



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 19, 2018

District 157-C October 17, 2018 Board of Education Meeting Recap

FRANKFORT, IL — The regular Frankfort School District 157-C Board of Education meeting of October 17, 2018 was called to order by Board President Gina Briese at 7:02 p.m. The roll call was taken, and a quorum was present. Board Member Edith Lutz was absent. The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board approved the Open and Closed Session minutes of the regular meeting of September 19, 2018.

No one signed up to speak during the Public Forum portion of the meeting.

The Board recognized Lincoln-Way East senior Cole Chojnacki for contributing his Eagle Scout project to the district. Chojnacki designed, built and installed a life-sized checkers set, complete with a storage bin for the pieces, on the playground of Chelsea Intermediate School. Chojnacki's siblings attended Chelsea, including one younger brother currently in fifth grade at the school. Superintendent Dr. Maura Zinni and Board President Gina Briese thanked Chojnacki for dedicating his project to students at Chelsea.

Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds Rodney Davis reported that the generator upgrade was completed at Chelsea, which will ensure that the main office will continue to have power if the school loses power. He said that each summer, his department does a power shutdown at all three schools for two hours, and in return, the district receives a return from CPower Energy Management. This year, the return will be roughly \$52,000. Director of Business and Operational Services Kate Ambrosini said this is up from a return of \$31,000 last year, and it is great to receive the additional savings.

Director of Human Resources Shayna Cole reported that the district is receiving great turnout at its health and wellness events and is working with Horton to track changes to open enrollment to ensure a smooth transition for all staff. Cole said insurance representatives are discussing a concierge service that will be available to staff beginning January 1 at all group meetings at the schools, and the district will send emails and letters to staff about the service. The service can help staff members compare prices for a medical service between multiple doctors.

Director of Technology Jacob Nelson reported that the district is working with Distant Horizon to develop a new website, focusing on design and functionality for desktop and mobile devices. The district is also working on developing a calendar that would allow parents to filter categories of events. He said he hopes the site will be launched over winter break.

During their reports to the board, school principals, Director of Curriculum & Instruction Janet McClarence and Director of Special Services Jennifer Bajda presented on measuring student achievement,

discussing various test scores. The district's overall percentage of students who met or exceeded Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) standards for English and math consistently climbed from 63 percent in 2016 to 69 percent in 2017 and 76 percent in 2018. "Scores are trending upward, and that is exactly what we want to see," McClarence said. Fifth- and eighth-graders take the Illinois Science Assessment (ISA), and the percentage of students who scored proficient on the test has remained around 79 percent the past three years. Grand Prairie Principal Kirsten Frankovich reported that kindergarteners entering the district scored significantly higher on the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) compared to state averages. The district ranked 47th out of 700 schools on this assessment. "This is a testament to the community and the families who work with kids to send kindergarten-ready students," she said. For FastBridge reading, the percentage of students on target increased from 73 percent in the spring to 80 percent in the fall. For math, this percentage increased from 85 percent to 93 percent. Chelsea Intermediate School Principal Doug Wernet said students had a nearly double digit increase in PARCC English and math scores from 2017 to 2018. For fifth-graders taking the ISA, the percentage of students scoring proficient on the test remained around 70 percent for the past three years. The percentage of student scoring on target for FastBridge reading changed from 85 percent in the fall to 83 percent in the spring. Wernet said the school is having conversations about why this is happening and how to help students who might be struggling. The percentage of students who scored on target for math remained at 77 percent in the fall and spring. Hickory Creek Principal Will Seidemann reported that scores are rising on PARCC results across all cohorts of students, and the district is closing the gap between English and math scores. "I'm extremely proud of our teachers and students, and the hard work they've done," he said. Eighth-graders taking the ISA increased proficiency scores from 83 percent in 2016 to 87 percent last year and 88 percent this year. Students scoring on target for FastBridge reading remained at 85 percent, and math grew significantly from 78 percent last year to 87 percent this year. Sixty-eight percent of students met benchmarks on the PSAT 8/9 in reading and math categories. In reading alone, 86 percent of students met the benchmark, and in math alone, 70 percent of students met the benchmark. Only 12 percent of students did not meet either benchmark. Seidemann said that when the students take this test, they have not learned all of the information on the test. He said he is grateful that the school is able to offer a free preparation class to students. Bajda said that students who are unable to take the PARCC test take the Dynamic Learning Maps-Alternative Assessment (DLM-AA), and the number of students reaching at target or advanced scores on the test has increased each year, correlating with an increase in the number of students with significant disabilities that the district serves in school, rather than through outside services. Board Member Dr. Larry Kociolek congratulated the district on their scores and great data.

