

Information Packet

For Public Distribution

For the

May 26, 2010

Board of Education Meeting



Ann Arbor Public Schools

2555 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734.994.2230

Todd Roberts, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools
robertst@aaps.k12.mi.us

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Education Trustees
From: Todd Roberts *TR*
Date: May 21, 2010
Subject: Information Update

I wanted to bring to your attention that we have an Executive Session for the purpose of Negotiations and Attorney Client Privilege scheduled for Wednesday at 5:30 PM prior to the regular Board meeting.

2010-2011 Budget

Included in your packet is a draft copy of the proposed 2010-2011 budget book. Robert Allen will be presenting the budget at Wednesday's meeting. Based on not knowing our funding allocation from the state at this point, or the impact of the state retirement legislation reform, the budget is based on implementing the budget reduction plan that includes both parts one and two. I have included another copy of the plan that was presented to the Board in February. Between our first briefing on the budget and our second briefing on June 9th we may have further updates based on the retirement picture and the outcome of negotiations.

If you have any questions let me know.

Retirement Reform Legislation

Included in the *Information Packet* (Tab 1) is information regarding the details of the retirement reform legislation recently signed by the governor. This legislation details the various components of the legislation. The deadline for employees to file for retirement under the legislation is June 11th. The state has also allotted a certain number of retirement extensions for each school district. We have been allotted 32 extensions that we can use if we want. The extensions allow an individual to postpone retirement for up to one year and retire no later than September 1, 2011 and still qualify for the incentives in the legislation. We are currently considering whether we will grant any extensions and under what circumstances. We plan to make a decision regarding this issue and inform staff early next week of what their options are regarding the extension option. I will let you know what we are planning to do prior to communicating with staff.

If you have any questions let me know.

AP Biology Textbook

Included on the agenda for Wednesday's meeting is a first briefing to purchase new AP Biology textbooks. The College Board requires that textbooks not be more than eight years old. We need to purchase the textbooks in order to be in compliance with the College Board. The total purchase price is \$23,094 and is being paid from the 2009-10 high school instructional budget.

If you have any questions let me know.

Information Packet Index

May 26, 2010

MPSERS Reform Legislation Analysis	1
Celebration of Excellence - Pat Butler & Sandy Maconochie	2
Draft Minutes of the 5/12/10 Regular Meeting	3
Newspaper Articles	4

MPSERS Reform Legislation Analysis

Background

- The current public school employee pension system supports approximately 171,000 MPSERS retirees
- There are 280,000 current public school employees contributing to the pension system
- There are 40,000 active employees who participate in the Basic system
- Approximately 9,000 to 10,000 employees retire during a typical year
- There are 38,000 active employees who would be eligible for the 1.6% multiplier incentive
- An additional 17,200 employees with a combined age and years of service totaling 80 are eligible for the 1.55% multiplier incentive
- The legislation does not specify a new MPSERS rate

Eligibility:

- The Office of Retirement Services (ORS) will notify eligible retirees by letter beginning after the legislation is signed by the Governor
- A list of the total number of eligible retirees by district is available in the MASA Retirement Reform Resource Center or can be accessed by [clicking here](#)
- Eligible retirees have between now and June 11, 2010 to notify ORS of their retirement in order to qualify for the increased multiplier
- The incentive applies to retirees whose effective date of retirement is between July 1, 2010 and September 1, 2010
- Employees must have been employed or on layoff or an approved leave of absence for the 6 month period prior to May 1, 2010

Retirement Incentive:

- A 1.6% multiplier for a currently eligible retirees
- A 1.55% multiplier and the option to retire early for employees with a combined age and years of service totaling 80
- Final average compensation, solely for the purposes of the multiplier, is capped at \$90,000 (FAC beyond \$90,000 would be part of the pension calculations, but at the standard 1.5% rate)

Retirement Extension:

- A superintendent may extend the retirement date of 1 employee per reporting unit to no later than September 1, 2010
- This extension must be done with the consent of the employee
- In order to extend a retirement the superintendent must submit notification to ORS along with the written concurrence of the employee being extended not later than June 15, 2010
- ORS will allocate 2,500 additional extension slots to reporting units statewide using a pro rata methodology
- Districts will be informed by ORS of any extra slots they receive by May 22, 2010

Increased employee contributions:

- 3% employee contribution increase
- Funds would flow into an irrevocable health care trust (established under HB 4073, which is tie-barred to this bill)
- Employees making less than \$18,000 will have a phased contribution of 1.5% for the first year and 3% in the second year and every year thereafter
- Districts must collect and remit employee contributions to the retirement system

Hybrid Retirement for New Employees:

- New employees will be enrolled in a new hybrid defined benefit/defined contribution retirement plan
- Final average compensation under the hybrid is based on a 5 year average
- The plan has a 50% employer match for employee contributions to a defined contribution system (up to 1% of salary)
- Employers may negotiate a larger match (at the same 50% rate) up to a total of 3% of salary
- Employer contributions are subject to a 4 year vesting schedule as follows: 50% vesting after 2 years, 75% after 3 years, 100% after 4 years
- The minimum retirement age for the hybrid plan is 60 years old with 10 years of service
- Employees may not purchase service credit under the hybrid plan
- Cost of living adjustment (COLA) is eliminated under the hybrid plan
- ORS may establish a separate MPSERS rate for hybrid plan employees that will be calculated using the same methodology used to calculate the rate for current employees but shall be based on an assumption of a 7% annual return on investments (it is currently based on an 8% annual return).

Third Party/Independent Contractors:

- Retirants who are employed directly by a reporting unit and earn more than one third of their final average compensation forfeit their pension and health benefits for the term of their employment
- Retirants who perform "core services" for a district and who are employed indirectly by a reporting unit (either via a third party or as an independent contractor) forfeit their pension and health benefits for the term of their employment regardless of income
- These provisions only apply to retirants whose effective retirement date is July 1, 2010 or later
- Retirants who are already employed either directly or indirectly by a reporting unit, or who retire with an effective date prior to July 1, 2010 are considered grandfathered and will not be affected by these changes
- Because an employee's effective date of retirement is the first day of the month after he or she terminates employment with Michigan's public schools, the last day that an employee can retire and operate as a contractor under the current rules is May 28, 2010
- For districts with employees considering a May retirement, please note that if an agreement to come back and work as a contractor is set up prior to an employee's retirement, MPSERS interprets this as not technically retiring. As such, districts and employees should be careful that they do not create a problem by making these arrangements prior an employee's retirement
- Retirants who are affected by these provisions may retain their health care if they choose to pay the full cost of the plan
- Retirants whose pension and benefit payment are suspended as a result of this change will resume receiving benefits after the employment that disqualified them is terminated

District Reporting:

- Quarterly reporting of employee information (names, wages, hours, contributions paid, etc.) has been replaced with a similar report that is due on a schedule and in a manner determined by ORS
- This report must now include a list of all MPSERS retirants who perform services at the district, but who are employed by another entity (third party contractors) or are independent contractors
- Although districts should consult legal council prior to taking action, consider including language in all service contracts that requires contractors to report employee information to the districts for all retirants and assume liability for any late fees, penalties, or interest payments that result from a failure to do so
- Superintendents must complete an annual certification that authorizes employees in their reporting unit to report the necessary information to ORS (the form of this certification has not yet been determined)
- A late fee and interest payments (as established by ORS) will be charged for reporting errors that are caught by ORS unless the district can show reasonable cause

CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

May 26, 2010

Pat Butler, Custodian @ Northside

Nomination for: Customer Service

Submitted by: Northside Staff

Pat Butler is one of our custodians at Northside Elementary School. Pat has one of the best work ethics of anyone we know. She greets everyone, staff, student and parents alike with a friendly Hi! when they enter our building. Pat also has a friendly and caring demeanor with the students. Pat seldom has to be asked to do anything because it has been done way before she is asked! Pat's sense of duty is demonstrated through her integrity and high level of energy and commitment to detail. Listed below are some staff and student thoughts on how much we love and value Pat Butler.

"I've worked with Pat for over ten years and she is such an asset to Northside School. Her work ethic is above reproach. Pat always has a good attitude and a happy thought to share with others. Always always a kind word for others."

"Wow! Say a few things about Pat? How can I limit them? One of my favorite things about Pat is that she always has a smile and a kind word for others."

"Pat Butler is by far one of my favorite people. She always asks how my family is and how my day has been."

"Pat always treats our building as if it is her home. Her work ethic is amazing and her cheerfulness while doing her duties is never missed."

"My classroom is one of Ms. Butler's areas. I never have to ask her to do something because it is usually done before I even noticed it. I can't think of a more deserving person than Pat for this award."

"I appreciate everything Pat Butler has done for me personally and even more importantly our school building. She treats it as if it a personal mission and her job is always done with a smile a hello and a smiling face. I don't think I have ever seen her without a smile and have never heard her utter anything but a kind word or do a nice deed for others"

Students say...

"I love Ms. Butler."

"Ms. Butler helps our school stay clean and neat."

"I like it when Ms. Butler says "hello cutie "to me."

As you can see many people at Northside love and respect Ms. Pat Butler. We can think of no one who deserves the celebration of excellence award more than Pat!

CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

May 26, 2010

Sandra Maconochie, Teacher @ Tappan

Nomination for: Customer Service & Innovation

Submitted by: Fred Smith

Sandy Maconochie, my esteemed music colleague and veteran teacher, is about to retire after sharing over 32 years of experience in our district. She started out teaching in just about every elementary school but maybe 3 in the district and still she now holds probably the longest Band Directorships, over 26 years, at one of our oldest junior high / middle schools, Tappan. She has had one of very few middle school Jazz Band programs in the city. With her innovative approaches her jazz groups have worked with the likes of world music educator and leading trumpeter, Wynton Marsalis, the Lincoln Center Orchestra of New York, played for the Dexter Ann Arbor Run many years, and the first Middle School Jazz Band to be invited and play at the University of Michigan's Jazz Festival with high honors (which was mainly established for High School and College groups).

Though she is an accomplished formal Concert Band director with groups always receiving top category ratings for both MSBOA District Band Festivals and Solo and Ensemble Festivals, her love and passion lies with her Jazz Bands. Her groups have also been the first and longest, now over 21 years, participants of the Paul Keller Orchestra's Jazz Student Outreach Program Series, sharing their stage at a professional jazz club with our students, and now shared by many. There are several parents who would like to speak to her customer service and innovative approaches for middle school students but unfortunately with the deadline of April 1st just passing and not knowing she would be retiring till now we may only get to scratch the surface to honor her long service to the Ann Arbor Public Schools and it's surrounding community properly.

She has been a beacon on a hill for our students and schools. She's always up for a challenge and usually says, "What the heck, You can always ask, they may say YES!" or "Let's keep in mind what's good for the students", and like Wynton, many times they said yes. From her humble beginnings as an AAPS school bus driver to her teaching accomplishments and honors she's a class act, most notably for those who have had her and worked with her. It has been a pleasure to work along side of her for over 24 years. (Maybe the longest running cooperative teaching pair in the district.)

Following are edited excerpts from other comments (full, unedited version available on the website):

Former Student & UM Graduate, Ingrid Racine...

Playing in Ms Maconochie's band programs at Tappan Middle School absolutely laid the foundation for my future as a professional musician.

Parent, Jayne Gissner:

Both my daughter Kathryn and son David have participated in the band program at Tappan. Ms. Maconochie has inspired David to get up every morning and get to school. Practice club and Jazz band is the highlight of David's school experience. He is able to express himself in a creative and healthy way with incredible support from two adults.

Parent, Jodi Johnson

Sandy Maconochie forwarded Dr. Roberts' announcement that our son, Spencer, was one of the four Presidential Scholar candidates. Sandy proceeded to share her memories of my husband, Dave, attending and recording all of the jazz band performances the year Spencer was a member of Tappan's jazz band, allowing her to make end of the year CDs for all the band members.

Later that month, not only Sandy, but all four Tappan instrumental music teachers attended Dave's memorial service, as well as many students from Pioneer, Community and Tappan music ensembles came to support my two sons.

From Joseph DeMarsh, Orchestra Director-Tappan:

Sandy is one of the most dedicated teachers I have ever met. We have worked together daily for the past twenty years and I am constantly amazed and impressed by her patience, dedication, and insight at the difficult middle school age level. I have learned an immense amount about teaching, planning and adolescents from her.



**MAY 12, 2010 – DISTRICT LIBRARY
REGULAR MEETING**

Vice President Patalan called to order at 5:05 PM

Present – Baskett, Lightfoot, Patalan, Nelson, Stead (via speakerphone), Mexicotte (arrived at 5:06pm), Roberts (non-voting member)

Trustee Stead, supported by Trustee Baskett, moved to recess to Executive Session for the purpose of negotiations and attorney/client privilege. On roll call vote, the motion carried 6-0.

Recessed Regular meeting at 5:06 pm

CALL TO ORDER

7:06 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Lightfoot

ROLL CALL

Present – Trustees Baskett, Lightfoot, Mexicotte (President), Nelson (Secretary), Patalan (Vice President), Stead (Treasurer – via conference call)

Present from Administration – Margolis Comsa, Chamberlain, Langford-Green, Landefeld, Ryan, Trent, Hoover, Osinski (Recorder)

INTRODUCTION OF NON-VOTING MEMBER AT THE TABLE

President Mexicotte introduced Dr. Todd Roberts, Superintendent of Schools.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Removed from first briefing, policy 7220. Revised agenda approved by consent.

CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

John Fisher – Teacher at Angell/Pattengill

Nominated by: Martine Perreault

Announced by: Simone Lightfoot

President Mexicotte read the following statement:

"At this time, I would like to take a moment and speak to our community directly about our district's strong and continuing commitment to diversity and equity. This commitment is grounded in the belief that they are fundamental for student success. They are also required to prepare students for meaningful participation in our democracy and the ever-expanding global society. I would also like to speak to the corresponding recognition of our mandate to guarantee that every student has the opportunity to reach their potential – to achieve their dreams, contribute to their communities, and be that full global participant I referenced moments ago. This evening we come before you undeterred from this recognition and commitment. As a Board and an administration we have worked diligently to put in place effective academic programs, work to ensure students receive high quality instruction, worked with professional partners to evaluate and strengthen our efforts, hired, trained and retained exemplary educators who are willing to go the extra mile both academically and culturally, We have done this in the face of diminishing resources and a changing political and financial landscape. We made and maintain this commitment because it is the right thing to do.

There has been a lot of anger expressed to us this past week, some from our community, but more often from people who, when reminded that the world is changing, have reacted to that change with an outrage that I wish could be directed at the relentless assault on public education. This anger has often not been civil, or tempered, or well informed - at times it has, indeed, been very troubling—and, as I said, often not

from within our community. It is an anger that I wish was directed at the failure of our public education system to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities for all students, a system that has left too many behind while maintaining the status quo - deciding that nothing could, or should be done to address long-standing issues within our educational institutions. And it is an anger that I wish turned to action focused on uplifting our communities through support, encouragement, investment, and a willingness to presume good will when mistakes are made. This great anger focused at a small school community trying to do something positive for their students - and by extension, at our larger community – this great anger illustrates just how far some have strayed from the presumption of good will on which the best communities rely.

Creating equitable opportunities and achievement for all students has been very difficult and there have been many false starts and ineffective efforts along the way over the years. Many of our recent efforts, informed by best practices and led by our administration - with the full support of this Board - are indeed finally bearing fruit. Our achievement for all students is rising, the gaps are closing and effective programs and strategies are being supported and embraced. We still have a ways to go before we see full opportunity for achievement for all our students, but we know we are on the right path – and our data bears that out.

However, even with an unwavering commitment to work together to achieve equity and opportunity for all, we may sometimes make mistakes.

Concerns have been raised over the past week regarding the "African American Lunch Bunch" program at Dicken Elementary School and a field trip that some of the students in the group attended. The purpose of the program at the school was to provide support and peer mentoring for African American students who are not achieving at grade level based on state test score results. The concerns raised are that the "Lunch Bunch" group was exclusionary in that only African American students were invited to participate in the group and that the program and field trip violated the AAPS Board of Education's Anti-Discrimination Policy and the Michigan Constitution, Article 26 which as approved in 2006 which state that you can not "discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting".

The school district has sought a legal opinion regarding the program and whether the program complied with state law and Board policy. Based on that opinion the "lunch bunch" program as it was structured does not comply with Board policy or the state constitution article 26. We have taken corrective action and will reorganize the program so that the students involved continue to get the support they need to be successful academically while insuring that the program is inclusive and in compliance with Board policy and state laws. The administration has worked with Dicken Principal Mike Madison and the Dicken community regarding the changes that need to be made and the legal and policy reasons for those changes. The administration and the Board will also create, disseminate and implement clear guidelines regarding compliance with the Board's anti-discrimination policy and state law to insure that Mr. Madison and all administrators and district employees understand and comply with all applicable policies and laws.

We members of the Board strive to provide leadership that creates a climate where all students thrive. To create this we must be aware that systematic differences in achievement are correlated with race, ethnicity, income, and culture. We need to have productive and honest conversations about the reasons for these patterns and possible solutions. We must hold a shared belief that each of us as individuals, and together as a collective, can improve the achievement of at-risk and struggling students. We need to have an expectation that staff in the district will act in ways that promote student achievement rather than leave it to someone else. And we also need an expectation that our central administrators and principals will provide constructive leadership that improves the achievement of all students, and a commitment to a sustained, visible effort to ensure all students and staff are respected and stimulated to achieve to their full potential.

We apologize that the effort at Dicken was not implemented in compliance with our policies and our legal and public obligations, while understanding the effort was well intentioned in an attempt to create support

for students to thrive. We are also sorry that this effort cast our community in a negative light on what became the national stage, when there is so much to celebrate about the accomplishments and character of our students, parents and staff – accomplishments we hear about at this table every meeting and that are experienced every day in every classroom and school building in the district. I look forward to the day when we get emails from Florida and voicemails from Georgia congratulating us on our National Science Olympiad champions, our Pulitzer-winning school newspaper, our Grammy winning music programs, or our Gates Millennial Scholar. We are proud to represent this district, this community and the belief that a free and excellent public education is the right of every student, and that it is our aspiration as a Board and as a district that this belief becomes a reality."

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

Ann Marie O'Connell spoke about proper equity education.

Board Candidate Presentations

Candidates James Corey, Noah Hurwitz, Victoria Haviland, Jack Panitch and Andy Thomas made presentations to the board.

BOARD CANDIDATE SELECTION

President Mexicotte explained the voting process and called for voting via paper ballot. Paper ballots were distributed to trustees, collected and read by Ms. Osinski:

Round 1: Trustee Stead, by voice vote via conference call – Panitch; Trustee Baskett – Haviland; Trustee Lightfoot-Haviland; President Mexicotte-Thomas; Trustee Nelson-Thomas; Vice President Patalan-Thomas. No majority reached.

Round 2: Trustee Stead, by voice vote via conference call – Thomas; Trustee Baskett-Haviland; Trustee Lightfoot-Haviland; President Mexicotte-Thomas; Trustee Nelson-Thomas; Vice President Patalan-Thomas.

By majority vote, Andy Thomas was appointed to the Board, sworn in and seated.

REPORTS

Youth Senate – Fight Poverty in Africa Walkathon & YEP picnic is May 16, 2-5 at Community High School; Recommends allowing off-campus lunches for high school students to instill responsibility. Concerned about the potential for cuts in the music program.

AAPAC – Promoted Williams-syndrome Awareness Week. Working on bringing peer mentoring to the district; SISS reorganization may realize Peer-to-Peer programming and Adapted PE positions. The next meeting will be 6/14, 7pm, Room B327 at Skyline.

PTOC – Provided update on advocacy goals, process, contacts, and next steps. Next meeting will be May 17, 7pm at Balas.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Roberts read his report.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning – Met May 7 to review bids, WISD budget and policies. Next meeting will be held June 15, 2010 @ 6:30 p.m.

Performance – Met May 6 to review 3rd quarter financial report, WISD budget and policies. Next meeting will be held June 10 at 6:00 pm.

INFORMATION*HRS Update*

Cindy Ryan provided an update via Powerpoint on the new teacher evaluation process. They are working with a collaborative group in Lansing toward a model for Race-to-the-Top evaluation compliance based on the Danielson method. This model will need to be negotiated, possibly in the current negotiations. Discussions and committee work will be ongoing. Although requirements from the state continue to change, we are leading in complying with the new legislation.

Mr. Comsa will provide trustees with an update on RTTT compliance.

Alice Chamberlain presented demographic data for AAEA Retirements, resignations and unpaid leave of absences via a Powerpoint. Noted that the state has not finalized the retirement legislation, which could dramatically change our retirement numbers.

Jane Landefeld presented information on Professional Development via Powerpoint. Chuck Hatt and Michele Madden provided detailed explanations of some of the workshops offered.

FIRST BRIEFING*SF10-001 – Asphalt Paving Bid Award Recommendation*

Mr. Trent presented the bid award recommendations for 7 asphalt paving projects scheduled for summer. In response to trustee inquiry about MBE/WBE or HUB status, Mr. Trent explained that this is an optional category and these companies did not submit information.

SF10-002 – Roofing Replacement Bid Award Recommendation

Trustees expressed concern about the lack of HUB bidding. Noted that the district has hosted mixers, they submit RFP's to minority business councils, and all contractors that we know about are sent directly to them. Could send a survey to past minority contractors to find out why they haven't been bidding on jobs. Planning Committee will ask administration how to proceed.

SF10-003 – ADA Site Improvements Bid Award Recommendation

Mr. Trent presented the bid award recommendations for ADA site improvement work to be performed over the summer.

10-006 – Customized Behavioral Energy Conservation Program Bid Award

Mr. Trent presented the recommendation to award the Customized Behavioral Energy Conservation Program bid to JCI, as their bid more closely fit our needs and guaranteed a positive cash flow of more than \$260,000 over a 4 year period.

Third Quarter Financial Report

Mr. Allen and Ms. Hoover presented the quarterly financial report. Mr. Allen noted that the proposed reductions were difficult to achievement mid-year. In response to fund equity, he indicated it would be extremely unlikely that our fund equity would increase in the future, explaining that the State would have to dramatically increase the per pupil funding. Ended last year at 14.2% fund equity, will be 10-11% by end of this year. The budget is being prepared for the worse-case scenario; if news is any worse than the plan for \$300 reduction, we will need to use fund equity or make mid-year cuts. If we use all fund equity, it would add to our operating expenditures to borrow. Vice President Patalan noted the importance of our rating.

The \$300 reduction is proposed using two components for funding: student count and foundation allowance. You have to build in a little extra because of the uncertainty from the state. He noted that we have always faced a structural deficit, but compounded with additional pro-ration.

WISD Budget Review

Trustee Nelson presented the WISD budget via Powerpoint. He noted that the proposed reduction in special ed funding to the AAPS from the WISD, should the renewal millage fail, will be \$12-\$14 million. This will need to be made up by our operating fund. If the millage is renewed, it would only be \$8 million shortfall.

Elections can be held in May, August or November. May be able to call a special election, but not sure we can do that.

Policy Updates:

Trustee Baskett presented the Performance Committee recommendations for updates to: 5550 – Chronic Health; 4020 – Anti-Harassment – Employees; 4050 – Personnel Policies/Handbooks; 4100 – Recruitment/Hiring; 4300 – Evaluation; 4400 – Labor Relations; 4500 – Safety and Security; 4600 – Board Ownership of Intellectual Property; 5120 – Middle School Attendance; 5130 – Middle School Retention; 6140 – Homework; 7220 – Parent/Booster Organizations;

Vice President Patalan presented the Planning Committee recommendations for updates to: 3000 – Financial Reporting; 3050 – Financial Control

SECOND BRIEFING – scheduled for approval at this meeting

09/10 Spring Grant Awards – no further discussion

~~County-wide Transportation Consolidation~~ (Removed prior to meeting)

ACTION – CONSENT AGENDA – scheduled for approval at this meeting

09/10 Spring Grant Awards

Vice President Patalan, supported by Trustee Nelson, moved to approve the 09/10 Spring Grant Awards as presented. On roll call vote, the motion carried 7-0.

Approve minutes of the 4/27/10 Study Session

Vice President Patalan, supported by Trustee Nelson, moved to approve the minutes of the 4/27/10 study session. On roll call vote, the motion carried 7-0.

Approve minutes of the 4/28/10 Regular Meeting

Vice President Patalan, supported by Trustee Nelson, moved to approve the minutes of the 4/28/10 Regular Meeting. On roll call vote, the motion carried 7-0.

Approve minutes of the 4/21/10 Executive Session

Vice President Patalan, supported by Trustee Nelson, moved to approve the minutes of the 4/21/10 Executive Session. On roll call vote, the motion carried 7-0.

Approve minutes of the 5/6/10 Study Session

Vice President Patalan, supported by Trustee Nelson, moved to approve the minutes of the 5/6/10 Study Session. On roll call vote, the motion carried 7-0.

ACTION – BOARD ITEMS

Resolution for Hearing Regarding the FY 2010/11 Annual Budget

Trustee Nelson, supported by Vice President Patalan, moved to approve the Budget Resolution and notice calling for a Public Hearing as presented. On roll call vote, the motion carried 7-0.

