

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORK SESSION**

April 21, 2008

The committee of the whole work session of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, April 21, 2008, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Johnson in the Professional Development Center of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. She welcomed an audience of 16 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Trustees Present: Tom Eddy, Shirley Johnson, Melanie Kurdys, Wendy Mazer, Deb Polderman, Dale Posthumus, and Jennifer Whistler

Board Trustees Absent: None

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

President Johnson opened the comments and communications portion of the meeting and asked if there were any citizens that would like to speak to the Board. Mrs. Polderman informed the audience of the public comment guidelines.

Mrs. Joanne Willson, 7122 Leawood, a citizen, congratulated the Northern choir on the success of their last performance with the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra; complimented Superintendent Wells on her Encore article; thanked the guidance departments for meeting the deadlines for the graduates; inquired about room fans at Northern High; and informed the Board that recalled beef is still on premises at North Middle School.

Ms. Mildred Taraszka, 410 Marylynn Ct., a citizen, shared concerns with the speed limit in front of Lake Center Elementary and suggested the District contact the City of Portage about relocating an "end of school zone" sign.

Mr. Ron Campbell, 6837 Trotwood St., a citizen, discussed his objections to the Regional Enhancement Millage request.

President Johnson opened the floor to comments from fellow Board members.

Mr. Eddy commented on businesses looking to relocate would be in search of Districts offering a quality education. He also shared an excerpt from a book entitled The True Patriot that pertained to true or false patriotism.

President Johnson informed the audience she had the honor of participating in the selection of the Rotary Club Scholarship students, adding 11 scholarships will be awarded. She noted 16 were Portage students and commented on the high quality of District candidates.

Superintendent Wells commented on the press conference held earlier in the day at Northern High School by Congressman Fred Upton and Sheriff Mike Anderson to formally announce a Bill to

promote an emergency alert system for K-12 schools. This notification system would empower schools to create their own emergency notification service for students, personnel, and parents through mobile text messages, e-mail, and other telecommunications services.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Bond Project Update. Superintendent Wells welcomed Mr. Mark Reile, Architect from TMP Associates, who provided an electronic conceptual design, both external and internal, of the Northern High School plan.

The Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Mr. Tom Noverr, shared information regarding interest in pursuing LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. He discussed costs, working with the architects, construction managers, and District personnel. This would be the right thing to do for the community and students, the District is currently looking into a three-way partnership, and more information will be presented to the Board at the May meeting. Mr. Noverr responded to questions about prioritizing and deferring costs. Mr. Noverr also shared Phase I bids for the 12th Street Elementary are due tomorrow. This bid process is for excavation work and the results will be in your April 29 Board packet. He commented on the turnout at the Lake Center Open House held last week adding citizens commented on traffic concerns and shared other information. The District will now be communicating with the City and the input received will be factored into the site plans.

Superintendent Wells informed the audience the District is looking at the third week of May to hold similar “Open House” meetings at Central and Northern High. More details will be shared when the meetings have been scheduled. She added more information will also be shared regarding a May 1st 12th Street Elementary School ground breaking. Trustee questions were answered by Mr. Reile and Superintendent Wells that pertained to the number of classrooms, classroom size, staffing, sister-schools, and redistricting. Superintendent Wells informed the Board their comments would be shared with the Owners, Architects, and Construction Managers.

2008/09 Fiscal Planning. Superintendent Wells shared the final draft of the goals, principles, and guidelines for 2009 budget development and program reductions. She highlighted the changes that had been made and received feedback from several Trustees about incorporating additional changes.

Mr. Noverr provided a 2008/09 budget presentation containing historical background information. He used a Budget Impact Analysis and walked the Board through a variety of different assumptions and variable changes to the District budget and responded to questions. He indicated that the outcome of the May 7 election, as well as the mid May State Revenue Estimating Conference will have a substantial impact on these assumptions.

Superintendent Wells presented 2008/09 potential budget adjustment information with three budget cutting scenarios and potential new revenue source ideas. Superintendent Wells, Mr. Noverr, and the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, Mr. Ric Perry, responded to numerous Trustee questions. More detail budget measures will be brought to the Board for further consideration at the May 12 Board Work Session.

Policy Governance. Mrs. Whistler shared potential interview questions with the Board and because of the late hour, opted to send an e-mail with “next steps” to the Trustees.

Public Comments on Discussion Items.

Mrs. Joanne Willson, 7122 Leawood, a citizen, shared concerns for high school lunch period scheduling, closed campuses, crowded cafeterias, classroom size, and setting a ceiling to the number of students in a class.

Ms. Mildred Taraszka, 410 Marylynn Ct., a citizen, discussed thoughts on the District pursuing solar energy and concerns about District employee health insurance.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was offered by Mr. Eddy, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education move into closed session for the purpose of considering a student reinstatement. Upon a roll call vote, all trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

The Board moved into closed session at 8:44 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 8:52 p.m.

A motion was offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mr. Posthumus, that the Board of Education deny reinstatement of a student. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was offered by Mr. Eddy, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education move into closed session for the purpose of discussing negotiations. Upon a roll call vote, all trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

The Board moved into closed session at 8:53 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 9:45 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary