

Board of Education Highlights

March 26, 2008 - Franklin Middle School

Recognitions & Achievements

Dr. Drury recognized Pleasant Hill Elementary School, and principal, Ken Bonomo, for raising over \$23,700 through their St. Baldrick's Project to support research for a cure of children's cancer. St. Baldrick's fund raising has people agree to shave their heads for pledges. The highlight of the Projects assembly at the school on March 20 was several students shaving Mr. Bonomo's head. Sixty five people had their heads shaved and 29 volunteer stylists were on hand to conduct the mass shavings.

Superintendent Report

On Monday, March 24, Dianne Thornburg, Jenny Meyers (Longfellow curriculum leader), Daphne Sapone (Longfellow bilingual teacher), Phyllis Weaver, Ken Bonomo, Dr. Rammer, and myself went to the Outreach Center in Carol Stream and met with approximately 34 parents from the French Quarter apartments to share with them the Longfellow attendance boundary recommendations for the 2008-09 school year. If you recall, we were at the Outreach Center two weeks earlier, on March 10, for a listening session and discussed the Longfellow enrollment issue with parents from the French Quarter apartments.

Once again this past Monday, we explained the population issues facing Longfellow and the necessity to find at least one additional classroom for the coming school year. We outlined how Longfellow students, because of enrollment increases, do not have a music classroom, an art classroom, the teachers lounge has been converted into a classroom, and one of the library offices is being used for a TAG classroom. We described the need to make at least one classroom available for next year to accommodate an increase in fourth grade students. In order to create that classroom, some students would need to be moved from Longfellow to another building. We assured the parents that the decision to consider students from the French Quarter apartments was based on the fact that these students were already being bused to Longfellow and the consideration had nothing to do with the ethnic makeup of the students involved. To consider moving any other group of students from Longfellow to another building would have required bussing students who currently walk to Longfellow and the cost alone of that additional bussing would be prohibitive.

We indicated that we were very sensitive to their concerns and feelings about moving their children from Longfellow. The recommendation took into account the feedback we received at the March 10th meeting with these parents. Therefore, the recommendation for the 2008-09 school year is that students who are currently in first through fourth grades at Longfellow would be able to stay there for the remainder of their elementary careers. Bussing would be provided for these students from the French Quarter to Longfellow.

In order to open one classroom at Longfellow for next year, the current 8 kindergarten students from the French Quarter apartments would be transferred to Pleasant Hill Elementary next fall for first grade. The distance and travel times would virtually be the same. The support programs and services students receive at Longfellow would also be provided to these students at Pleasant Hill as they are currently at Longfellow. Moving these 8 students would reduce the number of first grade sections for next year and make available the necessary classroom for fourth grade. All new students, at any grade, moving into the French Quarter apartments would be enrolled at Pleasant Hill starting immediately. For next year, parents of current students in grades one through four would have the option of attending Pleasant Hill. Mr. Bonomo assured the families that they would be able to visit Pleasant Hill to become acquainted with the school and there would be transition programs developed to help in their move to this new school.

Parents with a current kindergarten student and an older sibling at Longfellow would have the option of moving both children to Pleasant Hill or leaving the older sibling at Longfellow; however, it is necessary for all the current 8 kindergarten students to move to Pleasant Hill in order to open the additional classroom.

Parents were appreciative that the District listened to their concerns. They thanked us for taking the time to meet with them at the Outreach Center and for finding a compromise solution. Although some kindergarten parents would prefer staying at Longfellow, there was an understanding that this recommendation took into account all parties and allowed the majority of students the opportunity to finish their elementary school experience at Longfellow.

We feel it was a very positive and productive meeting. This solution will come before the Board on April 16, and we encourage the Board of Education to approve this recommendation.

The Board took the following action:

Approved to post for review an evaluation of the Library Learning Center Program.

Approved the recommendations as presented for the 2008 Summer School Program. High School classes will once again be available though College of DuPage, and Driver Education will continue to be offered at Wheaton North and Wheaton Warrenville South High Schools. Summer School mini-courses and the Middle School Replacement courses will not be offered this year due to declining enrollments resulting in these courses no longer being financially self-supporting. Middle School replacement classes will be available to students at the College of DuPage. Band for grades five through nine will continue to be offered as it is financially self-supporting. A Summer School Literacy Program for at-risk and ELL primary students in kindergarten, first and second grades is currently being developed as is a Summer Reading Book Bag Program for at-risk readers in grades three, four and five.

Approved to post revised Policy 7.60, Student Residence.

Approved a recommendation for the High School English Language Learners Program housing and design.

Approved a one-year contract extension with First Student, Inc. (formerly Laidlaw Transit, Inc.), for district transportation.

Approved the second set of bid packages along with the engineering services for the New Hubble Middle School.

Discussion Item

The Board continued discussion on modifications to Policies 2.200, 2.220, and 2.230 dealing with public comment at School Board meetings. Several members suggested increasing the time limit of public comment from 3 minutes to 5 minutes. Action on the policies is scheduled for the April 16 meeting.

Next Meeting:

April 16, 2008 at Hubble Middle School