

Massena Central School Board of Education Update
March 9, 2018

The Board of Education Meeting scheduled for March 15, 2018 will begin at 6:30 pm in Room 314 of Massena High School. It is anticipated that the Board will go into executive session at 6:30 pm to discuss such topics as personnel on the agenda prior to the regular meeting.

There will be a BOE Finance Committee meeting at 5:30 pm in the HS Student Affairs Conference Room.

Public Forum on the 2018-19 School Budget

The Board of Education will hold a second public forum on the 2018-19 school budget at 7:00 pm on 3/15 in Room 314 of the High School. I will provide an overview of the draft budget followed by an opportunity for questions and public input. The Board welcomes and encourages community attendance.

School Safety

In the wake of the Stoneman Douglas tragedy in Parkland, Florida, the District has continued to collaborate within and outside of the school to enhance safety. Beyond meetings of the District Safety Committee and with regional superintendents, we have also begun a conversation with the Massena Police Department about resurrecting the School Resource Officer program. On Friday, I met with state legislators where we discussed school safety and proposed legislation to support schools in this effort. We agreed there needs to be a comprehensive approach to the challenges before us. At the BOE meeting, I will update the Board on these efforts and ask for input. I have attached a link to the Board agenda that contains some helpful resources for school officials and parents in dealing with issues related to school violence.

As you are likely aware, there is a nationwide call for a student walkout on March 14th and April 20th to call attention to the issue of school shootings. Our administration has been discussing these potential demonstration at length including conversations with teachers, students, and parents. We have also received advice from counsel and collaborated with regional superintendents. Our first concern is student safety during these events as well as balancing student free speech rights with the disruption of education that can be caused by such demonstrations. The building principals and counselors have met with student leaders to communicate on these issues and the Massena Police Department will be present at the schools to support our efforts to maintain safety.

Here are some other important points that our students, staff, and community should know:

- School Districts don't engage in protests. However, students have a free speech right and may express their political viewpoint, if it doesn't present a material or substantial disruption to the learning environment.
- While we will be prepared for a possible walkout, school districts must remain neutral and not seen as being in support or non-support of such demonstrations. We will

encourage our students to assemble indoors and will provide a space for them to gather whether they stay inside or walk out.

- We will help students who are committed to taking action to think about how to make it a positive/productive learning experience and how to respect the rights of those students choosing not to protest. This is an opportunity to apply the citizenship lessons they are learning in school.
- Our staff will be prepared to ensure that any demonstration is orderly and safe. District policies will be followed including access to campus by the community. No parents or community members will be allowed on campus during such events unless authorized by administration.

High School Trip to Spain and France - April 2019 - Joseph Boyle

The MHS Spanish Club, French Club, and Art Club are collaborating for a class trip to Spain and France in spring 2019. Adviser Joe Boyle would like to present their plans to the Board on Thursday. The itinerary and other information about the trip has been attached to the Board agenda. Listed below are the key details for the Board to review:

- Name of Group: Spanish Club/French Club/Art Club
- Destination: France (Paris, Versailles); Spain (Barcelona, Bilbao)
- Advisers: Joseph Boyle, Trish Murphy
- Number of students expected: 18 (based on historic participation. More students will warrant more chaperones.)
- Number of chaperones expected: 3-4
- Dates of Trip: April 13-20, 2019 (Spring Break)
- Number of school days missed: Planned to take place during spring break. According to the Field Trip Request form no school days will be missed.
- Estimated Cost: \$3440.00 per participant.
- Anticipated Fundraising: The Spanish Club will organize fundraisers to provide partial scholarships to offset costs of the trip. Additional fund raising efforts are being discussed.

Regulation 8460R.1 Out of Country Trips requires Board approval for participation in this event. The trip is on the agenda for BOE consideration on Thursday so the organizers can begin their preparations.

Jr. High Trip to Boston, May 17-20, 2018 - Alan Oliver

BOE Policy 8461 Overnight Trips requires the administration to inform the BOE of student trips which will require overnight accommodations. Accordingly, JW Leary Junior High Principal Alan Oliver will be presenting information about the Grade 7-8 trip to Boston in the spring. Attached to the BOE agenda is the submitted field trip request form and itinerary for your review. Further details will be discussed at the meeting.

Other Trip Requests

There are three other trips on the BOE agenda for either notification or approval based on Board policy. The two Grade 6 overnight trips, Madison Elementary to Albany and Nightengale to Camp Overlook require notification only. The Madison Grade 4 trip to Upper Canada involves a resolution for approval per Regulation 8460R.1 Out of Country Trips. Request forms with further details on each trip is attached to the BOE agenda.

