

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

May 12, 2008

The committee of the whole work session of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, May 12, 2008, was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by President Johnson in the Professional Development Center of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. She welcomed an audience of 18 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Trustees Present: Tom Eddy (arrived at 6:55 p.m.), 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.

Mr. Bob Schafer, 7667 Cobblewood, a parent, thanked the Board, administration and architects for finding a solution to the 12th Street Elementary traffic issues. He discussed high school shuttle bus concerns and limited class sizes.

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

Mrs. Polderman acknowledged and thanked the community for their support of the Regional Enhancement Millage.

Mr. Posthumus also thanked the community for their support of the Regional Enhancement Millage.

Mrs. Mazer thanked the community for their support of the Regional Enhancement Millage. She informed the audience that a Academic Achievement discussion of the work of the Committee will take place at a future meeting.

Mrs. Kurdys offered thanks to the community for their support of the Regional Enhancement Millage, offered congratulatory remarks to Mrs. Whistler and Mr. Rathburn, and expressed her frustration that the Board was unable to include a report from the Academic Achievement Committee on the Board agenda until June.

Mrs. Whistler thanked the community for their support of the Regional Enhancement Millage and thanked Mrs. Willson, Mr. Kuppler, and Mr. Rathburn for investing the time to be a candidate for Board Trustee.

President Johnson echoed the previous sentiments in support of the Regional Enhancement Millage and thanked all four candidates for their efforts and commitment to serve as Board Trustees. She offered congratulations to Mrs. Whistler and Mr. Rathburn on their election victories. President Johnson informed the audience that due to the importance of the Academic Achievement information, adequate time needed to be scheduled for discussions and suggested a Special Meeting may be necessary.

Superintendent Wells reiterated comments in support of the Regional Enhancement Millage and the amazing year the District has had regarding support by voters in November and May. She shared a letter received from the 2005 Northern High School class president expounding on the positive impact a teacher had made in his life.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Bond Project Update. Superintendent Wells discussed the citizen committee of elementary and middle school parents involved in examining District neighborhoods and drafting a plan to shift elementary attendance boundaries scheduled for fall of 2009. She invited the Director of Assessment and Student Information Systems, Mr. Dan Vomastek, to provide background on the Attendance Area Study Committee (AASC) findings. Mr. Vomastek shared the guiding principles used by the AASC during the development of the proposal for new elementary boundaries. Mr. Vomastek answered questions pertaining to: the percentage of students moving and/or staying in current buildings, grandfathering, and a request for before and after information about socio-economic status, student time on buses, enrollment numbers, and “trouble spots” in neighborhoods.

President Johnson informed the audience of the community open house planned for Thursday, May 15th from 6:30 – 8 p.m. at the West Middle School Media Center, allowing for an opportunity to discuss this plan. Families impacted will have an opportunity to process and gather information and ask questions as well. The AASC will meet again during the end of May to review feedback from this session. President Johnson also informed the audience to contact current building principals for redistricting information if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Superintendent Wells introduced Mr. Mark Reile, Architect from TMP Associates, who provided an update on traffic flow issues and updates to the plan at 12th Street Elementary and responded to Trustee questions about the 12th Street site. Mr. Reile also shared an electronic schematic design of the Central High School plan. Superintendent Wells informed the audience that open houses have been planned at Northern High on May 21 from 6:30 – 8 p.m. in the Media Center and Central High on May 22 from 6:30 – 8 p.m. in the Media Center to gather public feedback on potential traffic flow issues at both sites.

Both high schools remain to be challenges as the team attempts to fit all components on those current sites. The Superintendent commented on the beginning stages of discussion about relocating tennis courts and asked the Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Mr. Noverr, to share background. He discussed the idea of a single location for the courts at West Middle School. He shared several issues pertaining to parking, the cross-country course, and commented the District is in the preliminary stages of examining the West Middle School site to see if all needs can be met.

Mr. Noverr responded to Trustee questions pertaining to: funding for this project, the resurfacing of the current courts at West Middle, and lack of a multi-purpose facility at the site. President Johnson encouraged concerned citizens to attend the open house meetings regarding this topic. Superintendent Wells added the importance of all citizens voicing their opinion and added if they can not attend an open house they should contact the athletic director at their high school or the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Mr. Ric Perry.

Mr. Noverr presented background information for Facility Commissioning and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certification for the 12th Street Elementary School. Mr. Reile and the Owners Representative from the Kalleward Group, Mr. Gary Kalleward, along with Mr. Noverr responded to numerous Trustee questions pertaining to: paybacks for pursuing LEED, how everything ties together, original specifications, schedule impacts, costs, discounts, allocating the cost of funding to other buildings, positive and transparent impacts, sustainability and accountability.

High School Trip Requests. Superintendent Wells presented background information regarding two permission to plan trip requests: Northern High School Environmental Science and IB Biology students to Costa Rica from June 16-25, 2009; and Northern High School IB Advanced Drawing/Painting students to Germany, Switzerland, and Italy from June 22 to July 1, 2009. She also provided final updates on three previously approved high school trip requests: Northern High School French Club students to France from June 17-24, 2008; Central High School French and Spanish Club students to France and Spain from June 25 to July 2, 2008; and Northern High School Spanish Club students to Costa Rica from June 25 to July 2, 2008. Trustee questions pertained to chaperone to student ratio, trip funding, curriculum and liability. Mr. Perry and Superintendent Wells responded to most questions and Mr. Perry added he would forward further clarification regarding Policy 6400, Student Trips, to the Board. Hearing no further questions, President Johnson commented the permission to plan trip requests will move forward at the May 19th meeting.

2008/09 Fiscal Planning. Superintendent Wells shared updates to the 2009 fiscal planning goals, principles, and guidelines for budget development and program reductions. She discussed collecting detailed information, review, and controlled outcomes starting point for the Board's June 2nd meeting. By the May 19th Board meeting, information will be available from the state revenue estimating conference coupled with other legislative news. Discussion occurred. Superintendent Wells inquired and received agreement from the Board for the Administration to look at third grade class sizes in the District noting challenges in terms of space. This will be brought forward in the budget discussions at the June 2nd Board meeting. Superintendent Wells and Mr. Perry also responded to Trustee questions pertaining to: fund balance, professional development costs, and all day Kindergarten.

Public Comments on Discussion Items.

Ms. Judi Santek, 7527 Autumn St., a citizen, thanked the Attendance Area Study Committee for all their work that has gone into the draft plan and stated she does not favor grandfathering students.

Mr. Mark Anthony Martin, 10519 Dandale Street, a citizen, voiced concern about grandfathering in the redistricting draft plan, requested both high school lobbies incorporate a better way to house and showcase artwork, discussed funding, LEED, and Bond projects.

Mrs. Joanne Willson, 7122 Leawood, a citizen, discussed the need for fans at Northern High, credit recovery, the disbursement of Waylee Elementary students, split classes, and bussing. Superintendent Wells asked Mr. Vomastek to follow-up with Mrs. Willson regarding a bussing question.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary