

**NORTH SALEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
NORTH SALEM, NEW YORK**

www.northsalemschools.org

**Regular Meeting
Of the Board of Education
Minutes
March 14, 2007**

I. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the North Salem Central School District was called to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Conference Room by President Marie Martell.

Board Members Present at this Meeting

Ms. Marie Martell, President
Ms. Alison Hublard Hershman, Vice President (arrived 6:39 pm)
Ms. Katherine Daniels, Trustee
Mr. Paul Giamundo, Trustee
Ms. Carla Palma, Trustee, (arrived 7:46 p.m.)
Ms. Judith Schurmacher, Trustee
Ms. Paul Smadbeck, Trustee

Others: Dr. Sidney Freund
Mary Jo Hauser
Louise Lynch
Carol Pawlinski
Pat Cyganovich
Roberta Reiner
Henry Sassone
Members of the teaching staff
Members of the public

II. Motion to Enter Executive Session

- At 6:31 p.m., on a motion by Judith Schurmacher, seconded by Katherine Daniels and carried, the Board moved to an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing specific personnel and litigation.

III. Motion to Adjourn Executive Session and Reconvene to Public Session

- At 7:30 p.m., on a motion by Judith Schurmacher, seconded by Katherine Daniels and carried, the Board adjourned the Executive Session and reconvened to the Public Session.

IV. Pledge of Allegiance

V. Board of Education Budget Work Session

Marie Martell read the ground rules regarding the Budget Work Session.

A. K-12 Instruction

Dr. Freund welcomed everyone and explained that evening's presentation is the heart of the budget as it includes instruction, current levels of staffing and new positions. He explained that 75% of the budget is salaries and benefits. He explained that presentations this evening would include Pequenakonck Elementary and the Middle School/High School; that special education would be presented at next week's meeting.

Roberta Reiner expressed her gratitude for inclusion of the full day kindergarten and stated that one request for next year was to include aides in the classrooms. She explained that aides were cut during the budget process last year (when the first budget was defeated). She stated that the need for aides in the kindergarten classrooms was essential when looking to change the processes under which the children learn, specifically literacy and mathematics. She added that the aides would be helpful during the lunch time monitoring, as well.

Pat Cyganovich indicated the need for a MS/HS fulltime equivalent for the math department. She explained that the budget now includes one new math position. She noted that the two math teacher retirements were not replaced in the last two years and this would not be an expansion of the program but rather getting back to the level of staffing that was in the past. She stated that one teacher would work to support student achievement toward mastery by providing extended classes. She explained that the current staffing does not allow for this. Dr. Cyganovich stated that the math consultant's recommendation supported two additional math teachers. Dr. Freund asked how a second math teacher would be used in the MS/HS if the Board were to provide the second teacher. Dr. Cyganovich answered that there would be additional extended classes in all areas which the MS/HS would like to have extended classes and this would provide the opportunity to add course opportunities for more seniors. This additional math teacher would give more students the chance to take a fourth year of math. Dr. Freund explained his understanding that there was a strong correlation between student achievement and time on task. Judith Schurmacher asked if the math

consultant recommended two teachers and Pat Cyganovich answered that she had. Marie Martell stated that her understanding was that currently HS math teachers were also teaching in the MS. Dr. Cyganovich stated that five high school math teachers have at least one assignment in the middle school in order to meet all MS needs. She stated this makes for fragmented teams. She stated that if two math teachers were provided for, this could be curtailed. Paul Giamundo asked if the addition of one math teacher would allow for additional classes and Dr. Cyganovich stated it would not. Katherine Daniels wanted to know how many students at the upper end of the academic spectrum would be interested in the additional math classes. Dr. Cyganovich stated that 29-30 students had signed up for AP Calculus this year and that if something else was offered, there would be students interested in taking the college classes. Carla Palma asked what the class size would be for extended classes and Dr. Cyganovich stated the classes would be at approximately 25 students. Dr. Freund stated that, with the Board's permission, he would like to add the second math teacher to the "score card". The Board agreed.

