

Massena Central School Board of Education Update August 10, 2018

The Board of Education Meeting for August 16, 2018 will begin at 6:00 pm in Room 314 of Massena High School. It is anticipated that the Board will go into executive session to discuss such topics as personnel on the agenda prior to the regular meeting.

School Mascot Branding Plan - Rebekah Grim

At the July BOE meeting, the administration presented a branding plan for the new mascot to be used for those people and businesses who want to reproduce the mascot. This plan was created by our communications specialist Rebekah Grim who has a background in public relations and marketing. Our intention is to have an organized plan so the images to be produced are consistent with our expectations. At the meeting, one of the Mascot Committee members, Mike Trimboli, addressed the Board. He raised a concern that the plan was too restrictive and did not provide latitude to add images or other information that would denote specific clubs and sports. Since the meeting we have done some further review including communications with merchandizing companies in the field. We also met with Mike and other members of the Mascot Committee to seek some common ground on the branding plan. Based on these conversations we have made some revisions to the plan which we will share at the Board meeting. The changes include allowing the small symbols of sports and clubs requested by Mr. Trimboli. I have attached the revised plan to the BOE agenda for your review. It is important to note that the branding plan is a new concept for the District and will be a work in progress. However, we feel it is important to hold to our main premise that the District needs to retain control over reproduction styles for the image as it could become distorted and inconsistent with what was originally voted on by the students and accepted by the Board.

Massena CSD Professional Development Plan 2018-19

Last year the District adopted the Professional Development Plan as required under NYS Commissioner's Regulations 100.2(dd). Subsequently, schools were notified that the two year plan must be reviewed and adopted by the Board in an even numbered year and reviewed only in the odd year. Evidently, this requirement is to keep all NYS schools in a similar process and timeframe. Therefore, the plan is on the 8/16 BOE agenda for review and adoption.

The Professional Development Plan is produced in a collaborative effort by the Professional Development Committee. The plan focuses on improving student performance and teacher practice as identified through data analysis. It contains each of the SED requirements including:

- implementing a mentoring program for new teachers;
- providing teachers holding a professional certificate with opportunities for completing 100 hours of professional development every five years;
- ensuring that level III teaching assistants and long-term substitute teachers participate in professional development activities,

- describing how all teachers will be provided professional development opportunities directly related to student learning needs as identified by multiple sources of data, including but not limited to school report cards; and
- providing professional development to all professional and supplementary school staff who work with students with disabilities.

Massena RtI/AIS Plan 2018-19

During April and June of this year, the District ELA and math interventionists, along with a community member, parent and building principals met to review the district's AIS/RTI plan. This is a two-year plan that must be reviewed on even years, thus, 2018-2020. As the plan is a living document and we are looking to improve student achievement and meet state requirements with an effective plan, the following changes are being proposed:

1. Page 5: Adding wording to include 'benchmark criteria'. This provides the process to not be solely based on test proficiency (NYS 3-8, Regents) in Grades 3-12. Benchmark criteria are locally agreed upon measures, i.e. growth or achievement in i-Ready, Fountas and Pinnell, Dibels, Common Interim Assessments, etc.
2. Page 7: It was decided that "Classroom Average: should be included in the Multiple Measures for Social Studies and Science.
3. Page 11: Based on recommendation from the Title I audit, we added "**Start a Student AIS Folder and Send a Parent Letter" to each of the action boxes to remind all personnel of a critical step in the process.

The AIS/RTI Plan for 2018-2020 is attached to the BOE agenda for Board review and approval. Director of Curriculum Stephanie Allen will provide a brief overview of the plan at the meeting on Thursday.

Food Service Program - Peter Bertrand, Director of Food Service

One of our District goals this year is to "Improve fiscal status and training within the Food Service Department" At the Board meeting on Thursday, Food Service Director Peter Bertrand will provide an update to the BOE including budget status, student debt, and other factors impacting the program.

Though the food service program incurred an overall loss in 2017-18, it was significantly lower than the previous year, \$85,373 in 2016-17 vs, \$12,097 in 2017-18. Please see spreadsheet attached to the agenda. School breakfast sales were up 14.4% and lunches were up 2.6% . Revenues in 2017-18 were up \$85,341 or 7.4%. Expenses were up \$11,964 or 1%. Student lunch debt was \$2,600 but this was offset by an anonymous donation of \$2,000. Peter will discuss the status of the program and goals for 2018-19 at the BOE meeting on Thursday.

