

**BEMIDJI AREA SCHOOLS
SCHOOL BOARD NEWS**

By Dr. Jim Hess

The Bemidji School Board met on April 19, 2010 with the following results:

Consent Agenda	The following Consent Agenda items were approved: Minutes from meetings held on March 12, March 15, and March 31, 2010; Current Bills and Special Checks Totaling: \$2,813,189.64; Certified Staff Appointments to serve Oshki Manidoo School, Three Noncertified Staff Resignations from Catherine Smith, Mellissa Nelson, and Sheila Markeson; Five Teacher Resignations from Victoria Fink, Sharon Hokuf, Diane Sharpe, Paulette Grand, and Sandra Krohn; Two Requests for Part-Time Teacher Program from Paula Welte and Patricia Lempola; Recognition of Student State Competitors; Two Overnight/Out-of-State Field Trip Requests from Solway Elementary Fifth Grade and Bemidji High School Bel Canto Choir.
Special Topics	Board Members learned about the Bemidji High School PACER Transition Project from involved students and staff members. Three videos are being produced which will assist students in transition from school-to-work. The second Special Topics presentation was from Sandy Eberhart, who explained how Community Education provides for second chances to succeed through the Adult Basic Education Program which often leads to a GED diploma.
Student Representative Report	Jade Hovet, Student Representative to the Board, provided a lengthy list of spring activities at Bemidji High School highlighting many individual or group successes.
Listening Session	One community member addressed Board Members during the Listening Session. He asked several questions regarding the intended purchase of the former First National Bank building for alternative programs. His questions were referred to administration for a response.
Effective and Efficient Operations	<p>Board Members accepted resignations from two long-time Bemidji administrators. Sue Bruns and Tom Kusler have served the children in our schools for a combined 60+ years in various capacities. Board Members expressed their sincere appreciation to Sue and Tom and wish them the best in their retirements.</p> <p>Board Members approved administrative recommendations for reductions in programs and positions as a result of licensure issues, shifting enrollment, staff members returning from leaves, federal funding reductions, and grants that are ending. The following positions were discontinued: .08 FTE Art, 1.10 FTE Elementary Education, .5 FTE Early Childhood, 1.0 FTE Special Education, 1.0 FTE Social Worker, .5 FTE Teacher on Special Assignment – Math Specialist, and .25 FTE BEA President Release Time. The Board approved adding 1.0 FTE to Bemidji Middle School for a Grade 8 Core Subjects Teacher.</p>

	<p>A VALIC Special Pay Plan for a retired staff member’s 403(b) account was approved by Board action.</p> <p>No action nor discussion took place on the Superintendent’s contract. It will be considered at a future meeting.</p> <p>Several health policies were revised including SBR 700-60-2 – Health Services Policy, SBR 700-60-4 and SBR 700-60-4R – Medication Policy and Procedures, SBR 700-60-6 – Immunization Requirements, SBR 700-60-7 – Students and Employees with Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases and Certain Other Communicable Diseases and Infectious Conditions, and SBR 700-60-8 – Employee Right to Know Exposure to Hazardous Substances. These revised policies came from the District Health Advisory Committee under the guidance of Sue Nokleby, District School Nurse, and policy guidelines from the Minnesota School Boards Association.</p>
<p>Highest Levels of Student Success</p>	<p>Submission of four grants was approved by the Board. These include: Exploring Ceramics at Solway Elementary by Candace Burk for \$1,000; Parent Education at the Beltrami County Jail for \$1,600; Sigma Pod Deep Portage Field Trip by Mark Studer for \$3,000; Local Community Collaborative for Bemidji High School Home Rooms by Bemidji High School Social Workers for \$65,000.</p> <p>Board Members received notification the Community Education grant request for Parent Education at Beltrami County Jail was approved.</p> <p>Student Teacher Agreements were approved between Bemidji Area Schools and Bemidji State University and Luther College.</p>
<p>Safe and Welcoming Environment</p>	<p>Board Members approved a Purchase Agreement to acquire the former First National Bank building for alternative programs. Plans call for Adult Basic Education, Area Learning Center, and BYLaW Programs to be housed in the downtown structure. This purchase will allow us to find a permanent home for the BYLaW Program, which has been relocated five times in ten years. It will also allow us to consolidate programs and three leases which, when combined, amount to more than the lease purchase price on an annual basis.</p> <p>Over one and one-half years ago, shortly after the White Earth Tribe purchased the Archdeacon Gilfillan property, we were advised to find another location for school programs. We have carefully considered many Bemidji properties but failed to find any building that could meet our needs until the First National Bank building became a possibility. In our proposed purchase, the district would pay \$700,000 for the property and First National Bank would receive a tax credit for the difference between the appraised value and our purchase price. The last appraisal valued the building at \$1.65 million.</p> <p>We plan to borrow \$1.1 million (\$700,000 purchase price and \$400,000 for improvements) to acquire the building and remodel it to better suite our program needs. We will enter into a lease-purchase plan with Wells Fargo Finance to pay for the building over 15 years. The transaction will shift current lease levy amounts from three locations and consolidate them under</p>

	<p>one lease-<u>purchase</u> arrangement. The new effect of this consolidation will <u>reduce</u> our local property tax levy by approximately \$73,000 per year. It is clearly a win-win situation for everyone involved.</p>
Other	<p>Board Members shared favorable comments on the Bemidji Student First Initiative, Joint Legislative Conference in St. Paul, Code of Conduct Review Committee, MCA Testing, and management of district property.</p> <p>The next Regular Monthly School Board Meeting will be held on Monday, May 17, 2010, at 4:00 p.m.</p>