dr. Marcia Tate on brain-based teaching strategies. An early dismissal would require Board approval.
- F. June 26th: Dr. Courtney will conduct preliminary workshops in accountability, data driven decision-making, and school improvement planning at both schools.
 1. Review all testing and assessment data K-12
 2. Consider curriculum alignment process
 3. Begin school improvement planning process for 2006/07

A workshop on Safe Supervision will be offered for the teacher assistants/aides. Tentatively we will replace the April 14th date with April 18th for a full-day training of faculty by Dr. Marcia Tate. This would require early dismissal of students in order to be accomplished.

*Dr. Courtney left at 10:00 p.m.

Wrestling Update - Dr. Peter R. Litchka

Dr. Litchka noted that there has been some interest with regards to instituting independent wrestling at the modified level. Our Athletic Director, Mr. Henry Sassone is here and will talk about the number of students who have signed up and then we can talk about the direction in which we want to go with this item. Mr. Sassone noted that when we talk about independent wrestling, it is a term that the state does not recognize. What the term means is that a school district might have 1, 2, 3, or maybe 4 wrestlers who would represent their school as wrestlers but compete and practice at another venue. Mr. Sassone stated that we have three students who are interested in being independent wrestlers. After speaking with John Jay, they would be interested in taking the wrestlers but they were clear that they would only be able to do this if our numbers were low; they would only take 3-4, maybe 5-6 students. After sign-ups we had two (2) seventh (7th) graders sign up who are experienced wrestlers. There was some discussion with regard to the costs involved; potentially the cost could run approximately \$1,000.00; which would include such items as bus transportation, coaching, chaperones, uniforms, and headgear. Mr. Sassone said that he would have to do some number crunching, but he does have money in his athletic budget. Our Board would have to appoint their (John Jay) coach, and there would be no stipend involved in this action. After a rather lengthy discussion, the Board decided to make a motion on a resolution and then poll the Board.

Wrestling Update - Dr. Peter R. Litchka (continued)

The Board was polled, the results of the vote were as follows:

Mr. O'Meara - yes

Ms. Douglas - yes

Ms. Hart - as long as we can revisit it next year, yes

Ms. Hublard Hershman - absent

Ms. Palma - yes, agrees with Ms. Hart, as long as it is revisited next year, with no commitment at all that we are going to review this and it would have to be in

Presentations/Discussion

Items:
(continued)

the budget for next year and particularly if it means a team. Just want to make it clear that this is for this year only, we will deal with the big picture next year.

Ms. Martell - yes

Mr. Giamundo - yes

The resolution passed 6-0.

On a motion by Mr. O'Meara, seconded by Mr. Giamundo and carried 6-0, the Board approved the following resolution:

“RESOLVED, that in light of the opportunity this year for two (2) experienced athletes to participate in an adjoining school's program, but as North Salem independents, that we approve Henry's proposal to participate in this program for this year, with the limit on expenses which are covered in the budget for uniforms and for chaperones.”

Mold Update - Dr. Peter R. Litchka

Mr. Kenneth Waldron will provide us with an update on the mold issue in the middle school/high school. Basically we have located some areas of concern with regard to air quality. We have hired a company, QuES&T, to do some testing. They will compare what the outside air quality is to the inside air quality. The results from the middle school/high school proved to be okay, with a few hot spots that need to be addressed. Mr. Waldron noted that they are recommending some changes, but that there is nothing to be concerned about. They are currently taking an overnight sampling at Pequenakonck Elementary School. Once the reports have been completed, they will be asked to come and present the information to the Board.

Mr. Steve Fuller, representing the North Salem Teachers' Association, requested copies of the report as well as what actions had been done to clean up the mold. Additionally, a request was made to receive information on the books that have been lost in the middle school/high school library due to mold problems.

Ms. Judy Schutz, secretary in the high school office, noted that she would like to make a request to have her office checked and cleaned.

Mr. Waldron stated that we cannot get rid of the mold until we find the factors that are causing the problem. We need to take care of the leaky pipes, air conditioners, and roof. We first need to take care of the problems with the roof. He said they are going to be looking to add dehumidification units in the budget for next year. Mr. Waldron will be compiling a rough estimate of expenses.

*Ms. Hauser left at 11:00 p.m.

Turf Fields Update - Trustees Carla Palma, Paul Giamundo, and John O'Meara

Mr. O'Meara suggested that we rename the committee to the Athletic Resource Review Committee. Since the last report on the activities of the sub-committee, there have been three (3) additions to the original list:

1. What about corporate donations? What about fundraising, etc.?
2. What about lights for night-time events?
3. Re-evaluation of the actual scope and bid documents by having additional consultants look at them

There have been additional meetings-a meeting with Mr. Kotz, Paul, Sylvia, and

Presentations/Discussion

Items:

(continued)

Ken, as well as with the Citizens' Advisory Committee.

