

Board of Education Highlights

December 10, 2003 -- Washington Elementary School

2003 Tax Levy

The Board adopted the 2003 tax levy which seeks to maximize the amount of revenue the District can collect under the tax cap. Although the Board requested an increase of 9.08 percent, it did so understanding the tax cap will limit the actual increase to about 3.4 percent. The Board levies at the higher rate in order to take advantage of any unexpected growth in equalized assessed valuation. Illinois school districts must adopt their tax levy no later than December, months before the District's equalized assessed valuation (EAV) is released in April. That is why school districts must make a 'best guess' in their levy request, basing it on historical factors such as previous increases in EAV. Since 1995 the actual levy increase has ranged from a high of 5.11 percent in 1997 to a low of 2.74 percent last year.

2004-05 School Calendar

The Board adopted the proposed 2004-05 school calendar, which it will implement on a pilot basis for one year. The calendar is similar to previous calendars except that school will not be in session during Thanksgiving Week, students will attend school on Veteran's Day and all parent/teacher conferences will be held outside of the regular school day. This proposal was introduced to enhance instruction by increasing the number of consecutive five-day weeks in November. The calendar is attached.

The Future of Hubble Middle School

The Board continued its discussion on the future of Hubble Middle School and agreed to identify its preferred option by the second Board Meeting in January. At that time, the Board expects to convene a Citizens Task Force to identify how the plan will be implemented. The Board is considering five options:

- Renew Hubble and continue to use as a middle school
- Sell Hubble property and build a new middle school on another site
- Build new middle school on Hubble site
- Build a new middle school on another site and continue to use the Hubble building
- Address critical needs only

The Board held three public meeting in October to present the options and hear feedback from those attending. A majority of those who responded to an informal survey following the meeting favor selling Hubble and constructing a new school on another site.

Finance Committee Parameters

The Board discussed the role and responsibility of the Finance Committee, which held its first meeting on December 3 and will continue meeting until the end of March. The Board agreed that the committee's role is advisory and that it should have the immediate task of recommending actions that will reduce next year's \$5 million projected budget

deficit. The Board also said it wants the committee to look at the District's financial outlook long-term and recommend options for balancing the budget over time. A formal charge to the committee will be adopted in January.

The Board took the following action:

- Accepted gifts to Wheaton North High School and Pleasant Hill and Lowell Elementary Schools.
- Accepted the 2003 audit report from William F. Gurrie and Sons.
- Approved the recently revised K-12 music curriculum.
- Extended the annual subscription that allows the Department of Technology to locally control Internet filtering based on nightly updates.

Next Meeting

January 14 at Bower Elementary School