Board Member Kevin Regas reported that the Frankfort Township Planning and Zoning Committee sent a letter to its members stating it plans to disband.

Zinni reported that the district's insurance committee asked Horton if it would be able to bring back better health insurance rates, and Horton did not receive any competitive bids from other insurance companies. Ambrosini said that the district did not have a lot of options this year with how the renewal ended up, and now she hopes the district can return to better rates in years ahead. Zinni added that the district will receive a \$100,000 rebate from Blue Cross Blue Shield in recognition of the district's wellness initiatives.

Allison Marketti reported that the Education Foundation is having a great start to the year and has been able to grant more than \$130,000 in items to the district. She said hot lunch sales are going well, and the Foundation is offering carrots and applesauce as healthy options for students. The Foundation is planning its Casino Night for March 8 at the Odyssey Country Club in Tinley Park and is seeking corporate sponsors and new live auction items.

The Family School Partnership is sponsoring book fairs taking place at each school, themed “Enchanted Forest of Books.”

During the Superintendent’s Report, Zinni recognized Hickory Creek Middle School for being named a National Blue Ribbon School. “This is the most prestigious award in the field of education for the public and private sector, and I could not be more proud,” she said. “This is truly a tribute to all the work that happens for kids who start with us in early childhood to when they walk across the stage in eighth grade. We’re fortunate to have the support to make things happen here that we believe are right for kids.” Zinni also reported the district’s Multi-Tiered System of Support helps students who are outpacing their peers or who need additional help. She said Data Days at the schools are a big part of this system. All three schools participated in Data Days in the fall, where teachers, social workers, and other support staff discussed student data to better understand children’s learning patterns and to determine if any interventions are needed. Zinni said it was great to see this team of people come together with the common goal of supporting students. Zinni also gave the Board an update on district health and wellness initiatives. She said the district is fortunate to be able to offer physical education five days a week, health education classes for all grade levels and recess through fifth grade. She said the district has moved from focusing on food at class parties to focusing on activities, expanded its extracurricular activities, and encouraged students, teachers and staff to participate in community athletic activities, like 5K races, together. For employees, the district offers the fitness room at Hickory Creek, annual flu shots and wellness screenings, and is planning a wellness focus for its January Institute Day.

Director of Business and Operational Services Kate Ambrosini provided the Board with the October 2018 Treasurer’s Report and Graphs. In September, the total fund balance increased by \$9,786,972. Monthly revenue receipts totaled \$12,477,889 primarily due to Will County property tax receipts. Monthly expense disbursements totaled \$2,682,324 primarily due to payroll and accounts payable.

There were three Freedom of Information requests that were responded to in a timely manner.

In discussion, Ambrosini said the district’s 2017-2018 audit was completed by Klein Hall, CPA, but no details of the audit can be released at this time. Ambrosini said the Teachers Retirement System of Illinois submits statewide actuarial calculations for districts to use as comparisons in their audits, and TRS’ calculations were found to be inaccurate. This prohibits the district’s auditors from releasing its final report at this time. Ambrosini said this will not affect the district’s numbers or audit, but it will impact footnotes in the audit. She said she expects to have the finalized audit next month.

In discussion, Ambrosini presented a presentation on potential tax levy scenarios the School Board could choose to pursue this year. She explained that the levy is what the district asks for in property taxes, and it does not necessarily mean the district will receive that amount. By the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law, it is capped at the Consumer Price Index for the year or 5 percent — whichever is less. Ambrosini presented the Board with various scenarios on what it might look like if the district did not abate, abated from its Debt Service Fund, abated from the Education Fund, and abated from a blend of the Education Fund and Debt Service fund. Ambrosini said the district would be able to handle any of the scenarios because of its strong financial standing. “My recommendation will always be to abate out of Debt Service,” she said. “I think that is most financially responsible. I think the blended option also meets our needs and starts to put us in a different position, because we know our debt is ending in three years.” Board Vice President Tom Reidy said the Debt Service scenario made the most sense to him. Brieese said she would need more time to look at the blended scenario, but she also wanted to pursue the Debt Service scenario going forward. Board Secretary Edie Adamski said she agreed that abating through Debt Service made the most sense. The Board agreed that they wanted to see more information on the Debt Service option in future tax levy discussions for this year.

