

**BEMIDJI AREA SCHOOLS
SCHOOL BOARD NEWS
By Dr. Jim Hess**

The Bemidji School Board met on September 20, 2010 with the following results:

Consent Agenda	<p>The following Consent Agenda items were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minutes from the August 16, 2010 School Board Meeting - Current Bills and Special Checks Totaling \$2,238,304.70 - Request for five additional staff to be paid through Education Jobs funding to reduce class size at the elementary level. - Five Noncertified Staff Resignations - Eight Certified Staff Appointments
Special Topics	<p>Marleen Webb and Tami Wesely presented a detailed report on the Solway Garden Project. Last year several grants were written in order to create a garden at Solway Elementary with an emphasis on student hands-on learning and generating greater interest in fresh vegetables in students' diets. The Solway Garden has been a huge success and has produced a variety of fresh vegetables used in district food service menus, especially at Solway Elementary and in the Summer Food Service Program.</p>
Student Representative Report	<p>Jade Hovet, Student Representative to the Board, reported on beginning of school activities including news from sports teams, the selection of the cast for the fall musical <u>Foot Loose</u>, and Homecoming Week activities currently in progress.</p>
Listening Session Review	<p>Board Members John Pugleasa and Ann Long Voelkner met with several employees. They expressed concerns regarding increases in health insurance costs and population growth and impact on facilities.</p>
Effective and Efficient Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bus Driver Competencies were certified by Board Action. This is an annual report to the Minnesota Department of Education verifying training for drivers. - Board Members approved a new contract with Erv Blom to provide transportation service for three routes in our district for the next two years. - The 2010 Payable 2011 Levy Limit Certification received Board approval. Chris Leinen reviewed this year's proposed levy and a comparison of this year's tax levy to last year's levy. Once again the district will not levy the maximum levy authority in keeping with our commitment to under levy and use voter approved Operating Referendum dollars. The final levy will be set by Board action in December. - Brent Colligan was approved as Bemidji High School Assistant Principal through official Board action. Mr. Colligan had previous teaching experience in Bemidji and administrative experience in Red Lake and Deer River School Districts.
Highest Level of Student Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kathy Palm presented the 2009-2010 Annual Report on Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Achievement. This comprehensive report describes school district demographics and goal attainment from the previous school year. It will be included in the <u>Buy Line</u> and distributed to the entire community in the upcoming weeks and posted on the District Website.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board Members approved submitting a grant proposal written by Stephen Pflieger, Northern Elementary Media Specialist. He plans to purchase 19 Playaways (audio books) for student use.
Safe and Welcoming Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chris Leinen reviewed the final proposal for reconstruction of the Highway 71 access to Horace May Elementary. Bemidji Area Schools and MNDOT staff have been meeting for several months in order to design an entrance that is safe and preserves the school forest. The new design creates a service road along Highway 71 which will separate cars and buses. We will need to relocate/replace some parking spaces, trees, and sign which will be affected by the new access plans. This project will be completed during the summer of 2011. - A Class Size Enrollment Report was reviewed by Board Members indicating which schools had class sizes that exceeded Board established guidelines under SBR 400-30-1. Current policy recommends the following student/teacher ratios: Grades K-2 – 1:25, Grades 3-5 – 1:30, Grades 6-8 – up to 120 per pod, and Grades 9-12 – 1:30. Of the 21 elementary classes exceeding the guidelines, 16 were over by one or two students. At Bemidji Middle School, sixth grade pods were over by four or five students or approximately one student per regular classroom teacher. Some Bemidji High School preliminary numbers were high but will be adjusted after the 15-day add/drop deadlines. After the class enrollments are adjusted, we will have a much more accurate picture of any enrollment “hot spots” at BHS. Official enrollment reporting begins in October but when compared to the same date last year, total elementary enrollment is up over 140 students while secondary enrollment is down by approximately 32 students.
Upcoming Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special School Board Meeting – Monday, September 27, 2010, 6:30 p.m. - Bemidji High School Academic Awards Ceremony – Monday, September 27, 2010, 7:00 p.m. - October School Board Meeting – Monday, October 18, 2010, 6:30 p.m.
Other	<p>Board Members reviewed the 2010-2011 Legislative Priorities recommended by Leadership Team Members. Board Members identified the priorities for the State Action Agenda and Federal Action Agenda. They include: State – Transportation Funding Inequities, Funding for All Day Kindergarten, and Charter School Rules and Regulations. Federal – IDEA Funding (Special Education) and Reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act).</p>