

BOARD MEETING OVERVIEW

Bexley City School District

348 S. Cassingham Road, Bexley, Ohio 43209



NEXT MEETING - Regular Meeting - Monday, 2/8/10 - 6:30 p.m. - Cassingham Community Room

- Organizational Business
- Awards Presented
- Board Reports
- Treasurer's Report
- Enrollment Data
- All-day Kindergarten
- Public Comment
- Race to the Top Funds
- Operations Report
- Other Items

The organizational meeting of the Bexley Board of Education was held on Wednesday, 1/13/2010 at 6:00pm in the Cassingham Complex Community Room.

Organizational Business

Bexley Mayor John Brennan gave the oath of office to members elected in 2009: Carol Fey, Marlee Snowdon and Diane Peterson. Joan Fishel was sworn in as Board President and Craig Halliday as Vice President. The regular Board meeting commenced at 6:30pm, with all members present. "We approach this responsibility with both humility and dedication," noted Ms. Fishel.

The following 2010 meeting dates, all Mondays, were approved: 2/8, 3/8, 4/19, 5/17, 6/28, 7/19, 8/23, 9/20, 10/11, 11/15, and 12/13/2010.

The Board, all of whom serve as community liasons, approved the following specific appointments for community boards and groups in which members officially participate:

Tech Roundtable, Athletic Board – Mr. Halliday
PTO Council, Ohio School Boards Association – Ms. Fey
Metro Education Council – Dr. Zwick, delegate for coming year with Ms. Peterson serving as an alternate
Bexley Education Foundation – Ms. Fishel
Partnership Council - Ms. Peterson
Developmental Assets group, Recreation Board – Ms. Snowdon

Awards Presented

Superintendent Mike Johnson and Board President Fishel presented the district's Keymaker Award to members of the 2009 Bexley High School girls' soccer team, who recently became state Division II champions. Dr. Johnson praised the members of the team as well rounded, noting the many members who have been academic all-Ohio and all-American. "You are very supportive of each other and take care of yourselves as a team," he said. "Those are the values that took you all the way."

Board Reports

. Ms. Fishel congratulated the Bexley Public Library on passage of its levy and the hiring of its new director, Rachel Rubin.

. Board Member Craig Halliday gave an update from the January Tech Roundtable meeting that included a preview of the Sakai application and discussion of the district's future technology direction. The next meeting is Monday, 2/8/2010 at 6:30pm in the Community Room.

. Student Representative Rebecca Carroll noted that BHS exams are coming up next week. The Science Department has initiated the E3Smart program and Environmental Club is planning a February blood drive.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Chris Essman commented that the district has completed its annual outside audit and the "generally favorable" report has been sent to the state auditor. There is not a whole lot of new information in the December Financial Report. Interest rates keep falling; the district will soon receive the January quarterly settlement for income tax.

Mr. Halliday inquired about the General Fund Balance. Mr. Essman drew attention to the month-to-month projections that he presents. "We're doing about where we said we would be in the Five-Year Forecast. Without additional revenue (coming in 2011), the district will be spending more than it brings in each year and the cash balance will disappear by 2013. The 2010 levy would fund FY2012 to

FY2014 if it is a normal levy request for funding an additional three years.

"When we settle on a levy type and amount, for the first time, that levy will not increase the General Fund Balance," added Dr. Johnson. "It's a different concept that we're all going to have to understand. Chris does it better than anyone else, in explaining in layman's terms." He and Ms. Fishel stressed the importance of communicating the levy information to the public.

Enrollment Data

Dr. Johnson presented historical enrollment data from 1977 – 2009, remarking on the ebb and flow of Bexley's birth and enrollment rates. "We're a landlocked school district, with those who do not have children moving out and families with children moving in. Bexley enjoys stability because of the quality of the schools and its excellent ratings," he said.

Enrollment in the elementary grades is projected to increase slightly at Cassingham, Montrose, and the Middle School. At BHS, however, it is expected to fall from 708 in 2009 to 682 in 2010.

As enrollment shrinks at the HS, the community's expectations about the programming there are not going to shrink. It will not be as easy to get the efficiencies there as it has been at the elementary level. "Our district has a number of assumptions, in particular about class sizes and avoiding RIF [reduction in force], because of the negative environment it creates in the school district," he said. He reminded the Board of district policies concerning class sizes: 20-22 students/class is the expectation in grades K-3; 22-25 in 4-6.

Dr. Johnson noted that BMS has managed enrollment decline through attrition. Principal Williams has avoided hiring new teachers by asking staff to serve in areas that they have not taught in two decades or setting up teams of teachers to handle courses (e.g., in Family Consumer Science). "I am not making recommendations at this time about attrition or moving teachers around, but I did want to let you know about enrollment trends," he said.

All-Day Kindergarten

Dr. Johnson noted that the district can probably take advantage of a waiver provision and postpone All-Day Kindergarten (ADK) for one or two years. The process for obtaining a waiver has changed significantly since it was initially presented in the summer.

If Bexley pursues a waiver, the Board would be required to send a resolution to the State Superintendent along with a plan for future implementation. He asked the Board to let him know how to proceed on ADK. "In the public record there is a resolution suggesting that ADK should be part of the next levy discussion," he reminded members. "There are certain complexities existing here, but I would like to know the will of the Board."

