

**Synopsis of
Westfield Board of Education Meeting on March 12, 2019
By Superintendent Margaret Dolan**



On behalf of the entire Board, Board President Peggy Oster welcomed the Westfield High School Varsity Bowling Team and their coaches Ralph Corey and Al Rabinowitz for recognition on a spectacular season that included 8 team scores of over 3,000 and a 17-1 record as 2018-2019 Watchung Conference Champions. The team also earned a championship trophy last month at the North 2, Group 4 Sectional tournament in Linden. Additionally, senior Will Shepherd – who earned a varsity bowling letter as a freshman – won the 2019 Union County Conference Individual Bowling Tournament in the boys division. Will also bowled a perfect game (300 score) on December 8 in the Westfield Warren Wheeler Tournament. Coach Corey thanked the Board for its recognition and his team for their hard work, commitment and passion for the program.

Mrs. Oster also welcomed new Board member Brian Morrissey who was sworn in before the meeting by Board attorney Richard Kaplow.

2019-2020 TENTATIVE BUDGET

The Board approved the tentative budget for the 2019-2020 school year and authorized Business Administrator/Board Secretary Dana Sullivan to submit the tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline.

Mrs. Sullivan presented an [updated report](#) based on the district's confirmed receipt of an increase in state aid of \$452,693, bringing the current total of state aid for 2019-2020 to \$4,281,274. In response to a question from Mrs. Oster, Mrs. Sullivan stated that, while she does not anticipate a significant change, the amount of state aid might need to be adjusted once the State finalizes its budget this summer.

Mrs. Sullivan reviewed the history of state aid received by the Westfield Public School District over the past decade which, she said, has fluctuated from year to year but continues to fall far short of the amount due the district if the State's aid formula was fully funded. She reported that the increase to the operating budget is estimated at \$3,319,150 with a tax levy increase of 2.8%. The increase to the average homeowner will be approximately \$275.

Mrs. Sullivan also reiterated the priorities of the 2019-2020 budget, including:

1. Maintain class sizes within policy guidelines
2. Maintain funding for:
 - o Recently approved courses
 - o School Resource Officers
3. Provide funding for:
 - o Health and Wellness Coordinator
 - o Recess Requirements
4. Maintain fund balance at 2%
5. Stay within 2% CAP plus eligible waivers

She restated the many ways the district contains costs, including self-insured medical and prescription plans, shared transportation services with other districts for out-of-district placements, cooperative purchasing, and an annual energy savings of approximately \$100,000 provided by solar panels installed on five solar-capable schools.

Mrs. Sullivan reported that, as required by law, a public hearing on the budget will be held at the Board of Education meeting on April 30, 2019. Mrs. Oster again thanked Mrs. Sullivan and the administration for the hard work that goes into creating a fiscally responsible budget.

PERSONNEL

The Board accepted with regret the retirement of Wilson art teacher Marylee Massenzio and Washington/Roosevelt speech/language specialist Diane Scudato, whose last day will be June 30, 2019. Mrs. Massenzio has helped students express themselves artistically for the last 15 years while Mrs. Scudato has been a strong advocate for her students for more than 25 years. We wish them both a happy and productive retirement.

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND PROGRAMS

The Board approved district field trips and overnight field trips as correlated with curriculum.

The Board approved for first reading the following curricula:

Science
General Biology

World Languages
Latin III

Latin III Honors
Latin IV
Latin IV Honors

Curriculum Committee Chair Amy Root noted the leadership shown by four student members of the Youth and Government Club who will serve as officers at an April conference in Elizabeth and who will arrive a day earlier for conference preparation and event planning. Mrs. Root also reported that committee members reviewed the curriculum for General Biology with teacher Molly Dennis and Science Supervisor Tom Paterson and Latin III, Latin III Honors, Latin IV and Latin IV Honors with teacher James Rowan and World Languages Supervisor Enrique Pincay.