Mr. Giamundo and the Facilities CAC group have been active with meetings; there have been a couple of interviews; as well as additional site visits. He mentioned that they met on October 11, 2005 to review the goals of the CAC; they looked at the report on funding options by Mr. Kotz. On October 17, 2005 was in attendance and they had a question and answer session, where they continued to address the concerns of the community. Mr. Giamundo noted that they had done visits to Mahopac, Lakeland, Carmel, and Yorktown. Future visits have been planned for John Jay, Valhalla, and Bedford. He stated that Mr. Brown and he met with a construction manager and visited a local design and environmental consultant. On October 24, 2005 a design consultant will be doing a presentation. Mr. Giamundo wanted to assure the Board and the community that a thorough investigation is being conducted. In November they will be prepared to give the Board a complete report.

Consent Agenda - Personnel Actions

After a brief discussion, on a motion by Ms. Hart, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 6-0, the Board agreed to accept the Consent Agenda, which contained only one substitute teacher. The Board requested a copy of the resume to review and reserve the right to not add the name to the substitute list if they should so choose.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Reports of August 2005 and the Extra Classroom Activities Reports of July and August 2005

On a motion by Ms. Hart, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 6-0, the Board accepted the Treasurer's Reports of August 2005 and the Extra Classroom Activities Reports of July and August 2005 as presented.

Adoption of 2005-2006 Organizational Chart

After some discussion, on a motion by Ms. Hart, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 6-0, the Board agreed to table the adoption of the 2005-2006 Organizational Chart as presented, pending further adjustments.

Acceptance of Donation of Pedometers

On a motion by Ms. Hart, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 6-0, the Board accepted the donation of pedometers. On behalf of the Board, Ms. Martell thanked Ms. Lanzarone for thinking of our students.

Approval for the Transfer of Funds for Fiscal 2004-2005

On a motion by Ms. Hart, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 6-0, the Board approved the transfer of funds for fiscal 2004-2005 as presented and attached.

Approval for the Final Transfer of Funds for Fiscal 2004-2005

On a motion by Ms. Hart, seconded by Ms. Martell and carried 6-0, the Board approved the final transfer of funds for fiscal 2004-2005 as presented and attached.

Action Items:

None at this time.

(continued)

Copt of the Transfer of Funds for
Fiscal 2004-2005 attached.)

(Copy of the Final Transfer for Fiscal
2004-2005 attached.)

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

Old Business:

New Business:

Mr. Giamundo noted that at a previous meeting he wanted to have a discussion on the timing of the Board meetings. He requested that this item be added to the Agenda for the next Board meeting.

Mr. Giamundo also asked that the Board consider setting a date to have a general discussion with the Town Board, to be scheduled after the elections.

Ms. Martell noted that the cable in the new wing is not working and asked to have someone check on it.

Ms. Douglas requested a copy of the Reporting of Type A, B and C lunches. Additionally she requested an answer regarding the Treasurer's Reconciliation Report for August 2005 regarding NTSA Ben Swartz Loan Fund.

Ms. Douglas asked for clarification on why the Angel Scholarship Fund is not being listed.

Ms. Palma noted two items:

1. National Honor Society Dinner
2. The Board needs to set a date to finish the Goals Review. After some review of calendar, it was decided that a meeting would be scheduled for Tuesday, November 8, 2005 @ 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Giamundo suggested that an anonymous survey be developed and given to the teachers regarding block scheduling. The Board would like to get a little feedback, some background information, as to how the teachers feel about block scheduling. Dr. Litchka respectfully disagreed with the Board. After some discussion, it was decided that the survey would be distributed from the Board and returned to the Board. The three (3) questions on the survey regarding block scheduling would be as follows:

1. What are your thoughts?
2. What are your comments?
3. What else do you need to know?

On a motion by Ms. Hart, seconded by Mr. O'Meara and carried 6-0, the Board voted to enter executive session for the purpose of discussion on collective negotiations. Ms. Hart was appointed Clerk *Pro Tem* for this session.

**Proposed Executive Session
Subject to Board Approval:**

The Board took a short recess, after which time they immediately convened into executive session.

On a motion by Ms. Martell, seconded by Ms. Douglas, and carried 6-0, the Board adjourned executive session and reconvened to public session.

Seeing no further business, on a motion by Ms. Martell, seconded by Ms. Douglas and carried 6-0, the Board adjourned the meeting at 1:30 a.m.

Recess:

Respectfully submitted,

Reconvene to Public Session:

Adjournment:

Marsha S. Freer, District Clerk

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