Ms. Fishel reviewed 2009 events related to the discussion. The state budget bill passed in June, HB 1, mandated ADK to begin in 2010. The mandate included the opportunity for school districts to request a waiver based on space concerns and alternative program options. The state's revenue situation has worsened since June, resulting in passage of HB 318, a budget compromise. Now ADK is still mandated, but the reasons for requesting/receiving a waiver are unrestricted.

"You are very supportive of each other and take care of yourselves as a team. Those are the values that took you all the way."

- Dr. Michael Johnson

Regardless of the way this goes, Dr. Johnson and some Board members encouraged the Board to decide by February whether to seek the waiver, so that administration and parents can plan for the fall. The district's application for a waiver

would presumably be based on declining revenues and the income tax not producing as projected. There is no deadline for submitting the waiver.

Ms. Fey clarified that administration has earmarked some funds in the current budget (savings from staff attrition) that could be used to pay for ADK. She noted her strong support of ADK. "Bexley should be taking the lead, rather than grudgingly assuming an obligation," she said. "I see the diversity that has evolved in Bexley, academically and financially, concerning economic opportunity and economic situations. We need to recognize the lower end of the economic spectrum and devote our resources to helping the students who are challenged."

Ms. Snowdon also stated her support of ADK, mentioning research from the 2008 community task force showing how ADK benefits all children. "Our kindergarten teachers and administrators unanimously support this concept," she said.

Dr. Johnson confirmed that parents who do not want the full day will not be forced to send their children for full day; and the district would let parents know what their children would miss if they attended only half-day. Mr. Halliday pointed out that there are many in the community who do not want ADK and they are often silent in their opposition.

Ms. Fishel concluded that the Board will review a draft resolution or resolutions at the February meeting, when there will be more opportunity for discussion and public comment. Board members indicated that administration should craft the waiver resolution and provide it to the public for review prior to the 2/8/2010 Board meeting.

Public Comment

Community member Barbara Fisher introduced her daughter, Sophia Fisher and two other BHS students. She asked for policy changes to help (1) get her “daughter a decent education so that she will stay in the district;” (2) improve the schools’ English and writing curriculum; (3) improve teacher training through a mentoring program used by Columbus Public Schools. “This district chases its brightest students away,” noted Ms. Fisher, who said that Cassingham denied her daughter gifted education and BMS refused her HS level courses. She asked for policies that would allow students to take more advanced courses if they can handle them.

Sophomore Jake Steinberg spoke of his experience in the BHS English Department, comparing it to the positive learning experience he had in his BMS GATE classes with Dr. Linda Kelley. He emphasized that he is not complaining about his HS teachers, rather he takes issue with the lesson plans, reading and allocation of class time. Sophia Fisher noted that she and 57 other BHS students (members of the Facebook group the Writers’ Party, or WP) struggle with the HS English curriculum. “It’s not that we can’t keep up with the standards; the standards cannot keep up with us,” she said. “We are being denied an education.”

Dr. Johnson and Dr. Kellogg indicated their willingness to meet with Ms. Fisher and the students. Ms. Fishel asked for some time to review their situation before getting back to Ms. Fisher.

Chip Bell, as the parent of future kindergartners and the son and spouse of educators, spoke in favor of ADK as a way to support learners at the less proficient end of the spectrum. “How do you as elected officials do the right thing right now?” he said.

Race to the Top Funds

Dr. Anne Hyland, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, told the Board that the federal government is focusing on education by providing stimulus funds to states. With very short notice, it asked states to apply for grants from a large amount of money allocated for particular types of programs. Ohio will receive \$200 - \$400 million in these funds over the next four years. Bexley plans to participate

in the project and has indicated its intention to apply for the funds. According to the *Columbus Dispatch*, only 40 percent of Ohio districts are applying for the funds.

Bexley can expect to receive at least from \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year for four years. “There are several areas that we have already been working on that are part of the criteria for qualifying for the grant award,” she said. “Things we would do normally.” For example, the district is already integrating STEM instruction across the grades and committed to using an instructional improvement system (Bexley uses the North Central process and Best Practices with external validation). Ms. Fishel observed that the school district’s teachers’ union rep has participated in the discussions about Race to the Top. The Board approved the resolution concerning the Race to the Top.

Operations Report

Dr. Barry Zwick, Director of Operations, reported on the cell tower project. The pouring of foundation footers was delayed, but has been completed and the district has already received money for the agreement’s first year. He praised the district’s “snow team,” members of the maintenance staff who agree to come in to work very early or on weekends to plow and spread salt around the schools.

On Monday, 1/25/2010, the district will hold its third annual Health Fair for employees and their dependents. He said that the district hopes that the practice will improve staffers’ health and eventually lower health insurance rates. He expects to be able to offer the H1N1 flu vaccination at the Health Fair.

Other items

- . The Board gratefully accepted a gift of \$12,000 from the Athletic Boosters for the new indoor storage facilities.
- . The Board approved the school calendar for 2011 – 2012, as well as several fundraising activities for the 2009 – 2010 school year.

BOARD REPORTS

Bexley Middle School - February 2010
Montrose Elementary School - March 2010
Maryland Elementary School - April 2010
Cassingham Elementary School - May 2010
Technology Department - July 2010

The official minutes of the Board Meeting are on file in the District’s Board of Education Office.