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# BOARD BRIEFS

Dr. Arleen Armanetti, Superintendent

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## BOARD BUSINESS



### ***New Superintendent Announced***

On behalf of the Board of Education, I am pleased to announce that Dr. Robert Dyer will be the next superintendent of LaGrange Highlands District 106. Dr. Dyer will succeed Dr. Arleen Armanetti upon her retirement at the end of the school year.

Bob is currently the Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction at Moline District 40. He has spent 32 years in District 40 as a teacher, dean, principal and administrator. Bob completed his doctoral studies in educational leadership from Western Illinois University in December, 2008.

On January 28th, the Board of Education approved a three-year contract with Dr. Dyer. This final step follows a search process that attracted a large number of candidates – a great reflection on our district. The board conducted a series of interviews with a number of highly qualified candidates. The board found itself with the luxury of having several outstanding choices, but ultimately agreed that Bob had the best combination of experience, leadership ability, personality and alignment with our values and mission. As an example, Bob’s personal motto is “every child succeeds - no exceptions, no excuses,” a theme very consistent with our mission statement.

We are currently planning a time for Bob to visit the district to meet the staff and the community. We will share the specifics as soon as they are finalized.

We are pleased to bring the superintendent search process to a successful conclusion. It is important to note that the high level of parental involvement in the education process and ongoing support of the community are defining characteristics of our district. These, along with the hard work and dedication of our staff, are major reasons that we were able to attract such highly qualified superintendent candidates.

★ Tom Hinshaw  
★ President, Board of Education



### ***Food Service Program***

District 106 is now serving hot lunches to students on a daily basis through Food Service Professionals (FSP). Initially, order forms and menu packets were sent home to parents but, in the future, menus will be available on a monthly basis on the district's website under the tabs for Elementary School and Middle School. As in the past, the various hot lunch fundraisers will continue and the monthly FSP calendar will reflect those dates. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's school office if you have a question about the program. Ω



## BOARD BUSINESS (Continued)

### **Earth Partners Garden Club**

Dr. Powers-Richard, Mary Ann Mohrhusen, and Mr. Jon Stoddard presented information regarding Earth Partners, which is a partnership between the Lakeview Nature Center and Highlands Elementary School. The partnership began about two years ago when Mr. Stoddard, a Highlands parent and staff member of the Lakeview Nature Center in DuPage County, approached the school about an opportunity to create a restoration project at the school. Each participating school received support funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and included: a field trip voucher, \$500.00 for equipment and plants, and a set of plan field guides.



Thirty third, fourth, and fifth graders volunteered to join the Garden Club and met several times last spring. The first meeting was to learn about ecological restoration, which is a way of establishing a positive relationship between people and the land and is a process of renewing a degraded, damaged, or destroyed ecosystem through active human restoration. Further meetings included mapping the courtyard for low spots, sunny and shady areas, etc., and researching plant species for the garden. After a final plan was developed, with the help of the Earth Partnership for Schools advisors at the DuPage Forest Preserve District, the students created a wonderful ecosystem in the courtyard between the kindergarten and 2nd grade wings. This area will continue to grow each year and can be built into the curriculum in almost every subject area. Congratulations to everyone on the committee for their hard work in developing such a great project! Ω

### **Sick Bank**

In January, the Board of Education approved language that allows the Teachers' Association to establish a sick bank. Ω



### **Apple Exemplary Program Award**

Mr. Callis reported that Highlands Middle School is among only 38 educational technology programs nationwide to be honored with the "Apple Exemplary Program" award from Apple Computer. The Apple Exemplary Program designation is reserved for educational programs that are model implementations of Apple products and solutions. Only programs that have demonstrated a strong use of Apple technology in education and illustrate "best practice" qualities of a 21st century learning environment are honored in this way. Representatives from Apple Computer will be present at the March Board of Education meeting to present the Board with the award. Congratulations! Ω

### **Welcome New Staff!**

- **Mr. Jacob Southwood**, *Middle School Custodian*



### **Space Foundation Summer Institute**

It is possible that a Consortium Space Foundation Institute may be held this summer. The Consortium would be sponsored by Lyons Township and the West Suburban Consortium for Academic Excellence. Though the consortium is still in the planning stages, it is felt the program would contribute to the math and science curriculum. Mr. Swick, Middle School teacher, received a scholarship from the Space Foundation and travel expenses from the District 106 Educational Foundation to attend last summer's very worthwhile Space Foundation program in Colorado. Ω

### **ISAT Scores**

Mrs. Cusick reviewed the two types of ISAT reports. The first report is the State Report Card which can be found on the district's website. The second report comes from the Interactive Illinois Report Cards and is in two parts. The first part is a grade level analysis, and the second part includes Cohort reports that follow the same group of student year to year. Using these reports together, the district is able to glean information to find where there is a need for improvement. Ω

