

Board of Education Highlights

March 24, 2004 – Madison Elementary School

Good News

The Wheaton North Scholastic Bowl captured the state championship last weekend in Peoria for the third consecutive year. With a 95-1 season record, the team charged its way through the regional and sectional tournaments on its way to the state title. Congratulations to the team and sponsors Phyllis Kidd and Susan Martin.

District 200 was named one of the best 100 communities in the country for music education this week by two national music organizations. The American Music Conference and the National Association for Music Education selected the winners based on 30 categories, including the range of courses offered and the number of students participating.

WWEA Contract Extension

The Board of Education Wednesday approved an extension of its contract with the Wheaton Warrenville Education Association (WWEA) more than a year ahead of the contract's expiration date. The one-year extension makes the contract effective through June 30, 2006. The only change in the contract relates to salaries paid in the contract's final year plus a small increase in the stipends paid to coaches and sponsors of extracurricular activities. The increase in the teachers' base salary is 2 percent and the stipend increase is 0.3 percent. Due to the large number of teacher retirements over the next two years, the actual cost to the District will increase only 0.5 percent over the 2004-05 contract costs.

Finance Committee Recommendations

Bill Farley, Executive Director of Business Operations, reported on the Finance Committee's recommendation to reduce expenditures another \$1.7 million next year and issue \$16 million in working cash fund bonds to cover operating deficits until a long term solution to the District's financial crisis is developed and approved. The Board accepted the recommendation and agreed to continue discussing the proposals at its April 14 meeting.

During the last two years, the District has trimmed \$5 million from its operating budget, but still faces a projected \$5 million deficit next year unless more reductions are made. Past deficits have been covered by year-end balances, but those are projected to run out by 2006 unless there are more reductions or new revenue sources.

The bulk of the proposed reductions come from the teaching staff, but also include administrative and secretarial reductions, more custodial outsourcing, the elimination of a cleaning management contract with Aramark, and the end of a national standardized testing program. The committee also proposed dropping the fee for participation in non-athletic extra-curricular programs and increasing the basic registration fee instead.

Student Fees for 2004-05

In response to the Finance Committee's recommendations, the Board approved a change in the student fee structure for the 2004-05 school year designed to simplify and potentially reduce the costs associated with participation in non-athletic extra-curricular activities. This

change will increase revenues about \$234,000. High school students will no longer pay the \$50 fee to participate in non-athletic extra-curricular activities or the \$25 fee for an activity ticket which provides admission to school events. Instead, the basic registration fee will increase \$50, from \$100 to \$150. This will give students the opportunity to participate in any number of non-athletic extra-curricular activities without paying an additional fee and also gives them free admission to school athletic and performing arts events. At the middle school, the \$30 non-athletic user fee will be dropped and the registration fee increased \$30, from \$63 to \$93. This will permit students to participate in non-athletic extra-curricular activities at no additional cost. Although there are no extra-curricular user fees in the elementary schools, the Finance Committee recommended a \$15 increase in registration fees. Preschool and kindergarten registration fees will go from \$38 to \$53, while the fee for students in grades 1-5 will go from \$53 to \$68.

The Board took the following action:

- Approved revised high school curriculum in the following areas: English as a Second Language, French 4 and 5, Algebra II/Trigonometry, Introduction to Algebra, Health, Accounting, Interior Design, Sophomore English (all levels), Junior English (all levels) and Senior English (R level).
- Approved textbooks for the following courses: culinary arts, nutrition I and II, baking and pastry, and international cuisine.
- Posted proposed textbooks and supplementary materials for the following courses: British literature, composition, literature and film, creative writing, sophomore English, junior English, French 4 & 5, and health.
- Approved the purchase of two trucks, one for each high school, to be used for plowing and salting the high school sites.
- Approved the purchase of \$121,547 in technology items, ranging from computers to software to servers. The purchases are funded by Closing the Gap grant funds the District received from the state. The hardware and software will be dedicated to the middle schools, which will receive upgrades this summer.
- Approved the purchase of data cabling for Hubble Middle School, the only school that isn't networked for Internet access in all classrooms. This work will be completed during April and additional computers installed over the summer.

Next Meeting

April 14 at Hubble Middle School