Junior Kindergarten Program

As presented in the last BOE update, the Administrative Council has been reviewing the Junior Kindergarten program over the last year to consider whether retaining students at this level is providing a long term benefit. This review includes meeting with staff for input and gathering research on the impact of such programs. I have attached the research to the BOE agenda along with our recommendations. We will discuss these conclusions at the BOE meeting on Thursday.

MOA with St. Lawrence County Board of Elections - May 2018

We have received a Memorandum of Agreement from St. Lawrence County to use their voting machines in May for our school budget vote and BOE election. The MOA is attached to the BOE agenda for your review. We will be requesting approval of the MOA at the Board meeting.

Donations to the District

We are pleased to announce that the District has received two generous donations over the last month. The first from the North Country Prenatal Perinatal Society has provided 25 lice treatment kits. These kits will be provided to families in need who often find it challenging to purchase these resources. The second is a book about the Korean War from veteran Herb Spence and his wife Phyllis who recently spoke to our high school students in Mr. Dan Skamperle's class. We appreciate the generosity of our community in presenting these donations.

Update - Facilities and Grade Organization Study

The Facility and Grade Organization Study Advisory Committee held its fifth of seven meetings on 3/1/18. The focus of the meeting was the District's staffing. Attached to the BOE agenda are the agenda/notes from the meeting and presentation from the consultants. The key take aways are:

- Two feasible options have been identified: status quo and grade centers.
- It is recommended that any reduction in positions arising from this study be accomplished through attrition.
- Staff savings can be realized by creating grade center schools.

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be 4/11 at 6:30 pm at Massena High School. A building tour will be held at 5:45 pm. The community is invited and welcomed to attend.

Give Back Days

Each year, the regional school calendar contains five or six emergency days which are generally used for inclement weather. When these days are unused, the District has traditionally assigned them as days off during Spring Break, or Memorial Day weekend depending on the circumstances. This year we had six emergency days scheduled and so far we used two for weather related closings. I am recommending that we use one for 4/20 to extend the Spring Break and another on 5/25 to lengthen the Memorial Day weekend. The latter is contingent upon the use of emergency days between now and then. This would leave one for the last day of school and another in reserve in case of emergency. We will discuss further at the BOE meeting on Thursday.

Student Ex-Officio Board Member

In 2016, the voters approved adding a student ex-officio member to the Board of Education. Currently Rachel Hurlbut serves in that capacity with Octavia Viskovich acting as the alternate member. Under [Education Law 1702](#), Districts are required to have voter approval every two years for students to serve as ex-officio members. Accordingly, there is a resolution on the BOE agenda to once again place this question on the ballot in May.

Other News



Boys Varsity Hockey Team Reach State Final Four

Congratulations to Coach Trimboli and the Boys Varsity Hockey Team for reaching the final four in Buffalo this weekend. There were many Massena fans who made the trip to support the team. Despite a strong start, Massena fell to the Victor Blue Devils 4-2 in the semi-finals. Best of luck to our seniors who have played their last hockey game as a Raider.

[Here](#) is a Watertown Daily Times article about the game.

NYSCOSS Winter Institute and Lobby Day

I attended the annual NYSCOSS Winter Institute & Lobby Day in Albany from March 4th -6th. The theme of the conference was “Courageous Conversations” with special emphasis on student diversity and political issues facing our public schools. Highlights of the conference were the presentations by Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, NYSCOSS Deputy Director Bob Lowry, and Glenn Singleton, President & Founder of Pacific Educational Group. I also attended workshops on teacher/principal evaluations, contract negotiations, personalized learning and several others. It was an excellent opportunity to network and obtain information on key educational trends/issues.

Albany Update

The following is Information from the NYS School Boards Association in regard to educational issues under consideration in Albany.