Resolution for Race-to-the-Top Memorandum of Understanding

President Mexicotte, supported by Vice President Patalan moved:

WHEREAS, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (“ARRA”), Pub. L. 111-5, creates an opportunity for States to apply to the United States Department of Education (“USDOE”) to receive Federal funding for education reform through a “Race to the Top” grant program; and

WHEREAS, the USDOE requires that interested States submit a Race to the Top application and plan that includes a signed Memorandum of Understanding from each of the State’s local and intermediate school districts and public school academies that will participate in that State’s Race to the Top Plan, if approved and funded by the USDOE; and

WHEREAS, the USDOE has distributed a *Model Participating LEA Memorandum of Understanding* to serve as a template for each State to develop the required Memorandum of Understanding; and

WHEREAS, Michigan’s Superintendent of Public Instruction, Michael P. Flanagan, has notified local and intermediate school districts and public school academies that the State of Michigan has adopted and distributed the USDOE’s *Model Participating LEA Memorandum of Understanding*, entitled *Michigan’s Participating LEA/ISD Memorandum of Understanding* (“MOU”) (a copy of which is attached as Attachment A to this Resolution and incorporated by this reference); and

WHEREAS, Superintendent Flanagan further has advised local and intermediate school districts and public school academies that, in order to be eligible to receive Federal Race to the Top grant funds, should Michigan’s application and plan for such funds be approved, interested local districts and academies must submit to their intermediate school district by the close of business on May 20, 2010, a copy of the attached MOU signed by the local superintendent (or equivalent authorized signatory), school board president, and teacher union leadership; and

WHEREAS, although the Michigan Department of Education (“MDE”) has advised local and intermediate districts and public school academies that the USDOE’s accelerated application process for states has not allowed Michigan to provide local and intermediate districts and academies with all of the details of Michigan’s Race to the Top plan at this time, the attached MOU references the responsibilities to be agreed upon and a list of the seven assurances that local districts must agree to implement; and

WHEREAS, Superintendent Flanagan represented in his December 18, 2009, E-Blast, in pertinent part, as follows:

The Michigan Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) provides that the parties may mutually agree to terminate the MOU. If an LEA (school

district) determines that it wants to terminate the MOU, the LEA should submit a letter to me requesting this termination, along with the reason for the termination. **I would not force an LEA to participate in the plan if it ultimately determines that it is not in its interest to do so.** (emphasis added); and

WHEREAS, this Board has identified a *non-exhaustive* list of circumstances under which it would not be in the interest of this Ann Arbor Public Schools to participate in Michigan's Race to the Top plan, including by way of *limited* example:

1. In the event that the Ann Arbor Public Schools projects or determines that it has or will be required to expend more resources on implementation and compliance with the Race to the Top program (including, without limitation, staffing, equipment, training, reporting and operational costs required to comply with the State Plan and the corresponding LEA/ISD Plan during and after the grant period) than the Ann Arbor Public Schools will receive from the State of Michigan through the State's Race to the Top grant and the District's Participating LEA/ISD subgrant.
2. In the event that the MOU is construed or applied in a manner that effectively obviates the constitutional prohibition against the State's imposition of unfunded mandates upon the Ann Arbor Public Schools as a result of, or in connection with, the State's participation in the federal Race to the Top Program. See Mich Const 1963, Art. IX, Sec. 29.
3. In the event that the Ann Arbor Public Schools concludes that compliance with the State Plan may violate controlling law or contract, including without limitation, the Michigan Constitution of 1963, the Michigan Public Employment Relations Act (Act 336 of 1947, as amended), the Michigan Teacher Tenure Act (Act 4 of 1937, as amended), or the terms of an existing collective bargaining agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Education for the Ann Arbor Public Schools authorizes the District's Superintendent and Board President to execute the attached MOU to participate in a Michigan Race to the Top plan that substantially comports in detail with the responsibilities and assurances set forth in the attached MOU.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT by authorizing the District's Superintendent and Board President to sign the MOU on behalf of the Ann Arbor Public Schools, the Board expressly relies on the representations by Michigan's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Michael P. Flanagan, that he "would not force an LEA to participate in the plan if it ultimately determines that it is not in its interest to do so" and, upon request, the MDE will permit the Ann Arbor Public Schools to terminate the MOU and withdraw from Michigan's Race to the Top Plan without penalty.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the District's Administration is authorized to seek to obtain the signature(s) of an authorized representative of Ann Arbor Education Association on the attached MOU as requested by the MDE.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the District's Administration is directed and authorized to implement all terms of this resolution, including submission of an executed MOU to the Washtenaw Intermediate School District on or before 4:00 pm on Thursday, May 20, 2010, and is delegated all necessary authority to do so.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT all resolutions and parts of resolutions insofar as they conflict with the provisions of this resolution be and the same are rescinded.

On roll call vote, the motion carried 7-0.

ITEMS FOR AGENDA PLANNING, pp. 110-112

President Mexicotte noted that there is no July organizational meeting due to November election. Would like to find a board retreat time in July, so trustees will be contacted to discern a date.

ITEMS FROM THE BOARD

Trustee Nelson attended the AA Community Center dinner and dance; Noted a number of Art shows: opening at the Slusser Gallery; Exhibit in the AADL; Teachers and alumni of AAPS have exhibit called "Work" UM -306 S. State St. Friday, May 14.

Trustee Baskett thanked Bernice Fluker for hosting the Sanchez Lecture on bullying. Monday, May 24 Patricia Edwards will be speaking at Bryant Community Center, 6pm. Thank you to Peace Neighborhood for allowing them to host the Career and College Readiness meeting. Thanked all the community who attended. Thanked Trustee Lightfoot's daughters, Jayda and Jaydica, for their help. 85 people came to hear the presentation.

Trustee Lightfoot noted that the follow-up date for college and career ready meeting is May 27. Noted that April 29 Johnson Controls was at Skyline showing students what they do to that may spark interested for potential future careers.

ADJOURNMENT

11:33 pm

Heritage Newspapers (heritage.com)

Ann Arbor Journal > News

Crowley receives Ann Arbor schools' Celebration of Excellence Award

Friday, May 7, 2010

By Lisa Allmendinger, A2 Journal

Courtney Crowley was credited with creative thinking and a dedicated work ethic in her nomination for an Ann Arbor Public Schools' Celebration of Excellence Award.

The teacher-consultant and case manager for autistic children at Clague Middle School was honored recently by the mother of one of her students.

She was nominated by Gundy Sweet, mother of an eighth-grader at the school whose son has received support services for special education since he was 20 months old.

"She maintains regular and thorough communication with me so that I can provide the necessary support to (my son) at home to facilitate his education," according to the nomination.

Crowley, who is new to Clague this year, thanked her family and friends who, she said, have helped shape her teaching career.

In her nomination to the Ann Arbor Board of Education, Sweet wrote, Crowley "really tried (and is often able) to see the world through (my son's) eyes when he acts out or refuses to participate in an activity."

She says that Crowley reached her son in ways that most others were unable to do.

Calling her "a phenomenal teacher, a true team player, and an absolute advocate for the kids," Sweet said her son will move to Huron High School next year.

Crowley says teaching is her passion.

"I do what I do because I love it, not for the awards, but here I am receiving an award," she said.

Crowley was credited with having "limitless patience, terrific sense of humor, easygoing style, high expectations of the students, creative thinking and dedicated work ethic."

Lisa Allmendinger can be reached at 1-877-995-NEWS (6397) or at lallmendinger@heritage.com. Check out her daily blog at www.A2Journal.com.

URL: http://www.heritage.com/articles/2010/05/14/ann_arbor_journal/news/doc4be43a1f43ced499739212.prt

© 2010 heritage.com, a Journal Register Property



STAFF
By Jenn McKee
Entertainment
Journalist
AnnArbor.com

Pioneer High School will receive Grammy Signature School Award at a concert this weekend

Posted: May 10, 2010 at 6:20 PM [May 10, 2010]

The Grammy Foundation recently named Pioneer High School as a Grammy Signature School, one of 12 across the nation, for the sixth time. The award recognizes top U.S. public high schools that are making an outstanding commitment to music education during an academic year, and Pioneer earned both a place in the Foundation's Gold Status category and \$5,000 to benefit the school's music program.

PHS's music department will receive the Grammy Signature School Gold Award at a concert on Sunday, May 16 at 4 p.m. — in Schreiber Auditorium at PHS, at 601 West Stadium Boulevard — featuring performances by the Pioneer Symphony Band and Orchestra, the jazz band, the A Cappella Choir, and Sou'fège, a student-led a cappella choir. The Grammy will be presented at this concert by Grammy representative Howard Hertz, a Bloomfield Hills attorney who specializes in entertainment law and is a member of the Detroit Recording Academy.

Recordings of school concerts, sample concert programs, and repertoire are reviewed by an independent screening committee to determine the schools that merit Grammy Signature School status.

The rundown of Grammy Signature School Awards for the Ann Arbor Public Schools is impressive. PHS received the award in 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006, and Huron High School has received a Grammy Signature School Award in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2005.

Jenn McKee is the entertainment digital journalist for AnnArbor.com. Reach her at jennmckee@annarbor.com or 734-623-2546, and follow her on Twitter @jennmckee.

Tags: [Grammy Awards](#), [Pioneer High School](#)

1 Comment, Comment Now



1 Comment:

uawisok
Posted 2 days ago



Congratulations!! For a Public School to receive this award must be an unusual event. Ann Arbor schools music programs continue to amaze me. Now let's hear the naysayers complain about public schools and their "crotching the drain." I believe one quote was...LOL!!

Report this comment to staff

Showing 1 Comment, Comment Now



STAFF

By David Jesse
AnnArbor.com Staff

Andy Thomas selected to fill open Ann Arbor school board seat

Posted: May 12, 2010 at 9:40 PM (Yesterday)

The third time is the charm.

Andy Thomas - who has three times applied for open school board vacancies in recent months - was chosen Wednesday evening to join the board.

Thomas, a district parent, will fill the seat vacated by **Randy Friedman** last month.

He received four votes from the board in the second round of balloting. Voting for him were **Deb Mexicotte, Irene Patalan, Glenn Nelson** and **Christine Stead**. School board Trustees **Susan Baskett** and **Simone Lightfoot** voted for **Victoria Haviland**.

In the first round, Mexicotte, Patalan and Nelson voted for Thomas. Baskett and Lightfoot voted for Haviland in the first round, and Stead voted for Jack Panitch.

Also applying for the open seat were James Corey and Noah Hurwitz.

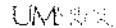
Thomas will serve through the end of the year. His seat will be up for election in November.

Thomas is the third person recently appointed by the board. Appointed earlier were Lightfoot and Stead. Lightfoot and Stead's seats will also be up for election in November, along with Mexicotte and Baskett's seats.

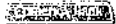
David Jesse covers K-12 education for AnnArbor.com. He can be reached at david.jesse@annarbor.com or at 734-623-2534.

Tags: [Ann Arbor school board](#), [Ann Arbor school district](#)

[Comment Now](#)



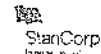
University of Michigan Credit Union
Invest in Shared Values
Visit Our Web Site



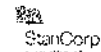
Comerica Bank
Comerica Small Business Stimulus Package
Visit Our Web Site



Busch's
Graduation Party Headquarters
Visit Our Web Site



StanCorp Investment Advisors
Professional Investment Management for Today's Investment Realty
Visit Our Web Site



StanCorp Investment Advisors
Click here to schedule your free consultation
Visit Our Web Site



Photo courtesy of Jean Brown

Holden Mass (center) is the grand-prize winner of Recycle Ann Arbor's fourth annual Earth Day Essay Contest. Also shown are Tappan Middle School teacher Wendy Raymond (left), Recycle Ann Arbor Curbside Manager Allen Kennedy, Kimberly Mass, Noah Mass, Recycle Ann Arbor Operations Manager Steve Sheldon and Tappan Middle School Assistant Principal Rick Waller.

Ann Arbor student wins recycling essay contest

Recycle Ann Arbor recently named Holden Mass, a student at Tappan Middle School in Ann Arbor, the grand-prize winner of its fourth annual essay contest in celebration of Earth Day April 22.

The contest was open to Washtenaw County students in fifth and sixth grades. More than 75 entries were received. The topic was "How I practice the three R's: Reduce, reuse and recycle."

As the grand-prize winner, Holden received a \$500 U.S.

savings bond, given during a special ceremony at his school April 21. In addition, his classroom will receive a free recycling workshop, and his winning essay is posted on Recycle Ann Arbor's website at www.recycleannarbor.org.

Due to the number of essays received, Recycle Ann Arbor also selected five runner-up winners. Each received a \$50 gift certificate to a local bookstore. Runner-up winners were Austin Choi, King Elementary School; Noah Dean, Wines Elementary School; Brian Guo, Slauson

Middle School; Zoya Gurm, Tappan Middle School, and Seungwon Hur, Logan Elementary School.

"The Earth Day essay contest provided a great opportunity for students to think about the future of the planet and about how conserving resources plays a critical role in saving the environment," said Recycle Ann Arbor CEO Melinda Uerling in a news release.

"There were so many good entries that it was very difficult for the judging panel to select this year's winners. We

were impressed by the students' creative thinking and plan to offer the essay contest again next year."

Founded in 1977, the non-profit Recycle Ann Arbor offers easy and convenient recycling for the home and workplace. The organization's aim is to provide education and innovative services in the collection, processing and distribution of recyclable materials.

For more information about Recycle Ann Arbor, call 662-6288 or visit www.recycleannarbor.org.



Ann Arbor elementary school's blacks-only program violated state law, district policy

'Well intentioned'

BY DAVID JESSE
davidjesse@annarbor.com

An Ann Arbor elementary school program open only to black students violated Michigan state law and the district's own anti-discrimination policy, school board President Deb Mexicotte said in a prepared statement Wednesday

evening. "The effort was well-intentioned," Mexicotte said. "We are sorry that this cast our community in a negative light" when the district has so many positive things going on.