District Goals 2018-19

In July, the building principals, Director of Curriculum, Director of Special Services and I met on retreat at the Nicandri Nature Center to begin preparing our District goals for the new school year. Since that time we have continued to expand and revise them with the input from all of our administrators and supervisors. A copy of the draft goals will be attached to the Board agenda for your review. The advancement of our Strategic Plan will continue to be a critical piece of our goals going forward. This includes improving student attendance, raising assessment scores, and increasing graduation rates. The goals will further focus on the implementation of the iReady K-8 benchmark assessment, capital project, and improving student safety, among others. At the BOE meeting on Thursday we will present the draft goals and seek Board input prior to unveiling them to staff in September.

Capital Project - Massena Central School District

Since our last meeting I have been in consultation with our school attorney to prepare a request for proposals and contract for the project architect. I will provide an update at the Board meeting on Thursday.

School Calendar 2018-19

The school calendar for 2018-19 is on the Board agenda for approval on Thursday. It includes some regional-wide staff development days as well as half days for district trainings. The end of year half days for elementary school have been added back in due to the MFT contract and allowance for them under the new SED regulations. A copy of the calendar is attached to the Board agenda for your review. I will discuss further at the meeting. We are also going to print with the full calendar which contains District policies and annual notifications to parents. It will be distributed this week and we hope to provide copies for BOE members at the meeting.

Opening of School

The administration and staff have been working diligently to prepare for a successful opening of the 2018-19 school year. New staff orientation will be held on Thursday, 8/23 to welcome our newest employees and acclimate them to District procedures and expectations. Board members are welcome to join us for the bus tour of the District as well as lunch. Please let Candy know if you plan to attend the luncheon so we can prepare for the appropriate number of people. At the luncheon we will introduce our new staff.

Community Schools Coordinator Kristin Colarusso Martin and other staff and community partners are preparing for our first Ready 4 School event on 8/27 from 3:00-7:00 pm at the high school. Students will be provided with free haircuts, clothing, and school supplies to get ready for our upcoming school year. We will also have free pizza and hot dogs for families to enjoy. Our community partners will be present with children's activities, information and resources for parents. We hope to see you there.

The District is also preparing for the Superintendent's Days on 8/30-31 where we will provide a variety of trainings and time for staff to prepare for the new year. Board members are welcome to join us on the morning of 8/30 for refreshments and the opening session in the high school auditorium at 8:00 am. I am excited about the start of the new school year and the initiatives we will be undertaking together.

Donations to the District:

We are pleased to announce that the District has received three more generous donations over the last month. The list of donations for your review and acceptance are attached to the Board agenda and presented below:

- Anonymous Donation- \$2000 to Food Service Department for student meal debt
- TRIAD - \$100 to Community Schools
- Gouverneur Central School District - SuperKids Texts and Support Materials

We appreciate the generosity of our community in presenting these donations. They will be of great use for supporting our staff and educating students.

Approval of Tax Rates 2018-19

School districts pass tax rates for the year in August after the towns have filed their final tax assessment rolls at the end of July and the County presents the school tax rates for each town. For the Massena CSD, the towns are Massena, Louisville, Norfolk, and Brasher. The school taxes will vary based on equalization rates which range from 100% in Massena to 82% in Norfolk. A spreadsheet containing these various tax rates is attached to the BOE agenda. The Board will need to approve the tax rates for 2018-19 at this BOE meeting so the tax bills can be sent to residents in early September.

Two issues of note in the tax report is the tax rate increase and decrease in taxable assessed value for the school district. The school tax rate will increase 1% for those residents in the towns of Massena, Norfolk, and Louisville. Brasher residents will see a higher increase of 10.5% due to a significant decrease in their equalization rate from 93% to 85%. The overall tax rate will increase by 1.2% to \$19.37 which is slightly above the 0.9 tax levy we proposed to the voters in May. The increase is caused by the taxable assessed value of the school district decreasing by \$1,629,604 which was largely due to a significant decrease of \$1,640,289 million in the Town of Massena. This drop was mainly the result of an agreement by the Town to lower the Alcoa assessment by \$3 million due to the removal of several buildings. Business Manager Nick Brouillette will provide further information at the Board meeting.

