

**WILMETTE, IL**  
**MAY 24, 2021**  
**REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Board of Education was held on Monday, May 24, 2021 at the Mikaelian Education Center, 615 Locust Road, Wilmette, Illinois. President Amy Poehling called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Members Present: Amy Poehling Jon Cesaretti, Anne Hart, Bonnie Kim, Frank Panzica,  
 Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Erin Stone

Members Absent: None

Administrators Present: Kari Cremascoli, Corey Bultemeier, Tony DeMonte, Heather Glowacki,  
 Katie Lee, Kristin Swanson

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Principal Becky Littmann introduced Central students who honored D39 bus drivers and crossing guards who help students get to and from school safely every day. The students then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**STUDENT RECOGNITION**

Principal Kelly Jackson recognized Highcrest Middle School and Wilmette Junior High School students for their accomplishments this year.

Mrs. Jackson introduced Elaine Xu, 6<sup>th</sup> grader, who won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Scripps Spelling Bee, 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the D39 Spelling Bee, 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the North Cook ISC Spelling Bee, and 4<sup>th</sup> place in the 11<sup>th</sup> Regional ISC Scripps Championship.

Mrs. Jackson introduced Avni Arora who won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the ADL's First Amendment Freedoms Essay Contest. She placed first among hundreds of submissions from across the Midwest. She won a \$5K scholarship for her essay. Avni shared her essay via video.

Mrs. Jackson recognized National Latin Exam Award students. On March, 19 WJHS students chose to take a remote, extra-curricular, fee-based test in Latin. Of those 19 students, 16 received awards and 12 received medals. She announced the Summa Cum Laude, Maxima Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Cum Laude award winners.

Mrs. Jackson noted in addition, on April 21<sup>st</sup> the WJHS Certamen Team won 1<sup>st</sup> Place in State Competition. The team slew competitors from the Western and Chicago Regions to take the win.

In spite of many challenges this past year, D39 students showed persistence and willingness to accept the obstacles they faced. HMS Music Teacher, Mrs. Martin and her students worked on singing *Imagine* by John Lennon. Students could not hear each other's voices as they participated remotely. The students learned sign language of the song's lyrics and individually recorded their voices while signing. Mrs. Martin put their voices together into a compilation video. They also renamed themselves in the Zoom title boxes with what they envisioned would make the world a better place. Mrs. Jackson shared the video of the students singing and signing *Imagine*.

### **PTA PLAYGROUND DONATION RECOGNITION**

Dr. Cremascoli introduced Romona Principal Cindy Anderson to announce the playground donation. Principal Anderson introduced former PTA President, Kimberly Newman, current PTA President, Paloma Samotny, and Vice Presidents Lauren Litchfield and Jacki Krashin. Lauren Litchfield reported on the PTA's fundraising goals toward replacing playground equipment at Romona School.

Mrs. Anderson noted the committee and staff and students worked three years to raise money for the playground. She thanked Board for supporting the amazing Romona PTA.

### **APPROVE THE MINUTES**

Ms. Stone moved, seconded by Mr. Panzica, to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2021 Board of Education and Reorganizational meetings. The minutes were approved as submitted by **General Consent**.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

### **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Facility Development – Mr. Panzica stated at the May 10<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole meeting, the committee discussed the following topics:

#### **Summer 2021 Construction Project Update**

Three major projects will be finished this summer with at a total cost of approximately \$11M. Projects include Romona and McKenzie KEEP39 classroom additions. Over 80% of incoming kindergartners will take advantage of this program. Extensive renovations will be completed at Wilmette Junior High School to add air conditioning to the second floor. These projects are ahead of schedule due to recent good weather.

#### **Updated Five-Year Capital Projects Summary**

Over the last six years major projects were added to support learning commons at all six schools and additional kindergarten classrooms to all elementary schools. Projects are currently being considered for the next five years that will focus on Health/Life Safety and include replacements of roofing, boilers, and windows. Options for next round of air conditioning upgrades will also be reviewed.