Mexicotte didn't criticize Principal Mike Madison in her statement. District spokes-

woman Liz Margolis declined to comment on whether any disciplinary action has been taken against Madison, citing district policy.

The district has been drawing heavy criticism of the program from across the nation — and from some parents in the district — for more than week. It started with com-

plaints from students and parents about a field trip taken by the African American Lunch Bunch at Dicken Elementary to hear a black rocket scientist at the University of Michigan speak. District administrators have said a private donation paid for the trip.

See **DISTRICT**, Page A4

District to reconfigure program

Continues from A1

After the trip, classmates who were excluded booed those who went. Madison entered a classroom, and parents have complained he berated the students. District officials have said he was just having a "passionate" discussion about race issues.

The blacks-only program was formed this school year in response to an achievement gap in test scores and other measures between white and black students. The district announced the program was disbanded Friday.

Parents whose students did not go on the trip have expressed concerns it was exclusionary, but Madison sent a letter home insisting that wasn't the intent. He said in the letter that the field trip was meant "to address the societal issues, roadblocks and challenges that our African-American children will face as they pursue a successful academic education here in our community."

The trip prompted a tidal wave of anger directed at the

school district — much of it from outside the district, Mexicotte said. In her statement, Mexicotte said much of the anger was misguided and didn't demonstrate a "willingness to presume goodwill" by Madison and the district.

"This anger has often not been civil," she said.

Mexicotte said she wished the anger would be redirected against a "public-education system that has left too many behind."

One of the issues raised by parents and others was whether the group violated the district's own anti-discrimination policy and state law. The district's legal counsel was asked to issue a ruling, which he did Wednesday night in a closed session with the board.

The district is working with Madison and the Dicken community to restructure the now defunct program, Mexicotte said. The administration is also drafting "clear guidelines" on how principals and other administrators can help overcome the district's achievement gap in an "inclusive" way.

Victoria Haviland, the secretary of the Dicken PTO and a parent of three Dicken students, was at the board meeting. She was one of five applicants to fill an open seat on the board, but wasn't selected.

Haviland said she thought the statement did a good job of demonstrating the district's "commitment to equity." She said administrators and members of the Dicken school-improvement team have begun work on reconfiguring the program.

Mexicotte said the district has worked hard in the past several years to attack problems surrounding the achievement gap and equity issues. She said the district's efforts in this matter "are finally bearing fruit" and the gaps are closing.

"We have done this in the face of diminishing resources" because "it is the right thing to do. We know we are on the right path," Mexicotte said.

David Jesse covers K-12 education for AnnArbor.com. He can be reached at davidjesse@annarbor.com or 734-623-2554.

ROBIN FRISCH-GLEASON

Age: 49

Position, for how long: Fourth-grade teacher at Bach Elementary School, 10 years.

Live in what neighborhood and how long: The Dicken School neighborhood for 19 years.

Family, ages: James Gleason, husband, 48 years; Maia Gleason, senior at Pioneer High School, 17; Ivy Gleason, eighth-grader at Slauson Middle School.

How would you like to be remembered: I would like to be remembered as an inspiring teacher who opened up children's eyes and wonderment, and invited them to ask questions and develop a lifelong love for learning.

Most significant accomplishment: I have been a part of two research expeditions to Antarctica. One was as a geologist working on my master's thesis and the other was as an editor with the ANDRILL (Antarctic Drilling Program) to learn about climate change. My interest in the polar regions, and my passionate desire to empower people to take care of the planet through environmental stewardship and mindful resource use, is my most significant accomplishment.

I just completed a full-day Climate Change Student Summit, where hundreds of students in Michigan, Illinois and Alaska were conducting research and sharing their learning as a culmination of four months of work. I was the facilitator for the Michigan students and teachers, and I feel strongly that today's students are tomorrow's scientists, legislators, policymakers, voters and consumers, and the better we raise awareness in today's students, the safer our future will be.

Also, another significant accomplishment was raising two wonderful, intelligent, caring, creative, talented daughters.

Biggest disappointment: That the Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen didn't succeed in creating an international, legally-binding set of laws for all nations to embrace with regard to Carbon Dioxide emissions. Time is of the essence, and the failure to set a clear time scale and measurable reductions is very frightening and disappointing.

4. What are the pros and cons of living in Ann Arbor?

Pros are the abundance of cultural events of all varieties, the proximity to great restaurants, museums, music venues, as well as the proximity to natural areas or a drive in the country. Cons are the cost of living and the difficulty parking downtown.

5. Which Ann Arbor restaurant makes your favorite dish, drink or dessert and what is it?

Raja Ravi has a lunch buffet that is scrumptious. Rather than enjoying one single dish, I like to savor the many different tastes all on one plate. For drinks, I like a rich, frothy cafe latte from Espresso Royale. Chocolate is by far my favorite dessert. I am partial to the truffles made by Sweet Gem Confections.

6. What building or landmark in Ann Arbor makes it unique?

The Diag makes Ann Arbor pretty unique. It seems to capture the essence of Ann Arbor's energy, diversity and pulse.

7. If you could wave a magic wand and change one thing about Ann Arbor, what would it be?

I would bring back all of the trees lost by the emerald ash borer. Trees in our neighborhood were decimated by the ash borers, and re-planting has been very slow. Our neighborhood still feels a little naked. I would love to see huge mature trees instantly replaced throughout Ann Arbor.

8. What's your favorite saying or quote?

"Live every day like it's your last." Tomorrow is very unpredictable, and life is just too short to put off dreams for the future. Live and enjoy each day!

9. If you could give a newcomer to Ann Arbor one piece of advice, what would it be?

Find a favorite place to walk. In nature, find a favorite coffee shop, find a friend to share those things with and soon Ann Arbor will be home.

10. Ann Arbor is known as tree city, what's your favorite and why?

Autumn blaze because it is so brilliant in the fall, and it is a fast-growing tree.



Ten Questions

1. What do you do on a home football Saturday?

I stay as far away from stadium traffic as I can. I often take walks at Eberwhite Woods, which is virtually empty during the games, and beautiful in the fall. I can often hear roaring from the stadium all the way over there. I ensure that I am home by the time the game ends, and watch the end of the game on TV.

2. You're a tour guide in Ann Arbor, where would you take a tourist?

The top of the Thompson/Maynard parking structure to see a bird's eye view of Ann Arbor, in the dusk or evening, for a walk and meal on Main Street to the Exhibit Museum of Natural History and the Art Museum, the Maya Lin "Wave Field" sculpture on north campus, to the arboretum, and for a walk along the Huron River.

3. What's your favorite season in Ann Arbor and what makes it special?

Autumn, no question. Tree town is absolutely magnificent in the autumn. Not only are the colors magical, but there is such a sense of change in the air.

Heritage Newspapers (heritage.com)

Heritagewest > News

'Guardian Angel' affords four area teens a chance at prom

Thursday, May 13, 2010

By Jeremy Allen
Heritage Newspapers

For Josh Whitfield, Van Mosely and Eddie Nailor, students at Ypsilanti High School, and Shawn Greco, a student at Huron High School in Ann Arbor, senior year came with more troubles than passing finals and filling out college applications.

A time that is supposed to be fun and celebrated, turned into a time filled with worry and stress over how their families were going to deal with the piling expenses that come along with this joyous season for graduating students.

Senior pictures cost hundreds of dollars. Paying for college applications also take a toll on the pocketbooks of so many. And the final hoorah for the students, prom, can sometimes be the most expensive of all of those costs.

Like many families across the economically repressed state, the Whitfield, Mosely, Nailor and Greco families aren't alone in facing financial, but a guardian angel gave these four families a sigh of relief by giving the four young men the gift of a free tuxedo rental from President Tuxedo for their prom.

Mosley's grandmother has been hospitalized for some time, and became even more ill after getting an infection while in the hospital.

"Things were taking a toll on me," said Van's mother Sandra Mosley. "I was praying to God to help me find a way to pay for Van's tuxedo and when I found out that he was going to be given a free one I just started to cry and say 'Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.' We are so grateful."

Whitfield is one of nine children in his family. His father was recently laid off from his job, leaving his mother as the main financial contributor to the household.

"There are two kids in Josh's house that are going to prom and the family had no idea how we were going to afford it," said Whitfield's aunt, Denise Crawford. "His grandmother was going to try to help out with the payment, but when we found out, his mom called his grandmother and read her the letter that he got and they both cried together on the phone. It's just so good to know that there are still good, caring people in the world."

Whitfield said he found out about that he was chosen to receive the free tuxedo while he was in school.

"I got called to the office and I thought I was in trouble," he said. "So I went there and everybody in the office was smiling

at me. I asked what they were smiling about and there was a big box. They gave me the box and were saying 'Congratulations.' So I waited until I got to class and went to the back of the classroom to open the box. There was a big bear in the box from Build-A-Bear and it was wearing a tuxedo holding a card that said 'Congratulations, you've won a free tuxedo from President Tuxedo and from your Guardian Angel.' I was excited about it."

Mosley said his experience went the same way.

"A lady called me to the office, too," Mosley said. "I thought I was in trouble so I didn't really want to go. I was stalling and tried to get them to tell me why I had to go to the office but they wouldn't tell me. They were just smiling. So I went and saw the box and opened it up and saw everything. I told my mom about it and she started crying and everything."

The guardian angel that made this possible wished to remain anonymous, saying that they don't want credit for this, they're just glad the students and their families are able to receive such a gift.

"I'm a single parent and I work for the district, so I know what a lot of these people go through, and I know a tuxedo rental that costs nearly \$200 is a lot for a family to have to pay," said the "guardian angel."

"These are all good kids and they all deserve a chance to go to prom and have a good time. I'm glad I could be part of helping them, but I don't want any credit or recognition for it. That's not what helping people is about. I hope this can turn into something more. A lot of time there are ways for the girls to get dresses easily, but I hope to start a 'Prom Closet' for the guys where people donate nice suits or tuxedos, so guys who can't afford them can have an inexpensive way to borrow a tux and return it in good condition after prom. Charge a low fee for them to rent it and just make sure they return it cleaned."

President Tuxedo Manager Justin Roy said he was happy to work with the guardian angel to provide suits for the four young men.

"We get a lot of requests every year to donate tuxedos to students and our owners are really passionate about giving back to the community, especially in these tough economic times," Roy said. "There's nothing cheap about prom. My mom was a single mother of three children when I was growing up so I know how difficult things can be. I know the parents and the students are definitely appreciative of it all."

Roy also talked about a Bucks for Tux program which allows \$5 from every tuxedo rental to get refunded back to the school district. He said students simply need to fill out a form when they rent their tuxedos and 30 days after the prom, President Tuxedos will cut a check to the school, to use to the school's discretion, for \$5 for each student who rents from them. Roy also said each student who rents from President, as long as it is seven days before their prom, will get a \$20 discount off of their rental.

"I'm really appreciative of President Tuxedo for helping out with this," said the guardian angel. "I hope these kids can truly enjoy their prom and that their parents can rest a little easier."

Jeremy Allen is a staff writer for Heritage Newspapers. He can be reached at jallen@heritage.com.

URL: <http://www.heritage.com/articles/2010/05/14/heritagewest/news/doc4bec6b5721915559068078.prt>

© 2010 heritage.com, a Journal Register Property



STAFF
By Lee Higgins
AnnArbor.com Staff

Five Huron High students charged with vandalizing Ann Arbor police car

Posted: May 14, 2010 at 9:00 AM (Today)

Five Huron High School students are accused of vandalizing an Ann Arbor police car at the school in March by smashing out the rear window and tail lights with a hammer and pouring feces on the roof, police said.

Charged with malicious destruction of property are 17-year-olds Miles Staton, Stephen Bakarich, Anthony Moneghini, Peter Godfrey and Dillon Pearce, police said.

All were arraigned Wednesday at Washtenaw County Circuit Court.

The damage to the school resource officer's Ford Crown Victoria occurred between 5 p.m. March 5 and 11 a.m. March 6, police said.

The feces was poured out of a cup from a restaurant where the teenagers were hanging out prior to the incident, police said. Officers found a recliner on the car's roof, police said.

Investigators were led to the teenagers after reviewing surveillance video of cars that were at the school during the time of the vandalism, police said.

Tags: Ann Arbor police, vandalism

15 Comments. Comment Now



Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation
We're raising a million dollars. For a million reasons.
[Learn more and donate](#)



Downtown Home & Garden
Good Looking Furniture. Built for Outdoor Living.
[Visit Our Web Site](#)



Busch's
Graduation Party Headquarters
[Visit Our Web Site](#)



StanCorp Investment Advisors
[Click here to schedule your free consultation](#)
[Visit Our Web Site](#)

the ann arbor chronicle

it's like being there.

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2010

SUBSCRIBE

New Trustee, AAPS Board Weigh Budget WISD budget review prompts concern over millage

BY JENNIFER COFFMAN

MAY 18, 2010

Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education meeting (May 12, 2010): Last month, Andy Thomas made a report to the board as a member of the Parent Teacher Organization Council. Now, the PTOC will make those reports to a board that includes Thomas.



Andy Thomas, being sworn-in as the newest trustee of the Ann Arbor Public Schools board of education at its May 12 meeting. (Photos by the writer.)