Other News

State Miscalculates Federal Funding Under Title IIA

State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia recently announced that the SED had underfunded 687 school districts in 2017-18 with federal aid under the Every Student Succeeds

Act. This Title IIA funding is used for professional development of teachers and administrators. The errors totaled approximately \$12 million and were caused by a formula issue that overpaid other organizations, largely charter schools. Massena was shortchanged \$12,252 which will be added to our 2018-19 allocation. This will bring our total funding in 2018-19 to \$154,838. This week, the Watertown Daily Times published an article which appeared to indicate that our shortfall was the entire allocation of \$154,838. I did receive some questions about it so I wanted to make it clear that the underpayment was actually the \$12,252.

[Here](#) is the article from the Watertown Daily Times

Rural Schools Association Newsletter

Attached is the Rural Schools association newsletter for August, 2018. It contains an analysis of the current state budget situation.

BOCES Capital Project

[Here](#) is a recent Watertown Daily Times article about the proposed St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES capital project. DS Tom Burns and other officials from the BOCES will attend the September Board meeting to discuss the project.

Albany Update

The following information is from NYSCOSS Deputy Director Bob Lowry in regard to the latest developments impacting public education at the state and federal levels.

Action on Bills Passed by the Assembly and Senate

It's been relatively quiet in Albany since the Legislature left town late last month. We have been writing letters to the Governor's office on education legislation which passed both houses, but none of the significant school-related bills have yet been sent to the Governor for his consideration.

Bills which pass both houses are not immediately transmitted to the Governor. Instead, the Legislature sends bills in groups between the end of the session and the end of the calendar year. The Governor then has 10 days, not counting Sundays and holidays, to act. Straightforward, non-controversial bills tend to be sent first.

We expect two bills of particular interest to us will be sent later, probably after Election Day. One would provide the first adjustment to the cap on BOCES District Superintendent salaries since 2003. The second is another attempt to provide BOCES capital costs an exclusion from the property tax cap. This version addresses objections cited by the Governor to a bill he vetoed last year.

We will also be weighing in on a series bills to give individual school districts relief from Building Aid penalties for final cost report errors, to authorize different rate-setting methodology for Special Act School Districts, and on other issues.

The Board of Regents

The Board of Regents met last week. No major policy changes were initiated or adopted. Most of the meeting was conducted as a board retreat, open to the public. The Regents received staff updates on several initiatives, including implementation of the federal every Student Succeeds Act.

Department leadership has made it clear that they intend to be active in shaping the next iteration of Annual Professional Performance Reviews. The current moratorium on use of growth scores is due to expire with the start of the 2019-20 school year. The Department will be convening work groups and regional discussions with the aim of developing recommendations in time for the start of the 2019 legislative session.

Congress and the Perkins Act

Congress and the President enacted reauthorization of the Perkins Act providing federal funding for career and technical education. Final passage came with exceptional rapidity. In a spasm of bi-partisanship unusual for the House Representatives, it passed a version of reauthorization in June 2017. The Senate version was discharged from that chamber's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on July 23, brought to the Senate floor by unanimous consent and passed by voice vote on July 25, and signed by Trump on July 31.

Together with AASA, our national affiliate, we favored the House version and had urged the Senate to slow down. Our primary concerns focused in the paperwork requirements the Senate bill imposes on school districts.

Here is AASA's summation of what transpired with Perkins reauthorization.

School-Level Financial Reporting

Speaking of paper work requirements...

A few weeks ago, we shared guidance issued by Division of the Budget on implementation of the new reporting requirement on school-level funding allocations enacted as part of this year's state budget. Seventy-six school districts will be required to submit the reports for this year by August 31. Next year, all districts with four or more school buildings will be required to report. Finally, in 2020, all districts will be required to report.

We and the New York State School Boards Association strongly opposed this proposal.

We would be grateful to hear from districts required to report this year about their experiences with the new mandate. We and NYSSBA get asked by contacts in the Capitol and the media how districts are managing.

Smart Schools Bond Act Processing

The leading frustrations we hear from superintendents concern processing of Smart Schools Bond

Act projects and school facilities projects in general. We may be seeing some progress.

Meetings of the three-agency Smart Schools Review Board appear to be accelerating – the Board met in both June and July after not meeting for more than six months. The State Education Department has hired a staff person from DOB whose responsibilities will include overseeing Smart Schools activity and has received some help on staffing issues from the Civil Service Department.

In an upcoming edition of the Councilgram, we will have an article with tips from SED on what districts can do to help avoid complications and delays.

State Budget Outlook

In May, the Division of the Budget issued its Financial Plan for the enacted state budget. As required by law, it includes projections of revenues and expenses for the three state fiscal years to follow. It projected the state will face a \$4 billion structural deficit next year. That's an incomprehensible sum to most humans, but it equates to 3.6 percent of projected expenditures – about on par with what the state projected at comparable points in the last couple budget cycles.