#### **Review of Potential Summer 2022 Construction Projects**

Members discussed a timeline for identification of construction project analysis, design, and commitment. Options will be more carefully reviewed before any commitments are made.

#### **Park District Bathroom Access and Proposed IGA**

The Administration is negotiating with the Wilmette Park District through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that would grant access to the exterior bathroom at the junior high school. The park district would like to renovate and maintain the facility for patrons and Community Field visitors. Details on access and safety are being reviewed.

#### **Romona Playground Donation Agreement with Romona PTA**

The Board had committed to contributing \$30K to the playground project if Romona PTA was able to meet their fundraising goals. The Romona PTA has accomplished their goal and has entered into a contract with District 39 to install the new playground.

School Finance – Mr. Cesaretti stated at the May 10<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole meeting, the committee discussed the following topics:

### **Special Education Transportation Services Contract Extension**

Mr. Bultemeier reported outsourced transportation contracts are typically renewed every three years. District 39 is in the third year of the busing contract with North Shore Transportation. Illinois School Code allows a two-year contract extension. In recent years there would be a rise in ridership based on student Population projections. During this year of the pandemic with schools being closed, the District had to only pay for actual services. The two-year contract extension allows for 3.3% increase for each year. Driver shortages continue and busing companies are having to increase pay to attract drivers. Other considerations for bus companies include increase in liability insurance, lost revenue due to pandemic, and reducing the amount of new buses being purchased. North Shore is requesting a clause be added to the contract with the option to either pay 80% of normal routes and they would keep their employees on the payroll or pay 37% of normal routes and they would have the ability to furlough employees in the event that schools close again.

### **Fiscal Year 2022 Draft Budget Review**

Mr. Bultemeier provided an overview of the budget process. He noted tentative budgets are presented in June along with approval of a public hearing on budgets to be held in August. Budgets are approved at the August Board of Education meeting and filed with state agencies in September.

Mr. Bultemeier stated the Operating revenues are mainly obtained through property taxes. He noted CPI for the 2020 tax levy is 2.3%. He reviewed other revenue sources such as fees, and state and federal aid.

Mr. Bultemeier reported on operating expenditures with largest expenditure being salaries and benefits. The administration and the Wilmette Education Association (WEA) are currently engaged in collective bargaining, therefore salary increases are unknown at this time. Staffing is driven by enrollment and while administration plans for a return to full in-person education for the 2021-2022 school year, place holders for extra staff are being held in the event COVID-19 continues to dictate staffing levels.

Mr. Bultemeier reviewed operating funds revenues and expenditures by category for Educational Fund, O&M Fund, Transportation Fund, IMRF/SS Funds, Working Cash and Tort Funds.

Mr. Bultemeier explained the Board's philosophy regarding maintaining a fund balance minimum of 40% and peak of 65%. The state requires school districts to maintain a reserve fund balance minimum of 25% to ensure the highest rating in this category. Maintaining a 40% fund balance allows a cushion of reserves for unexpected issues. He also noted state funding is received sporadically and having 40% reserves covers cash flow issues when funding is irregular.

Strategy – Mrs. Schneider-Fabes updated the committee on the Strategic Planning Core Team Liaison Report. She noted the Strategic Planning Team held four meetings which consisted of an orientation meeting and three data retreat meetings.

During the orientation meeting, all the members of the team engaged in article discussions on topics such as Trends in K-12 Education, Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, Effective Teacher Professional Development and Essential Components of Data-Based Problem-Solving Approaches.

The Data Retreat Meetings focused on the perceptual data gathered from the stakeholder groups; three (3) data reports: Working and Learning Environments, Student Achievement and Growth, and Finance, Facilities and Technology; then the committee reviewed and discussed. All materials have been uploaded to the Strategic Planning Process webpage. The team was to conduct a SWOT analysis which asks that Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats that were identified collaboratively. The Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) consultant, Arlana Bedard, consolidated contributions from the team and shared a draft of the SWOT analysis.