FINANCE

The Board accepted with gratitude the following generous donations:

- A gift of \$500 from the ExxonMobil Educational Alliance for McKinley School to enhance Mathematics and Science education.
- A gift of \$100 from Mr. Kenneth L. MacRitchie to finance the 2019 Ian MacRitchie Information Technology Award and the Walton Burriss Music Award.
- A gift of \$30,628.48 from the McKinley School PTO for the purchase and installation of playground equipment, play safe rubber curbs, wood fiber surfacing, two tables and a loop bike rack for the final phase of the Oasis Playground Project.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology Committee Chair Michael Bielen reported on a Digital Citizenship presentation given by Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Programs Paul Pineiro at the committee's last meeting. Mr. Bielen said the presentation included such topics as how to be a good online citizen, managing privacy, and copyright infringement. Digital citizenship resources have been and will continue to be provided to teachers, he said. Mr. Bielen said the committee also heard from Chief Technology Officer Brian Auker who reported that previous delay-causing glitches with the district's new messaging alert system have been addressed and resolved. The committee also reviewed Google analytics on the district website to measure how the website is being used.

LIAISON REPORTS

Board member Brendan Galligan reported that he attended a recent meeting of the Legislative Committee of the New Jersey School Boards Association where the topics included state aid and legislation to extend the statute of limitations on civil claims by victims of childhood sexual abuse.

Board member Kent Diamond stated that facility improvements were discussed at a recent meeting of the Westfield Memorial Library Board of Trustees. Mr. Diamond also reported that, given the well-attended study hours offered to Westfield students during the recent mid-term exams, the library board is considering again offering the study hours during final exam week.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Board heard from resident and PTC Legislative Committee representative Liz Mulholland who discussed public school funding and the future of PARCC.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HIGH SCHOOL

- Congratulations to Westfield High School gymnast Kaela Azzaretto who is this year's recipient of the Greater Westfield UNICO Brian Piccolo Sports Award. Kaela will be recognized at the annual awards dinner on May 14. Named after professional football player Brian Piccolo, this award recognizes excellence in athletics, integrity, and leadership.
- Congratulations to the following Westfield High School students for achieving a perfect score of 36 on sections of the February 2019 ACTs:
 - Henry Meiselman - Science and STEM
 - Jacob Rock - English and Reading
 - Brianna Weber - Reading
 - Abbey Zidel - English
- The Westfield High School Wind Ensemble departed on March 13 for Indianapolis, Indiana to take part in the Music For All National Concert Band Festival. The group received an invitation in July after undergoing a very selective application process last spring. WHS is only the fifth high school from New Jersey to receive an invitation in the festival's 28-year history. They will join schools from 24 other states and territories, spanning from Hawaii to Puerto Rico. The Wind Ensemble performance will take place at 6:45 p.m. on Thursday, March 14 and can be watched online by visiting the WHS Band website at www.westfieldhsbands.org. Congratulations to members of the Wind Ensemble and to band directors Christopher Vitale and Trevor Sindorf.

INTERMEDIATE

- Congratulations to the cast and crew of Edison Intermediate School's production of "Beauty and the Beast" which took place before enthusiastic audiences last Thursday, Friday, and Saturday under the direction of Michael Altmann. Next up for Spring Musicals: "Sweet Charity" at Westfield High School on Thursday, March 14 and Friday and Saturday, March 15-16 with 7:30 p.m. performances, followed the next week by Roosevelt's "Bye, Bye Birdie" on Thursday, March 21 at 4 p.m. and Friday and Saturday, March 22 & 23 at 7:00 p.m.
- Edison 8th grade trumpet player Andrew Matus has been accepted into the New Jersey Association for Jazz Education Junior High School Region Jazz Band. Andrew auditioned against some of the best trumpet players from Central Jersey to earn a spot with the Region Jazz Band and will be performing with this prestigious group on April 7 at Rahway High School. Congratulations to Andrew and to Edison Band Director John Scozzaro.