Dr. Freund stated that he would like to speak about the two other positions that were requested. One is for physical education. He stated this impacted PQ as well as the MS/HS. He determined that the problem could be partially addressed by an adjustment in PQ's master schedule. He explained the class cycles/class sizes/day cycles to everyone and also explained that modification of this on alternate days would help to partially alleviate the problem currently encountered. He felt that this would allow several electives to then be reinstated at the high school. He explained that the position is not in the budget because when looking at the budget and prioritizing, he had prioritized the math, kindergarten aides, special ed and teaching assistant at the elementary level higher than physical education. However, he explained, with some modifications through the master schedule, the schedule would be better than what is currently offered.

The Board did not add the PE position to the score card.

Dr. Freund stated that there was a study performed of the music department and that this had not yet been reviewed by the Board. Dr. Freund stated that he had not added a music position. He believes that there should be a systematic approach when looking at the arts program, through the Curriculum Council, in terms of study before adding a specific position. He stated that if he were to add a music position, he would add it to the elementary level, for a strings program, not the MS/HS level. Discussion ensued regarding the history of the need for instrumental lessons as part of the music program at the MS/HS level. Judith Schurmacher proposed future discussion regarding this position and Paul Giamundo agreed. Dr. Freund stated there was a need to look at the full performing arts program. At least four board members would like further discussion.

Roberta Reiner stated that PQ will continue the full day kindergarten implementation. She discussed mathematics. Roberta Reiner stated that she

would like to have new textbooks which are geared to the March to March testing cycle. She stated that the PQ highlights for next year include science in year two and training for all of science staff. She stated that K-2 selected science 21 through BOCES and this program is in many of North Salem's sister districts. She stated that PQ will lease the program from BOCES, as well as training the teachers; training will cost \$250 per teacher. Mrs. Reiner stated that PQ will be purchasing a lot more science material for hands on in the "upper house." She stated that they will be looking at training for new teachers and sending teachers out for "look sees" of new textbooks. Mrs. Reiner elaborated on the expanding role of technology and the use of one smart board in every grade level. She also spoke about the Tigers CARE program which instills positive behavioral intervention.

Pat Cyganovich stated the initiatives for the middle school/high school and that the current year has seen an honors curriculum in Spanish and French, new math, a new elective program, earth science in Grade 8, increased lab time in the AP sciences and added SAT review classes. She stated that with the new budget, the school is not looking at buying only things but also memberships, conferences and consultants, all of which are necessary to achieve the goals set forth. She stated the schools will continue the honors curriculum in Spanish and French and will implement the geometry course (for which teachers are already training). There will be new opportunities in science. Dr. Cyganovich is hoping to purchase musical instruments. These purchases would be included in the per pupil expenditure. However, she stated the need for a grand piano, which would not fall under the same allocation. She stated that the cost of repairing the current piano is not cost effective at the \$10,000 to \$20,000 estimate which was given. Dr. Cyganovich stated she would like to see the purchase of new literature books (not textbooks, but reading texts). She would like to redesign the American history course to make it an 11th grade course rather than a 12th grade elective, which would provide more opportunities for students to take AP classes. Marie Martell asked for confirmation that 11th grade students who did not wish to take an AP American history class would not have the opportunity to take the honors class, and Dr. Cyganovich said this was correct. Paul Giamundo asked about the possibility of reaching out to the public for a possible donation of a piano. Dr. Freund stated, though it is impossible to plan a budget based on donations, it would be a good idea to think about ways to advertise the needs of the school. Alison Hublard Hershman inquired about what would happen with the old piano. Pat Cyganovich stated it could be sold or taken away but there would be a disposal fee attached to having it taken away. Paul Giamundo talked about the difference of the grand piano and the upright piano that is in the budget. Dr. Cyganovich stated the grand piano is to enrich and expand.

