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Butler School District 53

Board Report

A news report of the Feb. 11, 2019 Board of Education meeting

New superintendent appointed

The Board of Education approved the appointment of a new superintendent, Dr. Paul O'Malley, who will succeed Dr. Heidi Wennstrom, who is retiring. He will begin July 1, 2019.

The Board also held a brief reception for staff and parents to meet Dr. O'Malley. Board President Christopher S. Edmonds said the Board is "extraordinarily pleased" with the outcome of the search process. "His understanding of our high-performing students and the expectations of our community to consistently raise the bar for all of our students was eye opening and refreshing. He has a transparent and data-driven approach to education. We are confident Paul's leadership will provide District 53 with a growth path for the future focusing on the development of the whole child," he said.

Dr. O'Malley is currently superintendent in Norridge School District 80. Prior to that he served as associate superintendent of schools in Community Unit School District 308 in Oswego. Before joining District 308, O'Malley was an assistant superintendent for business services at Niles Township High School District 219 and held the same position in Glenbard Township School District 87 for two years. O'Malley began his education career teaching high school chemistry, natural science and physics. O'Malley received his doctorate in educational leadership from National Louis University, Chicago, and his Type 75 superintendent endorsement from Loyola University, Chicago. O'Malley received his bachelor of science in chemistry education from DePaul University, Chicago, and a double master's in education leadership and special education from Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago.

Edmonds also thanked vice president of the Board Dr. Sally Beatty and board member Laura Bieselin for their efforts in guiding the search and working with the search firm Ray & Associates. The search involved town hall meetings and a stakeholder survey as well as video and on-site interviews. "We are extraordinarily pleased with the outcome of the search process. In the end, Dr. O'Malley proved himself the best candidate to carry forward the vision of the District," Edmonds said.

Alternative learning days discussed

The Board discussed the District's two alternative learning days, where students and staff worked remotely Jan. 30 and 31 while both schools were closed due to dangerous cold. Board members noted that teachers worked hard to put together a day of learning and said the Board will review the matter and ask its attorney as to whether the days are considered in compliance with the school code. Parents in attendance spoke about their child's experiences and gave reports on the rigor of the work and benefits of the day.

Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom said the alternative learning days provided a unique opportunity for students and staff to provide quality structured learning time with families. The Butler Education Association President Ellen Wozny said that the lessons were high quality and that teachers participated in designated professional learning activities as well as communicated with students during those days. Of 74 parents who responded to a survey, 80 percent said they were overwhelmingly positive about the learning experience.

Board Committee reports

Education Committee

Board member Mrs. Laura Bieselin gave an update on the Education Committee. She said the group is exploring adding more art to the junior high offerings. She commended art teacher Nina Angelillo for putting together a proposal to expand art offerings and encouraged community members to review it. She also said the committee discussed the alternative learning days at length.

Infrastructure Committee

Board member and Finance Chair James Chow outlined the work of the committee to review the redesign of learning spaces. He said the discussions dovetail with how to replace some aging equipment. He also noted that the desks and other furniture at Butler Junior High and the large north end playground at Brook Forest are both near the end of their life cycle. Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom noted that the playground is much larger than the one previously replaced and the District will need to initiate a fundraising campaign to replace it.

Meeting calendar, snow removal, personnel

In other news:

- The Board approved its meeting calendar for the 2019-20 school year. In all but one month, the meeting will be held on the second Monday of the month. In October, it will be held Oct. 21, 2019 because of a holiday on the second Monday. All meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. and are held in the Board meeting room at the District office. Meetings and times can be modified at a future date.

- The Board discussed the damage related to water infiltration in several classrooms due to a leak in a heating univentilator at Butler Junior High. The Board commended maintenance staff that worked through the night to move furniture and contain damage. Right now, technology is being investigated to determine if there is damage.

- The Board reviewed a cost benefit analysis of various options for snow removal. Currently, an outside contractor is hired to remove snow at Butler Junior High and Buildings and Grounds Director Bob Jakupki uses a District-owned vehicle to remove snow at Brook Forest. The administration recommended continuing that practice.

- The Board approved the appointment of Malcom Holland as an IT Technician. Previously he worked as an IT assistant repairing equipment and providing technical support. He will be located at Brook Forest. He has a Bachelor's of Science in Information Technology. In other personnel news, the Board accepted the resignation of permanent substitute Estefany Rozo Olaya.

- Director of Technology Farheen Beg gave a report on plans to research and design "an ideal learning space." She said that the design will be piloted and results shared with the Infrastructure, Education and Finance Committees.

Superintendent, Principals' reports

In the superintendent's and principals report:

- Dr. Heidi Wennstrom noted the recent recognition of Butler Junior High Principal Amy Read as a finalist in the Golden Apple Excellence in Leadership Award. "This award truly honors the culture of the school and the work of teachers, staff and students," she said.

- Parents were encouraged to take the 2019 5Essentials survey. At least 20 percent of parents must take the state survey in order for results to be tabulated and reported. The deadline is Feb. 15.

- Brook Forest Principal Dr. Chad Prosen announced that a STEMtastic bingo challenge is being held throughout the month. He also said that STEM night, which was cancelled due to weather conditions, was rescheduled for March 21 from 5-7 p.m.

- Butler Junior High Principal Amy Read reported on the successful Liferide 8th grade retreat, International Day and Spelling Bee competition.

Board Calendar

March 11 Board of Education Meeting- 6:30 pm.
March 13 Community Outreach Committee - 4 p.m.
March 19 Education Committee - 7 a.m.
April 1 Infrastructure Committee - 7 a.m.
April 3 Finance Committee - 4 p.m.



Want to learn more? Listen to the Board Meeting audio at www.butler53.com Click on the tab "Board of Education"

School Calendar

Feb. 15 Parent Teacher Conferences: Early student dismissal
Feb. 18 No School: President's Day
Feb. 19 Non attendance day
Feb. 21 Parent Teacher Conferences (BF only) 4-8 p.m.
March 1 No School: County Wide Institute Day
March 4 No School: Casimir Pulaski Day



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