In discussion, Ambrosini shared the details of the Annual Statement of Affairs and stated that the district will publish its Annual Statement of Affairs per School Code.

The Board took action to approve the Employee Benefits Plan for 2019 and program enhancements.

The Board took action to approve a one-year contract extension with The Horton Group and Allied Benefits, renewable annually, for the provision of employee benefits consulting services for fees of \$2,765.25 (Horton) and \$175.00 (Allied) per month.

The Board took action to approve Board Members, the Superintendent and Recording Secretary to attend the IASB/IASA/IASBO School District Annual Conference November 16-18 in Chicago.

The Board took action to approve the employment of Dawn Wasowicz as a part-time Lunch/Recess Supervisor at Grand Prairie Elementary School with a start date of October 5, 2018, contingent upon the receipt and evaluation of employment documentation required by District 157-C and the Illinois State Board of Education.

The Board took action to approve the employment of Julia Simpson as a full-time Special Education Paraprofessional at Chelsea Intermediate School with a start date of October 17, 2018, contingent upon the receipt and evaluation of employment documentation required by District 157-C and the Illinois State Board of Education.

The Board took action to approve the employment of Elena Cash as a part-time Lunch/Recess Supervisor at Chelsea Intermediate School with a start date of October 22, 2018, contingent upon the receipt and evaluation of employment documentation required by District 157-C and the Illinois State Board of Education.

The Board took action to approve the employment of Elizabeth Lamb as a full-time Long-Term Substitute Sixth Grade Teacher at Hickory Creek Middle School with a start date of October 18, 2018 and tentative end date of January 31, 2019, or until the assignment ends, contingent upon the receipt and evaluation of employment documentation required by District 157-C and the Illinois State Board of Education.

The Board took action to approve Nichole Reiser's increase from .70 to 1.0 FTE for the 2018-2019 school year due to enrollment.

The Board took action to approve Shannon Shanahan's increase from .75 to .83 FTE for the 2018-2019 school year due to enrollment of the Orchestra program.

The Board took action to approve the extracurricular activity Music Makers for second grade students, along with a \$780 stipend for the sponsor, and the extracurricular activity Best Buddies for Hickory Creek students, along with a \$300 stipend for the sponsor and \$200 in additional costs for materials and supplies. "I love the idea of Best Buddies, and I think Music Makers sounds fun, too," Briese said.

The Board took action to approve a contract with Soliant for the remainder of the 2018-2019 school year.

The Board took action to approve the payment of bills for September 2018 as presented.

In the Consent Agenda, the Board approved and directed the Business Office to publish and post the finalized Annual Statement of Affairs, as required by law, in a local newspaper of general circulation, and submit said document to the Regional Office of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education, along with all associated and required listings of staff salaries, vendor payments and contracts. Furthermore,

that the school district should maintain a copy of said Annual Statement of Affairs and the associated detailed listings on file in the District Office for the public to inspect, as appropriate.

In the Consent Agenda, the Board approved a resolution authorizing intervention in all tax year 2017, 2018 and 2019 Board of Review, Property Tax Appeal Board and Circuit Court property tax appeals and cases.

The Board took a building tour of Chelsea Intermediate School to review potential upgrades and improvements. Board members took checklists of potential maintenance projects with them through the tour and were asked to rank the items in order of priority. Following the tour, the Board discussed potential use of classrooms formerly used as science labs when the school taught older students, and directed the administration to request price estimates from the district's architecture firm, FGM Architects, on each of the maintenance items discussed. These price points are to serve as a basis for further discussion on potential improvements.

The Board adjourned the regular meeting at 9:42 p.m.

The next regular District 157-C Board of Education meeting will be held on November 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at Hickory Creek Middle School, 22150 S. Owens Road in Frankfort, Illinois.