Stakeholder groups are providing feedback and input, which will be reviewed before moving to next steps during the Setting Directions meetings.

### **Liaison Reports**

Community Review Committee (CRC) – Mrs. Kim stated the CRC meeting was devoted to reporting on and discussing data retreat meetings in conjunction with the CEC strategic planning.

Educational Foundation –Mrs. Kim stated the committee recognized the work of outgoing members and seated new board members. The committee watched the Educational Foundation’s “Silver Lining Project” video which celebrated special moments during this pandemic year.

Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) – No report.

Legislative Update – Mrs. Kim stated SB 2109 passed in Senate and moved to the House, which would require school board members and administrators to complete a course of instruction on the adoption of trauma informed school standard beginning in 2022 on an annual basis.

Bills are in circulation regarding sex education curriculum. An earlier version of SB 818 mandating sex education courses in grades K-12 was amended to strike such language. The bill requires any school districts choosing to teach sex education be required to follow national guidelines on sexual education. All instruction would have to meet a variety of new standards. The bill has moved to house for consideration.

SB 508 is in the House and provides if school districts or any taxing district has to give a tax appeal refund then the following year the aggregate levy will be increased by a supplemental levy to recapture the property tax revenue lost by the taxing district. Additional progress of this bill will be provided.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **A. Written Communication**

The Board received written communication from Rebecca Berlin Melzer recognizing her son’s teacher, the ‘spectacular’ Ms. Martin, 2nd Grade at Romona and Romona Physical Education teacher, Mr. Toy, ‘the bright light in her child’s day’; communications were received by the “Marvelous Mooneys”, students from Ms. Mooney’s McKenzie 2nd grade class, requesting the District, PTA, and Board consider purchasing a swing with a safety harness for their playground; communication from Kevin Dahm regarding emails sent by D39 teachers to parents regarding only responding to parents during “office hours”.

### **B. Administrative Announcements from Superintendent and Staff**

#### **1. Metrics Team Update**

Dr. Cremascoli stated the District 39 Metrics Reopening Advisory Team met last Friday for the final meeting of the year. The group met in person and the contributions of each team member were honored and celebrated. This team of teachers, administrators, parents, doctors and

specialists have provided invaluable guidance and support throughout this school year, and the administration is incredibly grateful for their contributions. The D39 Metrics Dashboard and full weekly report are available online. This is the final report of the year; however, the online dynamic dashboard data will continue to be updated through the end of the school year.

2. Vaccine Access for Children Ages 12-15

Dr. Cremascoli stated the Pfizer Covid-19 Vaccine has been approved for children 12 years of age and older. Administration worked with community partners to ensure broad communication of this approval as well as vaccination clinics through New Trier Township Vaccination Clinic at the Northfield Campus of New Trier High School. There has been significant interest in these vaccine opportunities as appointments for the first couple of clinics were quickly filled, even with expanded appointment times. Administration will continue to seek opportunities to offer clinics within the Township and encourage those who are interested to access the appointments available through the Cook County Department of Public Health. At this time, the Board has discussed and does not anticipate creating policy in the near future that would mandate students to be vaccinated; however, the District will continue to follow the guidance set forth by the Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois State Board of Education.

3. Planning for 2021-2022 School Year

Dr. Cremascoli stated administration continues to plan and hire for the 2021-2022 school year. While the mitigation protocols that will be required of public schools for reopening in the fall progresses, administration plans for a full return to in-person learning and will incorporate layered mitigation efforts, as needed.

Current families of students in the Enhanced Remote Learning Program, have been surveyed. Responses received thus far indicate nearly all are preparing to return to full in-person schooling in the fall. Eight families have indicated a desire for continued remote learning based on individual circumstances, four of whom indicate significant medical needs. However, many of these indicate the need will depend upon vaccine approval for their child. Administration continues to evaluate needs and programming options as plans develop for the upcoming school year.