ELEMENTARY AND INTERMEDIATE

- On March 10, Westfield was represented by 40 students in the Gateway Regional Odyssey of the Mind Tournament, with teams of students demonstrating their creativity, ingenuity, and presentation skills in specific problem-solving categories. The following teams placed 1st in the regional competition and will advance to the state finals on April 6 at Ewing High School:
 - McKinley: Christian Buonopane, Emma Crall (Wilson), Amelia Ing (Wilson), Dylan Lagrimas, Madeleine Smith, and Logan Welsh with parent coaches Hilary Crall and Suzanne Welsh.
 - Tamaques: Mahie Panjwani (Jefferson), Nikki Patel, Alice Schaefer, Etta Schaefer, Madeline Schlitzer (Jefferson), Sonya Seideman (Jefferson) and Bridget Whitlock (Jefferson) with parent coaches Lee Schaefer and Mary Wickens.
 - Edison: Ben Ackerman, Ted Crall, Lucas Gunzberg, Owen Ing, Avery Keith, Nate Reynders, and Max Rotter with parent coaches Aaron Keith and Ken Rotter.

Congratulations to all of our Odyssey of the Mind competitors.

PHILHOWER AWARD

- The Rotary Club of Westfield is accepting letters of nomination for the 27th Annual Charles Philhower Fellowship Award which recognizes an outstanding elementary school teacher each year. Nominations should specify ways in which the teacher has demonstrated outstanding teaching, interest in children, and continued pursuit of professional growth. To be eligible for the award, a teacher must have worked full-time in grades K-5 in Westfield for a minimum of 5 years. Nomination letters should be sent to: Charles Philhower Fellowship Committee of the Rotary Club of Westfield, c/o Office of the Superintendent of Schools, 302 Elm Street, Westfield, NJ 07090 or emailed to rotaryphilhower@westfieldnj12.org. The nomination deadline is Friday, April 12, 2019.

DISTRICT

- As previously announced, the Westfield Public School District has created a series of short TED-style Talks to explain Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and each of its five core competencies, with examples of how they are being used in our district and the research that tells us why they work. The six-part series is now complete and can be found on the district website at www.westfieldnj12.org under "Social and Emotional Learning" on the "Family Resources" tab. We hope this series helps you to better understand the tremendous benefits of social and emotional learning.
- March is Youth Art Month. Shoppers in downtown Westfield can enjoy paintings, drawings, and sculpture designed by approximately 330 students from our 10 public schools on display in merchants' windows as well as at the Westfield Memorial Library and RMC Studios in Garwood. In coordination with Youth Art Month, RMC Studios is hosting an Open House for the general public to view student artwork in unique gallery settings at 207 Center Street in Garwood on Friday, March 15 from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

- The 26th Annual Awareness Expo was held on March 13 from 7:15 – 9:45 p.m. at Edison Intermediate School. The free event was sponsored by the Westfield PTC Special Education Committee and offered four informative sessions.

COMMUNITY

- The Town of Westfield is seeking public input regarding its Master Plan Reexamination and Strategic Parks Plan. Community Workshops have been scheduled to give Westfield residents, business owners and other stakeholders the opportunity to participate first-hand in the planning process. Dates for the interactive public forums are March 21, April 3, April 24, April 29 and May 5. For more information, including times and locations of the Community Workshops, visit www.westfieldnj.gov/futurewestfield.
- Calling all families! The Midday Madness Interactive Clue Hunt is Sunday, April 7 from 1-4 p.m. beginning at 76 Elm Street. Families will be their own team and will use cunning wit and problem solving skills to decipher clues that lead them to various locations throughout downtown Westfield. Cost is \$10 per adult and \$5 per child to be paid at the registration table at 76 Elm Street on the day of the event (cash or check). For more information on registering for the event, contact Beth Brenner of the Downtown Westfield Corporation at b.brenner@westfieldtoday.com.

NEXT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

- The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Tuesday, March 26 at 7:30 p.m. at 302 Elm Street during which we will recognize more of our student-athletes. The complete agenda will be available on Friday, March 22 on the Board section of the district website and in the Business Office at 302 Elm Street.

Margaret Dolan, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Westfield Public Schools – A Tradition of Excellence

Follow us on [Facebook](#)

Twitter: [@WestfieldNJK12](#)