Dr. Freund stated that summer curriculum work, in terms of time spent is the most productive time spent in curriculum review since teachers have a full day to devote their attention. He explained this is a highly effective and efficient use of time. Pat Cyganovich stated that teachers say their most needed resource is time and summer curriculum work offers this as a professional opportunity. She stated that many match the initiatives and give the seeds to move along and offering opportunities for teachers to initiate projects. Carla Palma asked whether the science mapping was complete. Dr. Cyganovich stated that they were on schedule to be complete by the end of the school year. She stated that no big ticket items were included in the new budget; they will use the equipment that was used from the 06-07 budget. She stated she would like to see the teachers have the opportunities to attend workshops and to the state convention.

Paul Giamundo asked if PQ still participates in Quest and Roberta Reiner stated that this was part of the Tigers CARE program.

Marie Martell asked about the monies allocated in the consumable areas and whether there was a need to increase this amount. Dr. Cyganovich stated she did not have to turn down any requests that were made and Roberta Reiner stated the same for PQ.

Dr. Freund spoke about the co-curricular programs and clubs. He stated there were a significant percentage increase, as well as budget increase. He stated that this area was significantly under-budgeted for last year. He stated an increase comes along with the new chorus club at PQ. Roberta Reiner stated that the chorus director has been directing this club on her own time before or after school and has not been paid to date. She stated the number of participants has grown over the years and she would now like to conduct this as a formalized program. Mrs. Reiner also spoke about experimenting with an ensemble band. Dr. Cyganovich spoke about the MS/HS Amnesty International program which is raising awareness of student about crises that exist around the world.

Dr. Freund stated the Board had received a list of teacher/coaches and their stipends. He asked about how the clubs are monitored, student participation and how often the clubs meet. Dr. Cyganovich stated she asks for enrollment figures and how often they meet. If there is not significant interest within a year or two, then it is not funded. It is based on the "honesty" system. She stated that if one program does continue, this presents an opportunity for something new to take its place.

Dr. Freund thanked Alison Hublard Hershman for her help and expertise with the auditorium. He stated that the District had invested a lot in refurbishing the auditorium and what is needed now is for someone to take the responsibility to care for it and coordinate its use. He talked about having a technical directed for each production and said that he had spoken with Bill Dahl about what the stipends should be for inclusion in the budget. He stated

there was a need for a budget for each separate production, based on royalties, costumes, etc. Judith Schurmacher wondered where the revenue from the productions was used. Dr. Freund stated that it went back into the general funds. Alison Hublard Hershman discussed a proposal to put the money back into the auditorium to cover upgrades and maintenance. Further discussion ensued on what would be needed from this person and what further upgrades/repairs would be needed in the auditorium.

B. Athletics

Dr. Freund stated that regarding athletics, the Board would like to focus on the number of students participating and new teams.

Mr. Henry Sassone, Athletic Director, stated that he'd first like to demonstrate the growth of the program; 59 teams have been budgeted for the 07-08 school year. He stated that 72% of MS students and 61% of HS students participate in sports. He stated that 9 teams had accomplished scholar athlete status so far. He stated that the numbers are reflective of growth. He stated that he currently has students interested in varsity bowling and that 90% of these students do not play a winter sport. He stated that North Salem is known for having the largest and most comprehensive athletic program in Section I. Mr. Sassone discussed replacing the modified wrestling program with an independent varsity wrestling program. There was further discussion on whether there was still interest in the modified program. Mr. Sassone stated that the Board must think about growth beyond modified to varsity because this level is an enhancement for college applications and would allow the students to participate at the collegiate level. Discussion followed. Marie Martell inquired about the request for a treadmill and a stationary bicycle. Mr. Sassone stated that the treadmill is broken and will be thrown away, and so would the stationary bike. He stated the need for supervision in the weight room and that perhaps, in the future, a PE teacher could move around so that no one would get hurt and this would afford the student a full day of using the equipment. He stated that the equipment has not been used much this year because of unsupervised time.