## BOARD BUSINESS (Continued)

### **Elementary Technology Tidbits**

With the additional laptops in elementary school this year, the elementary staff was excited to present an update on the use of technology in the K-5 programs. Dr. Powers-Richard, Mrs. Meske, Mrs. Lanciloti, Mrs. Lipkowski, and Mrs. Ciango presented wonderful examples of students' work which showed the progression of technology from first grade through fifth grade. By the time students reach fifth grade, technology has been integrated into all areas of the curriculum including reading, language, math, social studies, etc., and the students have been provided a good foundation for sixth grade. Ω

### **IASB/IASA/IASBO Conference Report**

Mrs. Strecker, Dr. Combs, and Mr. Palmer reported on several of the workshops they attended at the Illinois Association of School Boards/Illinois Association of School Administrators/Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASB/IASA/IASBO) Conference in November. A few of the workshops they attended were on Data Base Decision Making, Succession, and Gifted Learning/Training. Ω

### **Race to the Top Memo of Understanding Review**

At a special Board of Education meeting held on January 11th, the Board of Education approved the district's participation in the State of Illinois' proposal for "Race to the Top" federal funding for school reform. Since details of this funding source have not be clarified by the State, the district's participation is contingent on final plan details. Ω



### **Flexible Grouping Update**

The Board of Education held a discussion on the status of the Flexible Grouping program with its highlights and concerns. Some of the earlier glitches seem to be working out, and communication is an area that continues to be improved. Also, there are a couple of items that are still being worked through including managing the data. Mrs. Cusick reported that there will be a Work Group meeting in February to plan the evaluation of the program. Ω

### **Set 2010 Graduation Date**

The Board approved the recommendation to hold eighth grade graduation on Wednesday, June 2, 2010. Ω



### **Superintendent Goals**

The 2009-2010 Progress Measurement Plan will serve as the Superintendent's goals for the school year. Ω

### **Donation to District 106**

Thank you to Mr. Nick Vasti, a District 106 parent and employee of BP (British Petroleum), who presented the Board of Education with a \$500.00 donation from the BP Fabric of America Fund. This is the second year that Mr. Vasti has recommended District 106 to receive this grant. Ω



### **National School Board Members Day**

Congratulations to our Board of Education for being recognized on National School Board Members Day, November 15, 2009. The Board of Education is outstanding in its commitment to doing what is best for the students and community of La Grange Highlands School District 106. Ω

LA GRANGE  
HIGHLANDS  
SCHOOLS

SCHOOL DISTRICT  
106

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We're on the Web!  
[www.district106.net](http://www.district106.net)



Julie Phelps, Editor

## CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

### Curriculum Council Report

The Curriculum Council met on December 8, 2009, to discuss a Gifted Training Opportunity, the January Institute Day, and the RtI Implementation Checklist. Ω



### National Middle School Conference Report

Each year, the Middle School staff rotate who attends the annual National Middle School Conference. This year, The sixth grade team Ms. O'Brien, Mrs. Novotny, Mrs. Scheiwe, and Mrs. Pilch along with Mr. Yena, Mrs. O'Reilly, and Mr. Papierski, attended the conference. Mr. Yena reported on Rachel's Challenge, which is a program based around the inspiration of kindness and compassion of Rachel Scott who was the first student killed at Columbine High School. Ms. O'Brien and Mrs. Novotny reported on a workshop they attended on the use of white boards. They learned that the use of White Boards in the classroom can increase student engagement, help to monitor student understanding, boost student achievement, and allow for immediate feedback to students. Mrs. O'Reilly reported on two workshops, Instructional Powers of Music and Bricks and Bridges. The first workshop worked with the book "Using Song Lyrics to Teach and Practice the Six Traits of Effective Writing" by Dr. Monte Selby, and the second workshop worked with the book "Bridging the Gap to At-Risk Youth: Bricks and Bridges" by Dr. Selby and Dr. Lemoges. Mrs. Scheiwe and Mrs. Pilch reported on Teaching Reading in the Content Areas, which provided innovative instructional strategies to improve student's understanding when reading for content. Mrs. Pilch also attended a workshop on Dinah Zike's foldables which are three dimensional hands-on manipulatives and graphic organizers. Overall, the Middle School Conference was a great success and inspired the teachers to bring new ideas and techniques to the classroom. Ω

## BUSINESS AND FINANCE

### Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee met in November to begin discussion on the development of new district financial goals and the 2009 Tax Levy. The Finance Committee recommendations were incorporated in the Tax Levy presented to the Board of Education. The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be held in early February. Ω

### Laptop Acquisition

Each year, computers are purchased as part of a 4-year cycle replenishment plan. The Board reached consensus for Mr. Callis to take advantage of an opportunity to purchase next year's laptop computer replacements early at a reduced cost and on a deferred billing basis. Ω

### 2009 Tax Levy

A public hearing was held at the December Board meeting, after which, the 2009 Tax Levy was formally adopted. A resolution authorizing reduction of certain fund levies for the 2009 levy year was also adopted. Ω