

## **Massena Central School Board of Education Update August 11, 2017**

The Board of Education Meeting for August 17, 2017 will begin at 6:00 pm in Room 314 of Massena High School. It is anticipated that the Board will go into executive session at 6:00 pm for an MCSEA grievance hearing and to discuss such topics as personnel on the agenda prior to the regular meeting.

### **District Webpage**

Director of Technology Mike Allen and BOCES Communications Specialist Rebekah Grim will attend the Board meeting on Thursday to discuss the new District webpage which was recently launched. They will provide some background on the changes and show how the new features enhance our communications.

In terms of background, in the Spring of 2017, Massena CSD was informed that School Fusion, which is the School Districts website hosting company, was in the process of being purchased. We were notified that the website hosting software would be phased out over the next few months. We had the option to switch to the new software version, but it also included a substantial price increase. Prior to this, School Fusion had downsized staffing and technical support times were very limited. In addition the hosting company faced several denial of service attacks, which it turn made their websites extremely slow at times, difficult to navigate and eventually took them offline for hours. This created several issues on our end since the school website is used for many functions by a variety of people.

During the next few months, the Technology Office staff and some neighboring School Districts looked into several website hosting companies and gathered pricing. Since School Fusion was used by many local North Country schools it was purchased through St. Lawrence Lewis BOCES. This way school districts could receive aid and special e-Rate pricing.

After several demonstrations many School Districts were very impressed with the Edlio hosting software company. Edlio provided us with a specific Spikes Gallery template that is only used by Massena CSD, which is a basically a custom built web layout design. The new website gives the School District a new look with many newly added features. Features such as Web Forms, Newsletters, Email Senders, Social Media feeds for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, Google Classroom and Calendar integration, etc..

Since the website went live on June 26th, the Technology Department has received a lot of positive feedback.

### **Martha Slack Recognition**

At the July Board of Education meeting, the Board passed a resolution agreeing in concept to a recognition for former athletic Director Martha Slack. It requested that Pat

Henrie, who represents the committee leading the effort, provide specific renderings of the outside lettering and indoor plaque to be erected in her honor. At the Board meeting on Thursday, Mr. Henrie is expected to attend to finalize these plans.

### **Opening of School**

The administration and staff have been working diligently to prepare for a successful opening of the 2017-18 school year. New staff orientation will be held on Thursday, 8/24 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. The District is also preparing for the Superintendent's Days on 8/31-9/1 where we will provide a variety of trainings and time for staff to prepare for the new year. Board member are welcome to join us on the morning of 8/31 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.

### **JW Leary Trip to Calypso Water Park, St. Limoges, Ontario - June 2018**

The JW Leary Junior High 85+ Club is planning a field trip to the Calypso Water Park in St. Limoges, Ontario on June 7, 2018. The purpose of the trip is an incentive and reward for students who maintain an 85 or above average in their coursework.

Per Board Regulation 8460R.1 Out of Country Trips, the group is seeking approval from the BOE for the trip. Principal Alan Oliver will attend the meeting on Thursday to discuss their plans. A resolution and the group's request been has placed on the agenda for your consideration.

### **District Goals 2017-18**

In July, the building principals, Director of Curriculum 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 created during the 2015-16 school year 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 consolidation study, implementation of the iReady K-8 benchmark assessment, and promoting cultural sensitivity, 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.

### **School Calendar 2017-18 Approval**

The school calendar for 2017-18 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 have been reduced due to 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 will provide copies for BOE members at the meeting.

### **Extracurricular Activities Report 2016-17**

Per Board policy, advisors to our paid extracurricular programs are required to submit reports at the beginning and end of the school year. This information is then collated by administration and used to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs. I have attached this administrative report for 2016-17 to the BOE agenda for your review. We are fortunate to have many programs both paid and volunteer to meet the interests of our students.

### **Facility and Grade Organization Study - Advisory Committee**

At the Board meeting on Thursday, I will provide an update on the consolidation study effort including the selection of the Advisory Committee. The first round of information requested by the consultants has been submitted and is currently being reviewed. It involves a variety of areas such as student enrollment, classroom usage in each building, and budget revenues and expenditures. We also need to discuss whether the BOE wants the consultants' final report to include a single recommendation or options. This was a key question presented by the consultants at their presentation on 7/5.