VI. Public Comments

A parent of a modified wrestler, stated that he would like to see the continuation of the modified wrestling program since there are no recreational teams after sixth grade. He stated that he does not see the reason for eliminating the modified program since it does not cost anything.

Rose Maria DosSantos, HS PTO President, commented on the report by the math consultants who visited North Salem. She wondered if it was public record and what it cost the District to have them come in for the study. She wanted to know this because she felt that recommendations were not always followed. She stated her support for the second math teacher. She stated that she has the same feelings this year as last regarding the music program. She stated that last year another music

teacher was requested but the public was told there was no plan; now there is a plan and no one has looked at it. She stated it was evident that the Board does not support music; how can you grow a music program if you do not provide opportunities. She stated it is apparent North Salem wants to accommodate athletics. She wanted to know why high school students were not given a chance for further music programs and asked for reconsideration of another music teacher. She also stated that she would like to see provisions in the budget to recognize the work the principals and assistant principals have done for the District.

A parent of a 6th grade wrestler stated that his son had been wrestling since second grade. He stated they now go to Carmel for wrestling and also have other friends who go there as well. He stated that he thought tonight's dialogue regarding the modified/varsity programs was great and that he understands this is not a budgetary concern. He stated he would like to see John Jay be used as a feeder program without a cost factor in creating a wrestling team. He stated that all neighboring school districts have the program and his son would lose two years of competing which could hurt his future in wrestling.

A parent spoke of her support of aides in the kindergarten classrooms. She stated that parents are currently helping with reading but there are not enough parents to volunteer. She stated that kindergarten has been her son's first experience here and that he has had an okay year. She feels he will do fine in first grade but that it would have been much easier on the teacher to have an aide as the students did not always get the time or attention they deserved. She stated that many parents were frustrated with the lack of progress that the students were making this year. She stated that the parents want to be sure that the teachers can do more than just deliver curriculum but provide a full kindergarten experience.

A parent stated that she wholeheartedly supported Rose Maria DosSantos and that she would also like to offer additional reinforcement for the principals and assistant principals. She stated that she was at the school with the math consultants and her concerns that their recommendations were not being followed. She inquired whether their recommendations were put into the budget.

Board members stated that the music program and the second math teacher will be readdressed.

A parent stated her complete support of more kindergarten aides. She stated that, though she is happy with the current program, the teachers really need another person in the classrooms. She would also like to see aides in the classrooms for the remainder of this school year if there is money available to do so. She also asked for reconsideration for an additional PE teacher, not only to help bring the class sizes down at PQ but to offer PE, electives at the MS/HS.

A parent added support to Rose Maria DosSantos. She also spoke about bowling and that though there is a great interest in this, bowling is already successful as a recreational program away from school. She felt that if it is added to the school, it will be taken away from someplace else.

A parent wondered what happened with the monies from the ticket sales from the play. He stated there is a sentiment to be against sports just to be against sports in the North Salem community. He stated that dollar for dollar, few things give the return that athletics does. He asked that parents work more with their young children so that they are more prepared when they come into the kindergarten classrooms.

Bill Dahl, NSTA President, spoke of North Salem's value to community wellness and the need to address the error in the budget. He stated that he would like to see the Board look at the possibility of putting the PE teacher back, as they have agreed to look at the second math teacher and the music teacher. He asked that the Board please take a stand and look at the fitness, wellness and the total child and make the PE position important enough to put back the positions that were eliminated due to retirements.

Mary Sireci, PE teacher, stated that she would like to see the PE teacher put into place so as to add electives, which would put physical education at a new level with fresh ideas.

A parent stated that he was a graduate of North Salem School District and has three children in the schools. He stated he also drives to other communities for the wrestling program and would like to see conversation regarding further interest in the modified program.

VII. Adjournment

On a motion from Judith Schurmacher, second by Carla Palma, the meeting was adjourned at 10:21 p.m.