4. Reflections

Dr. Cremascoli stated District 39's Reflections Celebration which honors retirees as well as teachers and staff who have reached career milestones will be hosted virtually again this year. The celebration is scheduled for the afternoon of Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup>.

5. End-of-Year Student Celebrations and Graduation

Dr. Cremascoli stated a very special graduation celebration for 8th grade students will be held on June 8th. There will be two ceremonies organized by students' homeroom classes. The ceremony will be held outdoors at New Trier Northfield campus.

6. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Dr. Cremascoli reported the District received FOIA requests from:

- Alice Schatz requesting the amount of money spent on mental health-related and/or behavioral health-related placements to Therapeutic Day Schools, Therapeutic Boarding Schools, Therapeutic Residential Treatment Centers, and Therapeutic Wilderness Programs from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2020

- Tori D'Antonio requesting any/all communications including emails, faxes, attachments between SafeGuard Surveillance, LLC and its representatives and District 39 Superintendent and Board President regarding presentation and implementation of testing at D39 schools prior to December 14, 2020 Board of Education meeting; all documents and presentation materials shared by SafeGuard Surveillance, LLC and its representatives in preparation for the December 2020 Board meeting; all communications, emails, faxes, attachments between La Grange School District 102 and its representatives and District 39 Superintendent and Board President regarding presentation and implementation of COVID-19 testing at D39 schools prior to the December 2020 Board meeting; any/all documents and presentation materials give to D39 Superintendent and/or Board members by La Grange School District 102 and its representatives in preparation for the December 2020 Board meeting and COVID screening presentations.

### **C. Strategic Plan Update**

#### **1. SWOT Analysis Review and Discussion**

Dr. Cremascoli shared the District's Strategic Planning Process website page which holds key products regarding updates in the strategic planning process. The draft Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis was shared and feedback was requested from staff, students, and stakeholders. Feedback is being analyzed and will be discussed with the Core team to provide next steps.

Board member discussion regarding SWOT analysis included refining the language of 'strong academic achievement'; correlation between opportunities and weaknesses/threats; importance of addressing financial threats such as amounts of money received per student and Consumer Price Index; analyzing standard test scores across various subgroups; refining the language of 'political divisiveness' perhaps to 'civility/lack of civility'; incorporating ideas from the community online chat that followed the virtual community meeting; expanding on the strength of creating a sense of belonging among upper grade level cohorts by changing class structure; academic achievement and academic growth having corresponding opportunities for strength; parent participation decreasing as students attend upper grades; upper grade level students being more connected, being involved, and having their own voice.

### **D. Annual Business**

#### **1. Fiscal Year 2022 Draft Budget**

Mr. Bultemeier reviewed the 2022 draft budget and budget timeline. He explained the Operating revenues by source noting the majority of revenue is obtained through property taxes. He noted CPI rate for 2020 is 2.3%. The largest portion of Operating expenditures is salaries and benefits. The administration and teachers' union are currently engaged in collective bargaining so salaries are unknown at this time. Staffing is driven by class sizes and building needs. Administration continues to retain placeholders in the event COVID-19 dictates staffing for the fall.

FY22 Operating funds summary with estimated total revenues of \$67,468,204 and expenditures of \$65,993,296. Expected surplus is projected at \$1,474,998. \$5.9M including \$5.1M for construction projects and \$0.8M for debt certificates. The June 2022 fund balance is estimated at \$27.8M (42.13% of expenditures).

2. 2021-2022 School Calendar

Dr. Cremascoli stated as the end of the school year approaches, school districts have to file their final attendance calendar. Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) allowed school districts five Remote Learning Planning Days for the 2020-2021 school year. District 39 utilized these days throughout the year and the final calendar needs to be adjusted to reflect these calendar changes. The last day of the school year is June 10th, an early release day.