Thomas replaces long-time member Randy Friedman, who resigned in April. The selection of Thomas to the board during last Wednesday's meeting marks the third change in board membership in the past six months. Thomas' current term will end at the end of the year, and he - along with trustees Simone Lightfoot, Christine Stead, Deb Mexicotte, and Susan Baskett - will need to be re-elected in November to remain on the board.

Also at the meeting, the district's achievement gap between white and minority students was addressed from multiple perspectives. The proposed Washtenaw Intermediate School District budget was reviewed, and the board was briefed on the district's finances, sinking fund summer projects, policy updates, and human resources.

Andy Thomas Selected as New Board Trustee

After presentations were made by five candidates at its meeting on Wednesday, Andy Thomas was selected, seated, and sworn-in as the newest trustee of the district's seven-member board.

Board Candidate: Presentations

Before Thomas was chosen, board president Deb Mexicotte reviewed the trustee selection process, reminding candidates they would each have five minutes to speak to the board about who they are, and what they would bring to the board. Then, Mexicotte explained, the board would vote, and whoever was selected would be seated, sworn-in, and enjoy full voting privileges. Candidates made presentations in the following order, chosen at random: James Corey, Noah Hurwitz, Victoria Haviland, Jack Panitch, and Andy Thomas.

Corey reviewed his history as an AAPS student, and as a teacher, coach, and dean. He named two events - the Columbine massacre, and September 11 - as making him realize how lucky he is to be an American, and how much he wanted to give back to his community. Highlighting his interest in using technology to improve education, Corey noted that he is among the 30% of Ann Arbor residents who do not have children, but he still cares about high-quality education. As the district's opportunities, he listed improving communication, involving the community, celebrating diversity, and making decisions more quickly. Corey acknowledged that he does not have a "magic pill," but wants to be part of making the decisions.

Hurwitz touted his strong commitment to education, and noted that he had also run for the board in 2003 "to give back to the community." He mentioned fighting for his adopted son to be given opportunities throughout his schooling, while working as a substitute teacher in virtually every school in the district. Also a former AAPS student, Hurwitz described himself now as a lawyer with an emphasis on education law. Due to the current challenges, he argued, he would "work to promote an understanding of the board's decisions in the community."

Haviland began her presentation by describing a visit she made to an AAPS classroom the previous week. She described her experience as a teacher and teacher educator as having led her to the "national forefront" of work in designing equitable instruction, including publishing in peer-reviewed journals, and working on a book on the topic. Haviland argued that teachers would appreciate a board member having had a life in education, and that her connections to the University of Michigan, as well as her expertise in equity issues would be assets to the district.

Panitch began by noting humorously that his wife thought he needed his head examined for applying for a board seat for the third time this school year. Saying he has learned something each time around, Panitch described his motivation for wanting to serve on the board as having a stake in maintaining excellence for all, being inspired by the trustees' selfless service, and feeling a "calling to serve."

Panitch pointed out that, while he is proud to currently wear the mantle of stay-at-home dad, he has 19 years of experience as a tax attorney, with experience in negotiation, litigation, and advising. He also described himself as a "confident, talented guy, but also a team player." Noting that "nobody can replace Randy Friedman," Panitch closed with, "Tonight, Ann Arbor may seem like a house divided, but we'll put it all back together and move on."

Thomas was the last to address the board, and reveled in the freedom of Wednesday's presentation topic. He pointed out that the last two times he applied, candidates were asked to present on a very specific topic, but that tonight he would simply speak about "what makes me tick, and why I'll be an asset to the board." Thomas pointed to his 25 years as a health care administrator as good practice for working with ongoing declines in revenue. He also mentioned some of his firsthand experience with the district - he has a son at Tappan, and has worked with the AAPS Educational Foundation. In addition to canceling and playing the viola, Thomas called his work with the Karen Thomas Memorial Fund as one of his greatest passions. The fund, which Thomas began to honor his wife, who died of breast cancer, encourages the reading of classic literature by at-risk elementary students.

As for why he wanted to join the board, just when he is really enjoying retirement, Thomas stated simply, "I feel it is my duty." In this unprecedented time, he said, the AAPS is at a tipping point, and his experience with budget cuts and cost containment, as well as his commitment to equity and excellence, makes him the ideal candidate. If chosen, Thomas said the board could expect him to be a straightforward, independent thinker without a predetermined agenda, someone who is not afraid to admit when he is wrong, and someone who would push the board to make data-driven decisions. In closing, of serving on the board, he said, "I would consider it an honor."

Board Candidates: Voting Process and Outcome

After the presentations, Mexicotte again reviewed the process that trustees would use to choose their new member. The voting would be done by paper ballot, she said, and would continue until a candidate received a simple majority, which is four votes. If no candidate achieved four votes in the first round of voting, she added, there would be more discussion, and another vote. If there was still not a majority at that time, trustees would put forth their top two votes, and the top three vote-getters would move on to another round. Mexicotte summarized the process as one that moves on by slowly eliminating those candidates with fewer votes. If there is a tie that cannot be broken after a short recess, she pointed out, she would cast the tie-breaking vote.

Before the voting began, trustees Glenn Nelson and Irene Patalan each thanked the candidates. Nelson encouraged them to stay involved in the schools no matter how the vote went, and Patalan said she was proud of and had learned from all the candidates.

Via speakerphone, Christine Stead asked for clarification on how her vote would be received, since she would not be submitting a paper ballot. Board secretary Amy Osinski suggested that Stead should give her vote first, since it would be verbal. Stead agreed.

Mexicotte then issued an invitation to vote: "Let us cast our first ballot."

Board members voted on small, lavender slips of paper, which were then collected and read by Osinski. The votes were as follows: Stead voted for Panitch; Lightfoot and Baskett voted for Haviland; Mexicotte, Nelson, and Patalan voted for Thomas.

Osinski noted that no one had received the majority. Mexicotte opened the floor for discussion, but after a few moments of silence, quipped, "... or a minute where trustees can collect their thoughts."

Osinski then passed out pink slips for the second round of voting, which yielded the final decision. As with the last trustee selection that had put Stead on the board, it was the four board officers who voted in the winner - Mexicotte, Patalan, Stead, and Nelson voted for Thomas. Trustees Lightfoot and Baskett voted for Haviland.

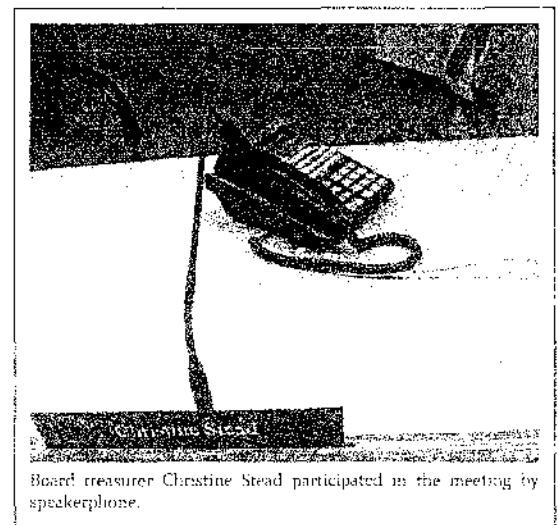
Thomas joined the table, sitting down next to the trustee with the longest tenure on the board, Glenn Nelson, and was sworn-in by Osinski. Mexicotte joked, "If you have any questions, just ask Glenn," and added, "Just kidding - by all means, if you need to ask a question, please do."

Achievement Gap

Throughout the meeting, references were made to the district's addressing of the achievement gap between white and minority students.

Dicken "Lunch Bunch" Program to be Reorganized

Near the beginning of Wednesday's meeting, Mexicotte read a lengthy statement from the board regarding recent controversy surrounding a program at Dicken known as the "African-American Lunch Bunch." The program was started this year "to provide



Board treasurer Christine Stead participated in the meeting by speakerphone.

support and peer mentoring for African-American students who are not achieving at grade level based on state test score results," Mexicotte said. Following a field trip taken by the program's participants a few weeks ago, the board has received many angry comments, many of which, Mexicotte said, have "not been civil, or tempered, or well-informed," and which she said "illustrates just how far some have strayed from the presumption of good will on which the best communities rely."

Mexicotte went on to admit that, after seeking a legal opinion, it was found that "the 'Lunch Bunch' program as it was structured does not comply with board [anti-discrimination] policy or the [Michigan] state constitution, Article 26." [Article 26 addresses affirmative action programs. It states, in part: "The University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Wayne State University, and any other public college or university, community college, or school district shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting."]

Mexicotte stated that the program would be reorganized, and that "the administration and the board will also create, disseminate, and implement clear guidelines regarding compliance with the board's anti-discrimination policy and state law to ensure that [Dicken principal Michael] Madison and all administrators and district employees understand and comply with all applicable policies and laws."

Dicken "Lunch Bunch": Public Commentary

One person offered public commentary on the "Lunch Bunch" – Ann O'Connell, an AAPS parent who has served on school PTOs and School Improvement Teams over the past 12 years. She expressed concern that district officials, as well as adults in the Dicken community, did not realize Dicken's African-American "Lunch Bunch" program was "illegally segregating students by race."

O'Connell noted that over the years she has been involved in the district, other district or school-based efforts have also have been found to be discriminatory for targeting students based on race or gender. On Wednesday, she urged the trustees, "in the strongest possible terms, to re-think and re-direct the district's group-focused approach to ... closing the achievement gap."

She argued for the retraining of district staff so they can clearly identify appropriate interventions. "What you have been doing, often with excellent intentions," O'Connell asserted, "is illegal, it's immoral, it's insulting to both girls and to African-Americans to imply that they will not, can not, succeed in a fair educational system."

"College and Career-Ready Review" Follow-Up Forum

Late in the meeting, Susan Baskett extended a "heartfelt thanks" to the Peace Neighborhood Center, the school board, the superintendent and his cabinet for participating in the College and Career Ready Review held on April 29, and for "working toward getting all of our kids college and career ready." The Review was an opportunity for AAPS administration, the Board, and the community to come together to review and discuss achievement gap data. She mentioned that the expectation was only that a few community leaders would attend, but over 85 people were there. Singling out her fellow trustees for a second round of thanks, Baskett said that she sees them, and herself, as bridges and inroads to different, specific communities within the wider district community.

Simone Lightfoot also addressed the review, saying she believed it was important for the district to "own our stuff." She announced a follow-up forum to take place on May 27, so "we can answer the questions posed, listen, and acquire feedback."

Fund Balance Considerations

Two of the first briefing items – the third quarter financial report, and the board's annual review of the Washtenaw Intermediate School District budget – tied together an ongoing board discussion over the district's fund balance and at what level it should be held. Also brought up was the need to begin working on a renewal of the special education millage that funds a large part of the WISD's work, but will expire next year.

Fund Balance: Third Quarter Financial Report

Nancy Hoover, AAPS director of finance, and Robert Allen, AAPS deputy superintendent for operations, presented the third quarter financial report to the board.

Hoover noted that there were no major changes to the bottom line, though some revenues and corresponding expenditures were reclassified because they are now coming from the federal government instead of the state. Trustee Glenn Nelson asked if anything had happened since the report was generated that the board would otherwise not hear about until the district's audit. Hoover said, "No, this is the last change we have to make that we are aware of."

Allen then took to the podium to lead the board through the budget trends evident so far this year, and to compare this year's spending with that of the 2008-09 school year. He asserted, "We are pretty much on track to where we were last year at this time."

Allen then pointed out another thing that has not changed: the projected deficit of \$7.58 million. He reviewed the fund equity balance he had previously presented to the board, highlighting that the district has spent down \$12 million of it over the past two years. Allen said even though the district had been "holding the line on expenditures, and buying only what is necessary," it looked like the target of \$2.7 million in mid-year budget reductions was not going to be reached; in fact, he said, "we'd be very happy to get to \$1 million in reductions."

Andy Thomas asked about the discrepancy between \$2.7 million and \$1 million: "In what areas were you not able to realize the savings you'd hoped for?" Allen pointed to overtime as a unmitigated cost, saying, "If you have to have coverage, you have to have it."

Christine Stead asked several questions: 1) if there was a possibility of fund equity increasing, 2) what percent of the current budget is reflected in the current fund equity balance, and 3) if Allen could describe what would happen if the district spends down all of its fund equity and has to borrow money.

Allen answered that the major source of the district's revenue is state aid, and that until the economy starts to rebound, he does not see fund equity increasing. The current fund equity balance, he continued, was 14.2% of the district's budget at the end of last year, and will be around 11% or 12% at the end of this year. While reassuring the board and public that the district is preparing its budget for the worst-case scenario so that fund equity will be preserved, Allen briefly described how AAPS could borrow money from a state bond fund at a low interest rate if needed. He also pointed out that the interest expense would become another operating expense. Irene Patalan added that the rating the district gets from its auditor would affect its interest rates.

Both Nelson and Mexicotte offered support for the idea of maintaining a larger fund equity balance, in light of the current political climate. Nelson pointed out that this year there will be a major contested election at the state level, and that well-known correlations with election cycles have shown that good news in terms of state funding may hold until the election, but that major cuts often follow an election.