Below are the scheduled Advisory Committee meetings which are open to the public. The meetings will begin at 6:30 pm. The Advisory Committee will conduct building tours at 5:45 pm as noted on the schedule ahead of some meetings. The meetings will then be held at the specified building.

Wednesday, September 20, 2017; HS Room 314

Wednesday, November 1, 2017; Tour of Jefferson Elementary School

Wednesday, December 20, 2017; Tour of Nightengale Elementary School

Wednesday, January 31, 2018; Tour of Madison Elementary School

Thursday, March 1, 2018; Tour of JW Leary Junior High School

Wednesday, April 11, 2018; Tour of Massena High School

Wednesday, May 30, 2018; HS Room 314

Thursday, June 21, 2018-Board Presentation; HS Room 314

### **School Counselor Assistant Position for Title VI Program**

Our Title VI agreement with the St. Regis Tribe includes targeted support for students at the elementary and high school levels. At the high school we added a Native American Resource Specialist in 2016-17 using the Title VI grant funds. However, shortly thereafter, the person fulfilling this role took a job as a school

counselor. Upon further discussion with the parents on the Title VI Committee and considering our available funding, we are recommending that the position be changed to School Counselor Assistant.

I have worked with the St. Lawrence County Civil Service Department to establish this non-competitive position pending the BOE accepting our recommendation. The successful individual will work with Native American students who are experiencing difficulty meeting standards due to attendance, academics and other issues. This will include making home visits and providing resource information for families. I have attached the job description to the BOE agenda for your review.

### **Bullet Aid 2017-18**

The District would like to provide recognition for our state legislators who have obtained additional funding for our school operations this year. Assemblywomen Addie Jenne has committed \$25,000 and Senator Joe Griffo, \$30,000 dollars. This funding will be used for the consolidation study, community schools program and a variety of other needs. We have also been informed that Senator Patti Ritchie has assigned \$3,000 to the District for bus safety. We appreciate the work of our legislators in supporting public education and securing this additional funding for the District.

### **Donations to the District:**

We are pleased to announce that the District has received two 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:

- Farmers Insurance - Coffeemaker/Coffee - High School
- Friends of Jefferson - \$7390 - Chromebooks

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 2017-18**

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 2017-18 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 1.58% for those

residents in the towns of Massena, Norfolk, and Brasher. Louisville residents will see a lower increase of 0.44% due to an increase in their equalization rate. The taxable assessed value of the school district decrease by \$2.5 million which was largely due to a significant decrease of \$2.6 million in the Town of Massena. This drop was mainly due to the result of an agreement by the Town to lower the mall assessment by \$1,777,700. Business Manager Nick Brouillette will provide further information at the Board meeting.

### **Other News**

#### **Albany Update**

The following information is from the State Comptroller's Office in regard to state pension funds.

#### NYS Common Retirement Fund Announces First Quarter Results

The New York State Common Retirement Fund's overall return in the first quarter of the state fiscal year 2017-2018 was 2.9 percent for the period ending June 30, 2017, with an estimated value of \$197.1 billion.

#### **Here is the Comptroller Report**

#### **New York's pension fund up, but Comptroller warns of future**

#### **BOCES Board Vacancy**

The following information was received this week from the BOCES Board Clerk in regard to an opening on the BOCES Board of Education.

Yesterday we received word from Nancy Cappellino, a long time BOCES Board of Education member, that she is resigning her position on the BOCES board immediately.

With this being said, our Board has two (2) options to discuss at their upcoming meeting on Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup>.

1. We may leave the position vacant until the election in April.
2. We may fill the vacancy by appointment per Section 1950 of the Education Law. Paragraph f of subdivision 2-a ("In the event of a vacancy in the membership of a board of cooperative educational services, such board of cooperative educational services may fill such vacancy by appointment, provided that notification be provided to all component boards of such vacancy and that the component boards are given ten days to provide any comments and/or objections to fill the vacancy by appointment, and the person so appointed shall hold office until the next annual election of the board of cooperative educational services.")

Our Board will meet next Thursday and will discuss both of the options. Please consider this email as your notification of such vacancy and if you have any comments and/or objections to please email me within the next 10 days.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

**District Upcoming Events**

8/14—Varsity & JV Fall sports begins

8/17—BOE Meeting—6:30 pm—HS Room 314

8/21—Modified Fall sports begins

8/24—New Staff Orientation—7:30 am—HS Library

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