

BOARD BRIEFS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE & SPECIAL MEETING MARCH 5, 2015

CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 158 BOARD OF EDUCATION

ELL PROGRAM TAKES THE SPOTLIGHT

Success of English Language Learners Celebrated

Susan Grieshaber, English Language Learners (ELL) teacher at Martin Elementary School, and Michelle George, director of curriculum, presented on the success of the ELL program.

The program supports the growth of both English language and academic skills for students learning English.

The goals for ELL are:

- To provide the learning opportunities that will accelerate the acquisition of English and academic development of all ELLs.
- To help all ELL's reach English proficiency levels according to the State standards.



- To provide a safe learning environment that values culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Fifth-grade student Leilani Nebot said the program has helped her improve her writing and speaking skills, which in turn had a positive effect on her other subjects.

George said that the District has more than 50 languages spoken among its population.

"We try to really encourage

[sharing] the native cultures. The students are first-hand examples of them," Grieshaber said, noting that students are very interested in learning from each other.

PARCC TESTS PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY

Chief Academic Officer Erika Schlichter reported that despite "constantly changing instructions and parameters from the State of Illinois," the District's ongoing implementation of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for

College and Careers (PARCC) testing is proceeding smoothly thanks to the hard work of staff. The largest issue was a delay for some special education students due to the state failing to provide modified materials on time.

BOARD VOTES TO MOVE FORWARD WITH PLANS FOR CHESAK ROOF, ENERGY EFFICIENCY

During its special meeting March 5, the Board of Education approved an agreement for consulting with Weatherproofing Technologies, Inc. to begin planning for the replacement of the roof at Chesak Elementary. According to Doug Renkosik, director of operations and maintenance, the roof is 15 years old and due to age and some design flaws, the new roof is needed to avoid further costly repairs.

In addition, the Board authorized the administration to begin negotiating a final Guaranteed Energy Savings contract with Performance Services, Inc. The company's proposal aims to save the District just under \$2 million over 10 years by upgrading lighting systems throughout District buildings.

Proposal to Change Semester Schedules for Elementary and High Schools

Schlichter presented proposals to transition elementary schools to a trimester grading schedule and to shift the high school schedule so that first semester ends before winter break.

According to Schlichter, for elementary schools, the advantages of trimesters would include:

- Provides a larger block of time at the beginning of the school year for students to acclimate to their class/grade/schedule before testing and grading for the first report card
- Increases the opportunity for more meaningful conversations at parent/teacher conferences
- More time for teachers and parents to identify areas of concern and work on improving these areas
- Fewer marking periods allows longer periods of time to collect data for report cards
- Midterms are more informative with a larger block of time following report cards
- Fewer report cards reduces the amount of testing which allows for more instruction.

Under the proposal, the 2015-2016 trimester calendar would be as follows:

- Trimester 1: Ending November 13
- Trimester 2: Ending March 4
- Trimester 3: Ending June 10.

The high school proposal would move the end of first semester to before winter break. A major advantage of doing so would be allowing students to finish final exams before leaving for winter break. Schlichter said a committee of three teachers and five administrators studied several other options, including moving final exams to before winter break but leaving the grading semester break unchanged. However, it was decided that changing the semester was the best option, as it allows the grading period to end at the same time the summative exam is given for that subject matter. The move would cause unbalanced semesters, with second semester being approximately two weeks longer than first. However, Schlichter reported that the school improvement team felt that this variance could be managed within curriculum and pacing guides.

The Board will vote on the proposals at its next regular meeting, March 19.

Proposal to Add Four Honors Courses at HHS

The Board heard a proposal to add four honors courses for next year at HHS:

- Spanish 2 Honors (formerly Spanish 2-9)
- Spanish 3 Honors (formerly Spanish 3-10)
- Spanish 4 Honors (formerly Spanish 4-11)
- Principles of Engineering (New Course, STEM Academy, Project Lead the Way)

The three proposed Spanish Honors courses currently exist as leveled courses and form a pre-AP sequence, with a higher degree of rigor than the regular Spanish courses, though the honors weighting is not currently applied. Under the current structure, students may opt to be placed into the more rigorous courses, but do not receive weighted grades despite the elevated rigor of the course. The proposed change would apply honors weighting to these pre-AP sequence courses, which culminate in AP Spanish as a capstone class.

Principles of Engineering is contained in the Project Lead the Way sequence and is part of the STEM Academy, thus making it eligible for honors credit.

The Board will vote on the proposal at its next meeting.

Girl Scouts Recognize Board and District

Local Girl Scouts Troop 470 took time during the public comment period to thank the Board and the District for their ongoing support of the troop, for which the District provides meeting space. As part of their thank you, the scouts presented each Board member with a box of cookies, which were graciously accepted.



Pending Actions

In addition, at its next Regular Meeting March 19 the Board will vote whether to approve:

- Moving forward with the posting of Tier 1 staff positions for next year
- Purchase orders at \$186,549.72; Imprest checks at \$142,050.19; and disbursements issued at \$6,922,635.22
- The elimination of all extra contract days outside of the standard 182 days
- Authorization for the Administration to expend up to \$25,000 to include emergency repairs for HVAC equipment emergency, as well as repairs due to a sprinkler system failure
- Change Orders to trade contractor's contracts for the HHS Additions and renovations, as presented in the letter from Lamp Inc., dated February 24, 2015, in an accumulative amount of \$37,253
- Minutes of the Board's February 19, 2015, Regular Meeting
- The designation of Board Member Paul Troy as the authorized agent of the Board of Education to sign approval of natural gas and electricity procurement contracts until the January 2016 Board meeting.

Informational Updates

The Board heard informational updates on:

- Monthly activities of Fiscal Services and Human Resources Departments
- Revenue and Expenditures Report
- 2015-2016 E-Rate Projects and Contracts
- Dashboards and foundational support for the District's 5-year Plan, FY15 - FY19
- A first draft of the Fiscal Year 2016 budget
- The budget and work progress of the Huntley High School Renovations and Expansion project, which is progressing on time and under budget.

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