That's because newly elected officials try to get all the bad news out the way in their first few months in office, to position themselves best for re-election. Mexicotte concurred, saying that it's possible that even if the state per-pupil funding is not reduced by \$300 initially – as the worst-case scenario in the district's proposed budget contemplates – larger cuts may come down the line, which is what happened this school year.

Allen closed by saying that "you have to build in a little extra" in case the student count or the foundation allowance is lower than anticipated. "What's gotten lost," he asserted, "is that we've always faced a structural deficit, and though we were able to do some things to lessen the impact, this problem is not fixed until the structural deficit is addressed, and it has yet to be addressed."

Fund Balance: WISD Budget and Special Ed Millage Renewal

Christine Stead, who participated in the May 12 meeting via phone, had prepared a review of the WISD budget, after she and Nelson had met with WISD staff in April. However, "because of the awkward nature of presenting by speakerphone," Nelson said he would make the presentation.

He began by pointing out that state law requires the budget of each intermediate school district to be reviewed by its constituent districts annually, which he described as "a good mandated function." He explained that the board needed to respond to WISD with any recommendations by June 1, and that WISD is required to consider the board's input in approving its final budget.

After giving a general overview of WISD's proposed budget and fund balance, Nelson zeroed in on the special education fund, saying "it's really important to understand as a preview of what's coming" in terms of the district's future budgets. Explaining that WISD's general fund revenues are declining alongside declining property values, he noted that next year, WISD's fund balance will drop from \$26.7 million in 2009 to only \$3.6 million. Nelson described \$3.6 million as "very close to the zero axis." "Their fund balance will be gone after this year," he cautioned.

In addition, Nelson pointed out, a portion of the most recent special education millage will expire after next year, requiring major cuts in WISD's payments to AAPS for special education services in 2012. Nelson expressed concern that cuts would then need to be made in the general fund to make up for the lack of funding for mandated special education services, saying, "The implications are huge for the entire student body."

In discussing the 2011-12 budget, Andy Thomas asked about the potential impact of a failed renewal of the special education millage. Nelson suggested that AAPS should be prepared to expect a ~~8-9%~~ \$8-9 million reduction in special education funding if the millage were passed at the same rate as it currently exists, and a ~~12-14%~~ \$12-14 million reduction if it fails completely. He added that this would be in addition to an increase in employer retirement system contributions, higher yearly costs in general, and likely another decrease in the foundation allowance from the state. About the impending millage renewal, Nelson said, "I'm not sure if ... I'm confident, but we do have to make the case and make it well."

Superintendent Todd Roberts added that if the millage rate were to be increased, it's possible that WISD funding of AAPS special education services could remain reimbursed at 82%, as it is now.

Stead emphasized the importance of maintaining fund equity in light of these upcoming issues, and offered, "We have to continue to be creative, but we may run out of creative ideas." She then reminded the board that at this time, "our obligation is to review the budget and make suggested changes." Deb Mexicotte pointed out that the board has sent comments in the past, and reminded everyone that any decisions about a new millage would need to be made countywide.

Nelson pointed out that state law says a millage could only be called in May, August, or November, but that the current millage had been passed as part of a special election held in September of 2004. He then added that, "The discussion of dates is in its infancy now."

Consent Agenda: Transportation Item Removed

~~There was no discussion of the items on the consent agenda, which included the spring grant awards presented at the last regular meeting, as well as four sets of minutes.~~

A proposal to consolidate busing services with other districts across the county, which had come to the board as a first briefing item at its last meeting, had also been listed on Wednesday's agenda as a second briefing and consent agenda item. However, on Wednesday, before the meeting, the proposal was pulled off the agenda.

When queried by The Chronicle, board president Deb Mexicotte said simply that the item was not ready for review. In the board packet, superintendent Todd Roberts wrote that, "Dave Comsa [AAPS assistant superintendent for human resources and legal services] and the legal counsel for the WISD are working on the language for the resolution that the board will adopt if the board approves moving forward with joining the county-wide consolidation of transportation."

If the WISD transportation consolidation does not come to fruition, or AAPS decides not to join the effort, the district would have until the end of the school year to decide on privatization of transportation services, whether or not a contract is reached with current AAPS transportation employees.

Outcome: The consent agenda, without the transportation consolidation item, was unanimously approved by trustees Nelson, Mexicotte, Lightfoot, Patalan, Stead, Baskett, and Thomas.

Action Items

The board took direct action on two items Wednesday night, approving a resolution for a public hearing on the 2010-11 budget, as well as agreeing to support the state's second attempt at winning a grant through the Race to the Top federal education initiative.

Action Item: Budget Hearing

Deb Mexicotte explained that, by law, the board needs to hold a public hearing on the annual budget each year.

Glenn Nelson read the notice of public hearing, which states that the hearing will be part of the next regular board meeting on May 26, and that copies of the proposed budget can be retrieved from the AAPS board office for public review. The notice also states that the "property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be the subject of this hearing." He then read the resolution calling for the hearing. A memo from Robert Allen, AAPS deputy superintendent for operations, details that the first briefing and public hearing on the proposed budget, as well as the first briefing on the millage resolution, will take place on May 26, but that the final approval of the 2010-11 budget, as well as the millage resolution, will not take place until June 9.

Outcome: The resolution calling for the budget hearing was moved by Nelson, seconded by Patalan, and unanimously approved by trustees Nelson, Mexicotte, Lightfoot, Patalan, Stead, Baskett, and Thomas.

Action Item: Race to the Top Commitment

Roberts introduced a resolution seeking board support of a second Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between AAPS and the Michigan Department of Education regarding Michigan's application to round two of the federal Race to the Top (RTTT) grant competition. He noted that the MOU "walks through various areas that state and local school districts would be responsible for," but that would only go into effect if the state is awarded RTTT funding.

Michigan applied for round one of funding in January, and was denied. However, in order to make the state more competitive, state legislators passed a flurry of legislation during the application process that local school districts are now responsible for upholding, even without having won the additional RTTT funding.

Roberts drew the board's attention to page five of the MOU, which begins the outline of the scope of work, and mentioned that this MOU is structured similarly to the one from round one. He also mentioned an example of something that is currently being put in place as a result of the RTTT legislation: a countywide data system to support instruction.

Baskett asked if there were any major changes, as the MOU did not look that different from last time. Roberts answered that the language in section D of the state reform plan, an element called "Great Teachers and Leaders," was loosened regarding the use of teacher evaluations, and gave more power to teacher bargaining units in terms of determining teacher evaluations. Roberts noted as well that the Ann Arbor Education Association, the local teacher's union, did sign off on this MOU, whereas they had not agreed to the MOU in round one of the application.

Baskett also asked if Roberts was able to see the actual application this time around. During round one, the application was still being written when districts were asked to sign MOUs in its support. Roberts acknowledged that, this time, he had been given the opportunity, but had not read all of the 500 pages. He did confirm, though, that the opt-out language is the same. That is, he said, AAPS can opt out of the arrangement "if it's costing us more than we're getting or it's not working for us."

Lightfoot again registered her distaste of RTTT, saying that while she would again support this MOU, "it is with a frustration at the public policy process." She noted that she did not want to cut off the possible resources that could be brought to the district if

Michigan is selected a winner this time around. Roberts agreed that, with or without the funding, the five pieces of new legislation would impose requirements on the districts: "It is that Catch-22."

Mexicotte read the "Resolved" section of the resolution supporting the MOU, which states that AAPS will support the MOU, but that it can "withdraw ... without penalty" if it is determined that it is not in the district's interest to participate in the state's reform plan.

Outcome: The resolution in support of the MOU between AAPS and the Michigan Department of Education was unanimously approved by trustees Nelson, Mexicotte, Lightfoot, Patalan, Stead, Baskett, and Thomas.

Sinking Fund Improvements

Also brought before the board for a first briefing were four bids for facilities improvements to be funded from the 2010 sinking fund. Randy Trent, AAPS executive director of physical properties, presented the bid award recommendations to the board for asphalt paving, roof replacements, ADA site improvements, and an energy conservation program.

During the discussion, Glenn Nelson noted that the sinking fund was a millage passed by the community, which funds improvements so that AAPS does not need to use money out of the general fund. Nelson also thanked the community for the passing the millage, pointing out its importance to the preservation of general fund money for instructional services. Trent confirmed that costs that have historically been paid for by the capital needs fund (which takes money out of the general fund) are now covered by the sinking funds.

Sinking Fund: Asphalt Paving

This summer, parking lots will be repaired at Angell, Carpenter, Clague, Scarlett, Slauson, Tappan, and Thurston, according to Trent. The biggest of these projects, he said, was Thurston, which will be redone completely to separate buses, cars, and pedestrians better. Trent put up a slide with a drawing showing how Thurston will look when completed – the main difference will be that a second loop will be created to separate buses from cars. In the new design, which he called a "safer and streamlined approach," the handicapped parking will be moved, and pedestrians will not have to cross any traffic.

Regarding the paving projects, Trent also mentioned that bids received by the district were 25% lower than anticipated. All the recommended companies have been hired by the district before, and have great references, he said. After reviewing eight bids, Trent recommended the following contracts for board approval: ABC Paving (\$145,200), Cadillac Asphalt (\$214,937), Nagle Paving (\$93,170), and T&M Asphalt (\$23,190).

Sinking Fund: Roof Replacements

Trent stated that this summer, roofs will be repaired at Pioneer, Forsythe, Slauson, Mitchell, Clague, Northside, and Huron. Seven companies bid on the work, and two were chosen as recommended contractors. Trent added that these bids contain more inspections, double the warranty, and more insulation than previous ones, and expressed that working with Firestone as the approved supply vendor had gone well. He recommended that the board approve two contracts for roofing to: Advance Roofing (\$1,062,848), and Royal West Roofing (\$87,300).

Sinking Fund: ADA Site Improvements

This summer, Trent said, site improvements to bring facilities in line with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be made at Allen, Haisley, Scarlett, Stone, and the transportation building. Three companies submitted bids for the work, and Trent recommended one of them be given the contract: GM & Sons (\$73,800).

Thomas asked for confirmation that each building is bid out as a separate project, rather than all the work of one type being consolidated in a multi-site bid. Trent confirmed that each site was bid independently, and that the bid awards he is recommending are to the lowest qualified bidder on each individual project. This is why, he pointed out, the paving and roofing bids are spread out among more than one contractor. In the case of the ADA improvements, Trent said, GM & Sons came in as the lowest bid for each of the five buildings needing work, which is why it was the only recommended contractor in that category.

Sinking Fund: Energy Conservation Program

Trent referenced a \$400,000 budget reduction for "energy savings" listed in the district's proposed 2010-11 budget as impetus for hiring a company to help AAPS streamline its energy usage. He explained that the district's legal counsel recommended bidding out the service. Five bids were received, and three companies were interviewed.

Trent then explained how the interview committee came to the unanimous decision to recommend Johnson Controls Inc. (JCI) over the other top contender, Energy Education Inc. (EEI). He reviewed several points: JCI has already done successful energy reduction work in the district; with JCI, AAPS is not penalized for saving more than targeted (EEI charges a higher fee if the district hits a certain savings mark); and JCI "has a nice addition of a student involvement piece."

Describing JCI's proposal as a "top-down effort" that starts with the superintendent and works through the whole district, Trent said that over 10 years, "the possible savings [reaped by implementing JCI's program] could go up to \$12 million." He also noted that, "Every dollar we are not spending on a utility can be put into a classroom."

Trent recommended awarding a four-year contract to JCI, in the amount of \$273,193 annually.

Sinking Fund: Historically Underutilized Businesses

Throughout the bid presentations ran a conversation between board members and Trent regarding the hiring of historically underutilized businesses (HUBs) for work in the district. HUBs are businesses that are minority or woman-owned. At the beginning of the discussion, Lightfoot asked Trent to note the HUB status of any of the contractors he was recommending.

In the first bid description, when Trent noted that none of the recommended paving contractors were HUBs, Lightfoot jumped on it: "I keep asking that question, and I'm getting no's. I'm looking forward to getting some yeses." In the next bid description regarding roofers, Baskett echoed Lightfoot's concerns, pointing out that "there has been a desire among some members of the board to foster relationships with HUBs." She asked Trent if he had provided any incentives or encouragement to HUBs to apply, and whether the district has gotten any feedback from HUBs about why the district's attempts to foster relationships with them "have not gone anywhere."

Trent pointed out that reporting HUB status on the bids is optional, and that some businesses simply choose not to self-identify as HUBs, even though they are, such as GM & Sons, the minority-owned business recommended as the contractor for ADA improvements. He also pointed out that there is no official policy in place to recruit HUBs, but that he has coordinated networking events, and sent out RFPs to minority-owned businesses. Trent concluded, "We can't make them bid."

Baskett conceded that, while few of the current contractors being recommended have HUB status, those companies could always subcontract with HUBs. Trent confirmed that this could happen, such as with the Thurston project, where the main contractor could subcontract certain aspects of the project, such as lighting or landscaping. He also suggested that he could send letters to the HUBs who have worked for the district in the past to get their feedback. Patalan added that the planning committee will look at this issue, and consult with the district's legal counsel.

