

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Ameeta Bajaj
Patte Knuth
Tanuja Rathi
Pat Sidler
Kanwar Singh
Sandra Martin, Superintendent

2801 York Rd., Oak Brook
District Office: 630-573-2887
Fax: 630-573-5374
www.Butler53.com



Butler School District 53

Board Report

A news report of the Feb.13, 2006 Board of Education meeting

Board Okays Critical Facilities Work in “Option A”

The Board of Education voted in favor of “Option A,” a stop-gap measure to provide critical repairs and improvements to the two schools, but one that will allow them to survey the community and develop a future plan of action for both schools.

The two largest projects are repairing air conditioning units and air handling units at Brook Forest and replacing all the old windows and doors at Butler Junior High. In all, the projects, set for the summers of 2006 and 2007, total \$2.7 million.

Board members said this option was most prudent because the work needs to be done now, can mean some energy efficiency savings through the Performance Contracting Program and leaves the door open to further explore a plan of action of renovation versus rebuilding.

“Obviously there’s a lot of work at Brook Forest and we’re trying to do the minimum work we can,” said committee member and parent John Prunkl.

Board members thanked the 22-member ad hoc committee, which with the architects Healy Bender, Inc. extensively evaluated the condition and future needs of the school facilities, including Performance Contracting and performing an audit of the building.

Superintendent Sandra Martin said she will explore opinion research companies to obtain feedback on a possible referendum from the entire community.

The Board voted after hearing from the Ad Hoc Buildings and Grounds Committee Report. They also authorized the superintendent to sign a contract with Honeywell for Performance Contracting. The plan is to fund some of the improvements through energy efficiency savings. The remainder of the work will be funded through the sale of debt certificates.

Elizabeth Hennessy from William Blair and Company recommended that now is the time to sell the certificates. They would be repaid from the Operations and Maintenance Fund.

A report on the improvements has been posted on the District’s web site at butler53.com.

New Principal Hired at Brook Forest

The Board approved a three-year contract to hire Nina McCabe as the new Brook Forest Elementary Principal. Mrs. McCabe has extensive experience as a Principal at two different schools, one in Franklin Park School District 84 and the other in Woodland School District 50 in Grayslake. She also has leadership experience as a Literacy Coordinator at the District level, has served as Reading Consultant, supervisor, teacher and curriculum author. Mrs. McCabe also serves as an adjunct instructor in the Education Department at Dominican University. She has a Bachelor’s in Education from Northern Illinois University, a Master’s in Reading Education from Northern and an advanced degree in Educational Administration from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Board Accepts Retirements

The Board approved the retirements of the following faculty members effective at the end of the 2007-08 school year: Margaret Castelli, Mary Haley, Carolyn Heiney, Carol Preseren and Marguerite Stiefbold.

Student Fees, new Library Data Base System Explored

The Board heard a report on its Finance Committee from Board Member Patte Knuth. Some of the items include a review of the library database system, which is outdated and needs to be updated. The committee will explore costs and options. The committee will also assess student participation in activities and look at student fees.

Budget Process to Begin

The Board authorized the superintendent to proceed with beginning the budget process for next year. Again, zero-based budgeting will be used so that the budget is based on current needs.

Class Size to be Studied

Board members said they will initiate a study on class size. The study will be conducted under the leadership of Board Member T.J. Rathi.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Sandra Martin reported that in the regional Math Counts competition Butler students placed Third and Tenth. A team of students placed Third and will represent Butler at the state competition on March 4.

- She thanked parents and others who contributed 300 new books for the Brook Forest Library.

- She reported on the March 3 Institute Day that will promote lifelong health and wellness and an opportunity to practice emergency preparedness plans.

- She reported on the nomination of Butler Junior High as a Blue Ribbon School and commended Ed Condon, Val Cawley and Rebekah Stathakis for their work.

Principals' Report

Butler Junior High Principal Ed Condon reported:

- Forty-five students leave March 2-5 for the Eighth Grade trip to Washington D.C. The trip includes a tour of the White House thanks to U.S. Representative Judy Biggert.

Brook Forest Principal John Jackson reported:

- Fourth Graders are engaged in a highlight of the year with Biography Week when they dress up as a famous person and report on his or her life.

Schools Switch from PTA to PTO

Butler parent representative reported that the school has switched from a PTA to a PTO. The reorganization allows both schools to operate a single board, rollover money to the next year and will allow a more effective management of the volunteer network.

Language Arts, Special Education Program Highlighted

- Teachers Val Cawley, Anna Lee and Ellen Wozny gave a report on the Language Arts curriculum, including how the schools meet state standards and the use of projects and materials.

- Director of Special Education Dr. Linda Vlasik reported on her activities to work with special education teachers, respond to parent concerns, monitor and evaluate staffing, budgeting and other components of the program, coordinate with the area's special education cooperative LADSE and develop a special education manual, among other activities. Her work is part of the District's School Improvement Plan.

Impact of Breckenridge Development Outlined

Attorney Stuart Whitt, hired by the Board and an expert on the impact housing developments have on schools, gave a report on his findings about the Breckenridge Woods/Brittwood Creek plan. He said that the 57-acre development at Route 83 and 35th Street, at its current zoning of 22 lots or at the developer's plan of 35 homes, would negatively impact the school district.

He projected that at the current proposal, the homes would generate revenues of \$274,000 in 2012 but that expenses to educate students would total \$810,000. As zoned, that gap between expenditures and revenues would remain, he said.

In addition, he maintained that the average District 53 homeowner would see less than \$50 in relief on their tax bills each year in the coming decade because of the new development.

Board members asked that Whitt continue to monitor the development and the District present its findings to the Plan Commission.

Board Calendar

- March 7 Buildings and Grounds Meeting - 8:15 AM**
Administrative Center
- March 13 District Leadership Team Meeting - 4:00 PM**
Administrative Center
- March 13 Board of Education Meeting - 6:30 PM**
Administrative Center
- April 24 Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting - 6:30 PM**
Administrative Center

Other Important Dates

- Feb. 17** Compensatory Day, No School
- Feb. 20** President's Day, No School
- March**
- 2-5** 8th Grade Washington D.C. Trip
- March 3** Teacher Institute, No Classes
- March 6** Casimir Pulaski Day, No School