3. 2021-2022 Student/Staff Plans

Dr. Glowacki announced this annual report highlights initial plans for staffing and planning for the next school year. Current plans are for a typical school year of in-person instruction. Plans are subject change pending recommendations and guidance from federal, state or local government agencies. Student registration is monitored weekly through the summer so grade level sections can be added if needed. A planned initiative to support social emotional learning for the next school year following the past pandemic year includes having one social worker and one psychologist at each school.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

## ACTION ITEMS

### Consent Agenda

Ms. Stone moved seconded by Mr. Panzica to approve the personnel report dated May 24, 2021 which included licensed full-time reemployment of **Kelly Bachman**, effective August 23, 2021; **Caitlin Ciulla**, effective August 23, 2021; **Madison Magad-Weiss**, effective August 23, 2021; licensed part-time reemployment of **Jill Gershune**, effective August 23, 2021; **Hillary Rosenthal**, , effective August 23, 2021; licensed full-time employment of **Madeline Gannon**, WJHS/Harper, Speech/Language, effective August 23, 2021; **Chelsie Harris**, effective August 23, 2021; **Kelli Lowry**, effective August 23, 2021; **Brooke Martyn**, effective August 23, 2021; **Elizabeth O'Toole**, effective August 23, 2021; **Taylor Parks**, effective August 23, 2021; **Nikki Powell**, effective August 23, 2021; educational support personnel full-time employment of **Muana Fahnbulleh**, effective May 17, 2021; release of a probationary employee of **David Zepeda Ovalle**, effective May 21, 2021; tenured leave of absence of **Joanna Nummy**, for the 2021-22 school year; **Jessica Ridgeway**, for the 2021-22 school year; licensed request from sick leave bank for **Employee 8046**, grant 9.5 days from WEA sick leave bank; educational support personnel request from sick leave bank for **Employee 6179**, grant 10.5 days from SSU sick leave bank: approve the 2020-2021 final school year calendar: approve Donation Agreement between Romona Elementary School PTA and the Wilmette Public Schools District 39 Board of Education: approve the accounts payable for bills listed between April 28, 2021–May 24, 2021 in the following amounts: Educational Fund \$896,570.87; O&M Fund \$210,253.42; Debt Service Fund \$475.00; Transportation Fund \$152,297.14; Capital Projects \$614,245.00; total all funds: \$ 1,873,841.43: to approve the manual checks issued between April 28, 2021–May 24, 2021 in the following amounts: Educational Fund \$699,426.67; O&M Fund \$108,997.95; Transportation Fund \$262.24; total all funds: \$808,686.86.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Anne Hart, Bonnie Kim, Frank Panzica, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Erin Stone, and Amy Poehling; voting “nay” – none; absent –none: **Motions Carried.**

## CONFERENCE ITEMS

### Old Business

None

### New Business

Mr. Panzica asked if a July Board meeting would need to be scheduled. Dr. Cremascoli stated there is no meeting scheduled at this time.

### Good and Welfare

Mrs. Schneider-Fabes thanked members on the Metrics Advisory Team for their stellar service.

Dr. Cremascoli noted the perspective of stakeholders and community on the Metrics Team were greatly appreciated. While there were challenging moments, the group was a model of civility and engagement and the expertise provided was exceptional.

Mr Panzica agreed that the advantages of this community, having a strong school district, administrators, teachers, parents, and community with a lot of expertise brought value to each weekly meeting.

Ms. Stone commented on the connection between Avni Arora’s essay, the Marvelous Mooneys’ letters, and HMS singers that put their ideals in the text box. She said it was heartwarming to see students advocating for fellow students and advocate for the change they hope for.

Ms. Stone moved, seconded by Mr. Cesaretti, to adjourn to executive session to discuss collective bargaining and specific personnel.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Anne Hart, Bonnie Kim, Frank Panzica, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Erin Stone, Amy Poehling; voting “nay” – none; absent – none: **Motion Carried.**

The meeting adjourned to executive session at 8:42 p.m. and returned to the regular meeting of the Board of Education at 9:43 p.m.

Being no further business, Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Hart, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education. It adjourned at 9:44 p.m. by **General Consent.**

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President

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Secretary