Policy Updates

Both the policy and planning committees of the board have been engaged in ongoing review of board policies. At Wednesday's meeting, 12 policies – 5550, 4020, 4050, 4100, 4400, 4500, 4600, 5120, 5130, 6140, 3000, and 3050 – were presented at first briefing. Most parts of these policies were either submitted for re-authorization as is, with no changes needed, or with only minor wording changes meant to bring the policy in line with current district practice, procedures, or department names. [[pdf file of revised policies](#)]

The more extensive proposed policy changes were as follows:

- In 5550.R.01, Chronic Health Conditions, ADA language was added;
- In 4040, Anti-Harassment of Employees, "electronically transmitted acts" added;
- In 4050.R.01, Family & Medical Leave Act, military family leave added and defined;
- In 4050.R.03, Personnel Files, long-term storage of files, and disposition of files upon employee's death addressed;
- In 4050.R.06, Employee Background Checks, fingerprinting and background check processes updated, and language added about fingerprinting results expiration date;
- In 4100.R.01 & R.02, Hiring Procedures, application and reporting processes updated; and
- In 4500.R.01, Safety, Injuries, and Emergencies, language added to be sure student health information is appropriately disseminated, and sign-in requirement added.

In addition, three of the policies were newly drafted:

- Policy 5120, Middle School Attendance, "articulates attendance guidelines ... and provide for problem-solving with parents/guardians when attendance is inconsistent and/or detracting from school success;"
- Policy 5130, Middle School Retention, "provides a protocol for administration, faculty, and families when grade retention is under consideration in grades 6-8;" and
- Policy 6140, Homework, establishes guidelines for teachers, families, and students regarding the purpose, nature, and expected time commitment of homework.

Both Baskett and Patalan submitted charts summarizing the proposed policy changes their committees were suggesting. Baskett added, "We believe the chart is very clear, but we're open to any questions ... or feedback." She highlighted the homework policy for parents in the community to note.

Patalan also thanked board secretary Amy Osinski, who, she said, "has her eyes focused on policy, and does a good job."

There was no discussion on any policy items, which will come back before the board as second briefing items for approval.

Human Resource Services Update

Each year, the AAPS human resources department updates the board on any new developments, as well as providing a snapshot of retirements, resignations, and unpaid leaves for the coming year. As new trustee Andy Thomas confirmed during the first part of the presentation, Wednesday's presentation was for information only, and no vote or approval by the board was required at that time.

HR Update: Teacher Evaluation Process

Cindy Ryan, AAPS director of human resources, updated the board on the process used in teacher evaluation. "We're in the process of working on a new evaluation system," she said, and identified one of the big concerns as how to integrate the Race to the Top (RTTT) mandates, such as integrating measures of student growth into the teacher evaluation process.

Ryan explained that, a year ago, a committee was formed through collective bargaining to assess models for teacher evaluation. Of the seven or eight models the committee reviewed, they decided they most liked the "Framework for Teaching" model created by Charlotte Danielson, and are moving forward with tweaking that model so that it would meet RTTT requirements and the needs of the district.

Several trustees asked how the Danielson model would intersect with specific district needs while ensuring that AAPS is in compliance with legal requirements, such as annual evaluations.

Ryan assured the board that the model could be embellished, or amended as needed, confirmed that it could be adapted for all Ann Arbor Education Association members, and called the work of the evaluation committee "a big undertaking." Dave Comsa, AAPS assistant superintendent for human resources and legal services, added that there is a collaborative group in Lansing working to develop teacher evaluation models that will incorporate RTTT.

Comsa continued, saying that the district was "somewhat working in a vacuum" without a lot of guidance coming from the Michigan Department of Education on how to interpret RTTT requirements. Still, he said, AAPS is "ahead of the curve by implementing this evaluation committee," and that the district can make a strong argument that it's already in compliance.

Thomas asked about the timeline for getting this new evaluation process embedded in the contract as it's currently being negotiated, and Ryan said it's possible that the new evaluation process could be in the next contract. Mexicotte added that the contract can always be amended with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) at any time.

HR Update: Demographic Data

Alice Chamberlain, AAPS assistant director of employment services, presented the district's current demographic data on retirements, resignations, and unpaid leaves for 2010-11, and pointed out that the district uses this data directly to arrange staffing.

In total, Chamberlain said, the district is expecting 58 people totaling 56.2 FTEs to leave the district next year, and broke them out by subject, and grade level. Of all the positions, she noted that the two positions opening up in the hearing impaired program may be difficult to fill.

Nelson noted that retirement legislation is being developed at the state level, and said that counting on this number of retirements is like, "saying 'there's no rain yet' before a thunderstorm." He continued, asking if it was accurate to assume major changes in these numbers if legislation including a retirement incentive should pass. Chamberlain allowed that if retirement reform passes, "these data very well could change, and the change could be radical."

[Retirement reform legislation, including a retirement incentive, did pass in both the house and senate late last week, and awaits signature by Gov. Jennifer Granholm.]

HR Update: Professional Development

Jane Landefeld, director of student accounting, Michelle Madden, math/science curriculum coordinator K-8, and Chuck Hatt, literacy/social studies curriculum coordinator, presented an overview of the professional development (PD) offered in AAPS.

Landefeld explained that PD is offered to teachers as part of their contractual obligations, and therefore all teachers are required to participate. Much of the PD is offered during the school year on days without classes, but some PD is also offered after school or over the summer. In total, Madden added, there are over 1,400 sessions and workshops offered to district employees each year, to "grow teacher-leaders." These sessions are often used to introduce new curriculum or interventions, she explained. Hatt added that PD can be adapted as needs arise, and that it can be used to continually improve and adjust instruction.

Nelson asked whether national efforts to standardize curricula match up with Michigan's curriculum. Madden answered that the national efforts are to devise standards, not actual curricula, and that AAPS outcomes standards are higher than both those of the national core standards project, and those of Michigan. Madden added that the national core curriculum standards project "will not happen overnight," and is "very ambitious."

Association Reports

At Wednesday's meeting, the board received reports from three of its associations – the Youth Senate, the Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee on Special Education (AAPAC), and the Parent-Teacher-Organization Council (PTOC). The Ann Arbor Administrators Association (AAAA), the Ann Arbor Education Association (AAEA), and the Black Parents Student Support Group (BPSSG) did not report at this meeting.

Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee Report

Scott White reported for the AAPAC, and began by describing a bit about Williams syndrome, the disease that affects his daughter, Lauren. He noted that the week of the board meeting was the first-ever Williams syndrome awareness week. In deciding where to send Lauren for school, White said he has become an advocate for increasing opportunities for peer mentoring in the district. Through this work, he has gathered information on successful programs, and he reported at Wednesday's meeting that a successful peer mentoring class has begun at Clague Middle School this year, which he called a "happy beginning" toward "helping students see abilities and not just disabilities."

White also said AAPAC is pleased that the reorganizations taking place in the district's Student Intervention and Support Services (SISS) department will lead to a full-time position for Peer-to-Peer programming and another for Adapted Physical Education. Unfortunately, White said, Steve Schwartz will be decreasing his volunteer hours for the fourth-grade disability awareness workshops, and he encouraged the board to ensure continuation of the workshops.

PTO Council Report

Co-chair of the PTOC, Donna Lasinski, began by reporting that the council has been making a concerted effort to take a look at what can be done as a community to make a difference at the legislative level. She noted that the PTOC advocacy committee now has 35 members, and is growing each week. The committee has crafted talking points around their four stated goals: (1) guaranteeing that school funding levels are set by the start of the fiscal year; (2) ensuring that schools are funded at the level of program cost, not dollars available; (3) developing a stable and secure funding model for schools; and (4) prioritizing education funding over other state needs. These goals reflect the PTOC's perception, said Lasinski, that "no state has ever dug itself out of an economic hole by building more prisons."

Thus far, advocacy efforts have targeted both elected officials, and those running for office in November. Next, the committee will be initiating a postcard campaign to give parents a chance to say why education is important to them. And finally, the PTOC, based on feedback from some of the legislators with whom they have met, has decided to attempt partnerships with other similar parent groups from parts of the state with less supportive elected officials.

Youth Senate Report

Youth senators Priya Menon and Nikila Lakshmanan suggested in their report that off-campus lunch privileges currently enjoyed by some Ann Arbor students should be extended to all high school students, or, alternately, offered as a reward to students with no unexcused absences or tardies. [Community High School has an open-campus policy.] Being able to leave for lunch, Menon and Lakshmanan argued, can help prepare students who go onto college "to adjust to the new surge of independence that comes with a new environment."

The youth senators also invited everyone to participate in a walkathon to fight poverty, wished all students good luck on AP exams, and reported that Pioneer High music students are concerned about the possible lay-off of their orchestra director, Jonathon Glawe.

Committee Reports and Agenda Planning

The board has two standing committees – performance and planning – through which many items on the board's agenda get a first look. Each board member except for the president is assigned to one or the other – Susan Baskett and Glenn Nelson sit on the performance committee, while Irene Patalan, Christine Stead, and Simone Lightfoot sit on the planning committee. All performance and planning committee meetings are open to the public. Also at each meeting, trustees can put forward items they would like to have considered on agendas for future meetings.

Performance Committee Activities

Baskett reported that her committee reviewed many of the first briefing items coming to the board for Wednesday's meeting, including the WISD budget, third quarter financial report, and a "slew of policies."

Planning Committee Activities

Patalan reported that Trent had walked her committee through the beginning of spending the 2010 sinking fund money, and that some of the first briefing agenda items reflected this discussion. She pointed out that the planning committee has also been engaged in policy review.

Planning for 2010 Board Retreat

Mexicotte announced that there would not be an organizational meeting of the board this July, since the elections were moved to November. Instead, she suggested, the board retreat usually scheduled for the end of the summer could be moved up to July. The board retreat, Mexicotte explained, is an opportunity for the board to set goals, re-form itself as a board, and move forward with agenda items, and is typically a single-day event. Saying that she would be working with Patalan to set an agenda and talk about facilitation, Mexicotte requested trustees to send their summer schedules to Osinski so a retreat date could be set.

Awards and Accolades

The board devotes time at each meeting to reflect on positive accomplishments in the district, and honor those people who go above and beyond the call of duty.

Celebration of Excellence

John Fisher, a physical education teacher at Angell and Pattengill, was honored with a celebration of excellence for his service to his students. He was nominated by Martine Perreault, chair of the PTOC, and a parent of three children who have attended Angell Elementary and who had Fisher as a teacher. Perreault's nomination lauded Fisher's emphasis on personal fitness, cooperative games, and innovative inclusions to the phys ed curriculum. She credited him with turning phys ed into "an enjoyable respite in the school day."

Fisher and many of his family and supporters gathered at the podium for his receipt of the award. He thanked them all, saying, "I'm lucky and I'm blessed ... I don't like my job - I love my job!" Fisher's mother, who had been standing next to him, then also responded, urging everyone to "do your best at whatever you do."

Superintendent's Report

Todd Roberts noted many recent successes of AAPS students and staff, beginning with the high school level, and including the receipt of a Grammy Gold award, and a regatta win by Pioneer High School. Huron High School, he said, had eight students' work recently published in a book called "Talking Back," and Skyline High School students placed highly in the recent Special Olympics competition.

Roberts also noted the impressive feat achieved by Community High students and staff, who removed 4,460 pounds of garlic mustard, an invasive species, from natural areas across the district as part of an all-school service project. At the middle school level, Roberts praised Slauson for placing highly in the Science Olympiad, and all the middle schools for becoming "healthy schools." He also praised many of the district's teaching staff for individual accomplishments.

Items From the Board

Glenn Nelson mentioned that he had just attended a dinner and dance at the Ann Arbor Community Center, and thanked the community centers for their wonderful work. He also reminded everyone of the "three wonderful art shows" of student work currently going on in town.

Susan Baskett thanked the SISS department for hosting Parent University talks at the Bryant Community Center. She pointed out that over 50 people attended the recent lecture by Dr. Sanchez, and invited everyone to attend the May 24 lecture by Patricia Edwards on reaching non-traditional students.

Christine Stead pointed out that Johnson Controls Inc. did a great job at Skyline High School on April 29 of showing students what they do, and providing some perspective on possible careers for students.

Present: President Deb Mexicotte, vice president Irene Patalan, secretary Glenn Nelson, treasurer Christine Stead, and trustees Susan Baskett, Simone Lightfoot, and Andy Thomas. Also present as a non-voting member was Todd Roberts, AAPS superintendent.

Next regular meeting: May 26, 2010, 7 p.m., at the downtown Ann Arbor District Library 4th floor board room, 343 S. Fifth Ave. [\[confirm date\]](#)



Section: Education, Meeting Watch

The following terms describe the content of this article. Click on a term to see all articles described with that term: achievement gap, Ann Arbor Public Schools, board meeting, board selection process, Dicken Elementary, fund balance, school budgets, special ed millage, state funding, WISD

ShareThis

Copyright 2010 the Ann Arbor Chronicle.

2 Comments

1.  BY GLENN NELSON (SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER)
 MAY 18, 2010 AT 12:28 PM | [PERMALINK](#)

Thank you to the Ann Arbor Chronicle and to Jennifer for another thorough, excellent article. Your work improves the quality of the public dialogue on important issues in our community.