Senate and Assembly Act on Gun Control and School Safety Proposals

Earlier this week, the State Senate and Assembly each acted on a series of bills in response to the most recent school shooting in Parkland, Florida. The Senate acted first, taking up a series of school focused bills on Monday afternoon. Included in their package was legislation that would:

- Make all threats of mass violence against a school a felony
- Alter the reimbursement for the Smart Schools Bond Act payments
- Establish grant programs for some districts to access funding mental health coordinators and school resource officers
- Increase the salary limits for retired police officers serving as school resource officers
- Require that a NYC police officer be placed in every NYC school
- Designate all school resource officers as peace officers
- Create distinctive license plates, the fees for which would fund school safety programs

The Assembly took action on Tuesday, taking a different approach with a different emphasis. Rather than prioritizing school safety upgrades, this house focused on gun control in general. Their package was smaller, and included legislation that would:

- Prohibit the perpetrators of domestic violence from possessing guns
- Ban trigger modification devices including "bump stocks"
- Empower state officials to inspect the out-of-state mental hygiene records of individuals applying for firearm licenses
- Increase the waiting period for potential gun purchasers who do not immediately clear a background check
- Allow law enforcement officers confiscate the firearms of individuals if a noncriminal court finds they pose a risk to themselves or others

It is not known at this point if these issues will be integrated into the pending budget negotiations. As conversations and negotiations progress, NYSSBA will continue to work with

both houses to pursue tools and resources for school districts, with maximum flexibility for local decision making.

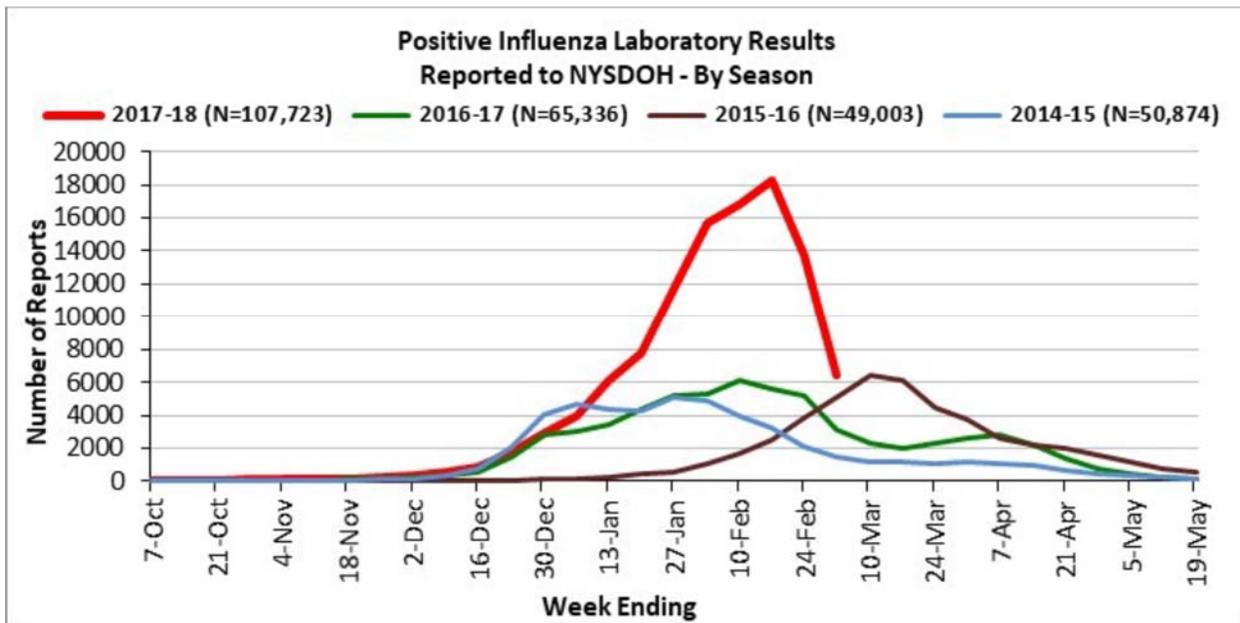
Governor and Legislature Agree on Revenue Consensus

Last week, Governor Cuomo and Legislative leaders met to set the consensus revenue and economic forecast. The final report projects that the state will take in between \$675 to \$750 million in additional revenue over two years, beyond what was projected in the Executive budget proposal.

These adjusted revenues are the primary source of funds that can be used to increase allocations beyond the Executive budget proposal or reduce taxes. While these numbers are less than what the two legislative houses projected, they still represent an improvement over the Executive's initial proposal.

Influenza Epidemic

We are all aware that the flu bug has hit particularly hard this year. Many of our students and staff have been out sick at various times over the last few months as a result. Principal Duane Richards recently shared the chart below which show cases of flu reported to the NYS Department of Health over the last four years. It is very remarkable and troubling.



District Upcoming Events

3/15—Finance Committee Meeting—5:30 pm—HS Student Affairs; Board of Education Meeting—6:30 pm—HS Room 314

3/23-24—HS Musical “The King and I”—HS Auditorium
March 23rd, 7:30pm
March 24th, 1:30pm
March 24th, 7:30pm