Any day, DOB should release its required first quarter update to the Financial Plan. Broader economic news has been positive. For example, last week we learned that second quarter growth in the national Gross Domestic Product was 4.1 percent, exceeding most expectations. But as we have warned, the federal tax reform legislation enacted last December poses unique threats to the state's finances. The first quarter update may provide some insight into what to expect in next year's state budget.

Whatever the data reveals, another reality is that next year will be the first in the new term of the victor in November's gubernatorial election. Governors sometimes attempt to get tough choices aimed at improving the state's fiscal situation out of the way in the first year of their term, the point furthest from their next election. But there have been exceptions. A big state tax cut was enacted in the first year of Mario Cuomo's second term (bigger than he would have preferred) and Foundation Aid became law in Eliot Spitzer's first year (his only full year).

Comptroller DiNapoli News

[Strong Growth For Local Sales Tax Collections Halfway Into 2018](#)

Local sales tax collections across New York grew 6 percent in the first six months of 2018, according to a [report](#) by State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli. Through June, local collections totaled \$8.5 billion compared to \$8 billion during the same period last year.

[Oil Spill Fund Reaches New Agreement with St. Lawrence County](#)

New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli announced an agreement between the New York Environmental Protection and Spill Compensation Fund and St. Lawrence County that will lead to the clean-up and redevelopment of contaminated commercial property in the villages of DeKalb and Massena.

Senior Prank Update

This week, I participated in a press conference on the June 5th senior prank. The meeting was called by the Massena PD and District Attorney to clear up misinformation about the handling of the case.

[Here](#) is a North Country Now article about the press conference.

Color Run for Recovery

The following is a message from Project Coordinator Amber Baines from the Massena Drug Free Community Coalition in regard to an upcoming event.

I have attached to this email a flyer for the Color Run for Recovery we will be having on September 8th on the John Story Trail here in Massena. There is a registration link on the flyer if you would like to pre-register to participate to get a t-shirt. This is a fun run to show the community our support of those in recovery.

Around the trail it is our hope that we will have different businesses/programs/people that will volunteer to spray people with color in support of Recovery month. Following the Tribe's lead on this- we will have each of our volunteers pick a color that best represent their business, their program, or themselves to spray on the participants. At the end of the run the walkers/runners are then covered in all of the colors of the businesses/programs/and people that make this community great. We are looking for more people to volunteer to throw the color. If this is something you or someone you know might be interested in- please send them my way! The more volunteers we have, the better this event will be.

If you would like to register for the run- click the link in the flyer and we will see you on September 8th!

Please share this with your partners so we can have this be a successful event supporting Recovery Month in our community.

A colorful poster for a 5k run/walk event. The background is a mix of green, blue, and red with a splatter effect. At the top, 'COLOR RUN' is written in large, white, outlined letters. Below it, '5k Run/walk for Recovery' is written in white on a dark blue, wavy banner. The text 'September is National Recovery month. Join our fun run in support of those in recovery.' is on the left. 'RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE.' is in bold white letters. Below that, 'Family friendly. Free. Fun!' is written. On the right, a white circle contains the date 'SATURDAY, SEPT. 8, 2018', location 'Massena John Story Trail Nightengale Park Entrance', and times 'REGISTRATION BEGINS 8:30 AM' and 'RUN BEGINS 9:30 AM'. At the bottom left, 'TO PRE-REGISTER:' is followed by a URL and a note that the first 200 pre-registered people will receive a t-shirt. Silhouettes of runners are at the bottom.

COLOR RUN
5k Run/walk for Recovery

September is National Recovery month. Join our fun run in support of those in recovery.

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Family friendly.
Free.
Fun!

SATURDAY, SEPT. 8, 2018
Massena John Story Trail
Nightengale Park Entrance
REGISTRATION BEGINS 8:30 AM
RUN BEGINS 9:30 AM

TO PRE-REGISTER:
[http://events.constantcontact.com/register/
event?llr=lhnyz4oab4oeidk=a07eflna3kh229c857f](http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=lhnyz4oab4oeidk=a07eflna3kh229c857f)

First 200 people to pre-register will receive a t-shirt

District Upcoming Events

- 8/13—Varsity & JV Fall sports begins
- 8/16—BOE Meeting—6:00 pm—HS Room 314
- 8/20—Modified Fall sports begins
- 8/23—New Staff Orientation—7:30 am—HS Library