I have one correction. In the discussion of the WISD budget and in the paragraph beginning with "In discussing the 2011-12 budget ...", my references to expected cuts should be expressed in million dollars rather than percents. I may have misspoke in my presentation. In any case, "8-9%" and "12-14%" should be "\$8-9 million" and "\$12-14 million", respectively.

African American Lunch Bunch ends at Dicken

By Lisa Allmendinger
A2 Journal

5/29/10

A program called the African American Lunch Bunch at Dicken Elementary School in Ann Arbor has been found to be in violation of both Michigan state law as well as the Ann Arbor school district's policies.

Ann Arbor Board President Deb Mexicotte last week reaffirmed the school district's mission "for a strong and continued commitment to equity opportunities for all students," and apologized to the community for a

"well-intentioned" effort at Dicken Elementary that caused a firestorm of national criticism.

In an effort to bridge the achievement gap between students of different races at the school, the African American Lunch Bunch was formed at Dicken and the students had been meeting weekly at the school as an academic support group.

On April 30, the group went on a field trip to visit a black University of Michigan rocket scientist.

PLEASE SEE ENDS/2-A

ENDS

FROM PAGE 1-A

According to reports, when members of the Lunch Bunch group returned to the elementary school, they were booed by students who weren't allowed to go on the trip.

Dicken Principal Mike Madison sent a letter home to parents explaining the intent of the trip and a meeting was

held at the school.

Mexicotte apologized for "the negative light on this district (the program and field trip caused) when there's so much to celebrate about our schools."

She then listed highlights from recent academic, extra-curricular and athletic awards that have been bestowed on the district.

She said that although there had been criticisms leveled by parents within the district,

much of it came from outside the district and from other states.

She said she wished that the critics' outrage could be directed toward a public education system "that's left too many behind."

Following a legal opinion that was discussed in closed session of the Board of Education, the club was disbanded and school officials are looking for other ways to help bridge the achievement gap.

In addition, new guidelines will be issued to school officials to address the district's achievement gap in a more "inclusive" fashion.

Mexicotte said the Ann Arbor school district wants to provide "a climate where all students can thrive."

A recent report by an outside consultant showed that the gap between white, minority at-risk and struggling students is closing, and that the district is improving.

In all cases, the report showed, the district scored well above the state average in standardized test scores, but that black students lag behind their white counterparts.

It is not known if any disciplinary actions have been taken against Madison.

Lisa Altmendinger can be reached at 1-877-995-NEWS (6397) or at la1tmendinger@heritage.com. Check out her daily blog at www.A2Journal.com.

Ann Arbor Board of Education Statement –5.12.10

At this time, I would like to take a moment and speak to our community directly about our district's strong and continuing commitment to diversity and equity. This commitment is grounded in the belief that they are fundamental for student success. They are also required to prepare students for meaningful participation in our democracy and the ever expanding global society. I would also like to speak to the corresponding recognition of our mandate to guarantee that every student has the opportunity to reach their potential – to achieve their dreams, contribute to their communities, and be that full global participant I referenced moments ago. This evening we come before you undeterred from this recognition and commitment. As a Board and an administration we have worked diligently to put in place effective academic programs, work to ensure students receive high quality instruction, worked with professional partners to evaluate and strengthen our efforts, hired, trained and retained exemplary educators who are willing to go the extra mile both academically and culturally, We have done this in the face of diminishing resources and a changing political and financial landscape. We made and maintain this commitment because it is the right thing to do.

There has been a lot of anger expressed to us this past week, some from our community, but more often from people who, when reminded that the world is changing, have reacted to that change with an outrage that I wish could be directed at the relentless assault on public education. This anger has often not been civil, or tempered, or well informed - at times it has, indeed, been very troubling—and, as I said, often not from within our community. It is an anger that I wish was directed at the failure of our public education system to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities for all students, a system that has left too many behind while maintaining the status quo - deciding that nothing could, or should be done to address long-standing issues within our educational institutions. And it is an anger that I wish turned to action focused on uplifting our communities through support, encouragement, investment, and a willingness to presume good will when mistakes are made. This great anger focused at a small school community trying to do something positive for their students - and by extension, at our larger community – this great anger illustrates just how far some have strayed from the presumption of good will on which the best communities rely.

Creating equitable opportunities and achievement for all students has been very difficult and there have been many false starts and ineffective efforts along the way over the years. Many of our recent efforts, informed by best practices and led by our administration - with the full support of this Board - are indeed finally bearing fruit. Our achievement for all students is rising, the gaps are closing and effective programs and strategies are being supported and embraced. We still have a ways to go before we see full opportunity for achievement for all our students, but we know we are on the right path – and our data bears that out.

However, even with an unwavering commitment to work together to achieve equity and opportunity for all, we may sometimes make mistakes.

Concerns have been raised over the past week regarding the "African American Lunch Bunch" program at Dicken Elementary School and a field trip that some of the students in the group attended. The purpose of the program at the school was to provide support and peer mentoring for African American students who are not achieving at grade level

based on state test score results. The concerns raised are that the "Lunch Bunch" group was exclusionary in that only African American students were invited to participate in the group and that the program and field trip violated the AAPS Board of Education's Anti-Discrimination Policy and the Michigan Constitution, Article 26 which was approved in 2006 which state that you can not "discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting".

The school district has sought a legal opinion regarding the program and whether the program complied with state law and Board policy. Based on that opinion the "lunch bunch" program as it was structured does not comply with Board policy or the state constitution article 26. We have taken corrective action and will reorganize the program so that the students involved continue to get the support they need to be successful academically while insuring that the program is inclusive and in compliance with Board policy and state laws. The administration has worked with Dicken Principal Mike Madison and the Dicken community regarding the changes that need to be made and the legal and policy reasons for those changes. The administration and the Board will also create, disseminate and implement clear guidelines regarding compliance with the Board's anti-discrimination policy and state law to insure that Mr. Madison and all administrators and district employees understand and comply with all applicable policies and laws.

We members of the Board strive to provide leadership that creates a climate where all students thrive. To create this we must be aware that systematic differences in achievement are correlated with race, ethnicity, income, and culture. We need to have productive and honest conversations about the reasons for these patterns and possible solutions. We must hold a shared belief that each of us as individuals, and together as a collective, can improve the achievement of at-risk and struggling students. We need to have an expectation that staff in the district will act in ways that promote student achievement rather than leave it to someone else. And we also need an expectation that our central administrators and principals will provide constructive leadership that improves the achievement of all students, and a commitment to a sustained, visible effort to ensure all students and staff are respected and stimulated to achieve to their full potential.

We apologize that the effort at Dicken was not implemented in compliance with our policies and our legal and public obligations, while understanding the effort was well intentioned in an attempt to create support for students to thrive. We are also sorry that this effort cast our community in a negative light on what became the national stage, when there is so much to celebrate about the accomplishments and character of our students, parents and staff – accomplishments we hear about at this table every meeting and that are experienced every day in every classroom and school building in the district. I look forward to the day when we get emails from Florida and voicemails from Georgia congratulating us on our National Science Olympiad champions, our Pulitzer-winning school newspaper, our Grammy winning music programs, or our Gates Millennial Scholar. We are proud to represent this district, this community and the belief that a free and excellent public education is the right of every student, and that it is our aspiration as a Board and as a district that this belief

becomes a reality.

May 20, 2010

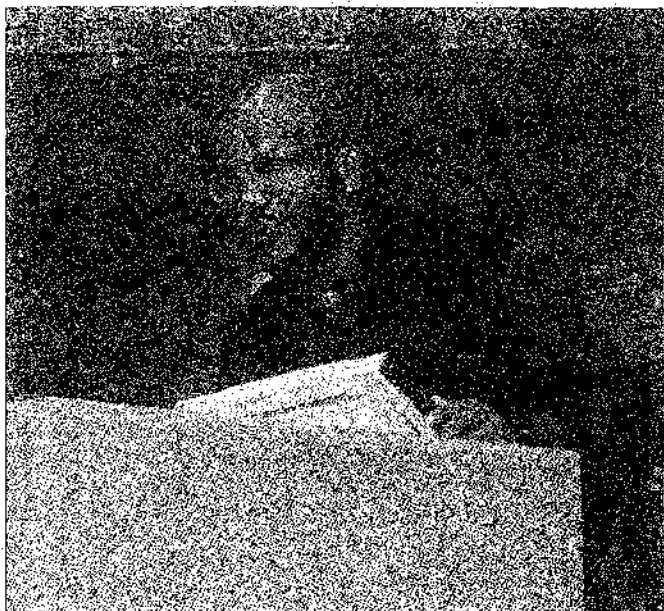


Photo by Lisa Allmendinger

John Fisher, a physical education teacher at Angell and Pattengill elementary schools, is a Celebration of Excellence award winner.

Former U of M athlete earns teaching award

By Lisa Allmendinger
A2 Journal

Before becoming a teacher, John Fisher was known as a four-time All-American wrestler for the University of Michigan.

In fact, he holds the record for the all-time wins on the mat for the Wolverines.

In addition, he's a freestyle World Cup champion, a two-time Olympic team alternate and a U of M assistant coach for 10 years.

Now a physical education teacher at both Angell and Pattengill elementary schools, Fisher was awarded another

title. He was recently named a Celebration of Excellence award winner by the Ann Arbor Board of Education.

Fisher was nominated by Martine Perreault, who said in the nomination that Fisher "leads by example" and "inspires and encourages everyone, of any ability to achieve their personal best, to set and reach for their own personal goals."

A sign outside the gym at Angell reads: "Always do your best. Always."

Fisher thanked his mother "for raising me right and the Ann Arbor schools for giving me a job."

He said, "I don't like my job; I love it."

Parent Amy Shepherd added, "All of the qualities he brings to his classes every day will benefit very student over their lifetime, not just while attending an elementary physical class.

"For that, we are grateful; for that we are in awe for the gift he gives every day. We would like for him to be recognized with a Celebration of Excellence award."

Lisa Allmendinger can be reached at 1-877-995-NEWS (6397) or at lalimendinger@heritage.com. Check out her daily blog at www.A2Journal.com.

Walk-a-thon good for the Sole

By Lisa Allmendinger
A2 Journal

Harib Moheyuddin completed 55 laps in last year's Haisley Elementary School Walk-a-Thon. He hoped to improve that mark this year.

"It gives you a little exercise," he says of the fund-raising event that not only helps with programs at the school, but also with charity projects in the community.

Nancy Kctola, one of the parent organizers for the annual event, which began in 1982, says it takes a few months to put it together.

"It's truly a community event and it wouldn't be possible without the help of a lot of volunteers and DJ Tim Furlong," she says.

While once held on a weekend, now it's held in two sessions during the school day so all the students can participate.

One group of children walks from 9 to 11:30 a.m., and a second group takes to the school's outdoor track from 1 to 3:30 p.m.

In addition, friends, parents and supporters walk along with the children.

Walkers get pledges and receive goodies such as water bottles, T-shirts, movie



Corinne Courtright waves to a friend as she participates in the annual walk-a-thon at Haisley Elementary School.

PLEASE SEE SOLE/3-A



Photos by Lisa Allmendinger

Zackery Vittek races around the track at Haisley Elementary during the annual walk-a-thon that began in 1992.



Photo by Lisa Allmendinger

In back, University of Michigan freshman swimmers Julia Andracki (left), Kristina Jaeger and Valerie Barthelemy walked with Marlee Corinne Courtright (left), Marlee Wilson and Mallory Hughes.

SOLE

FROM PAGE 1-A

passes and other incentives for laps completed around the one-eighth mile track.

The class with the highest lap total gets double recess, which is a very popular prize.

Three members of the University of Michigan swim team — Julia Andracki, Kristina Jaeger and Valerie Barthelemy, all freshman, walked with Marlee Wilson, Corinne Courtright and Mallory Hughes during the morning session.

Principal Mary Anne Jaeger said the school has a partnership with the U of M

Athletic Department.

"It's a great way to get them to exercise more," says Andracki.

"Corrine makes you run," Jaeger says the walk-a-thon is a way to give back to the community while having fun.

"We can act as role models and a lot of the kids told us, 'I'm a swimmer, too,'" Barthelemy says.

For Tim Furlong, the day's disc jockey, both of his sons, Dylan, 5, and Jake, 2, attend Haisley.

"I was a musician," said Furlong, who said he has been volunteering for the last four to five years.

For some of the participants, the walk-a-thon was not only a way to get exer-

Owen Connell, 7, says he walked 48 laps and came in second for the most laps in his first-grade class. His friend, Kwame Kwakye, finished with 52 laps.

cise, but also a competition to see who could walk the most laps.

Owen Connell, 7, says he

walked 48 laps and came in second for the most laps in his first-grade class. His friend, Kwame Kwakye, finished with 52 laps.

"This is my favorite time of year," Owen says of the walk-a-thon.

Forrest Flesher, 10, says he, too, likes competing for the most number of laps, adding "you get a lot of exercise."

Maya Bendiab says walk-a-thon is a great way to get fit and active, and be with your friends.

Lisa Allmendinger can be reached at 1-877-995-NEWS (6397) or at la@mendinger@heritage.com. Check out her daily blog at www.A2Journal.com.