

**Synopsis of  
Westfield Board of Education Meeting on August 27, 2019  
By Superintendent Margaret Dolan**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

The Board heard two reports at its August 27 meeting. The first presentation outlined important [updates to our security procedures](#) while the second report provided a [draft architectural building plan](#) for a possible March 2020 referendum that will allow voters to decide whether to implement full day kindergarten in the Westfield Public Schools District.

Business Administrator Dana Sullivan detailed a list of security upgrades that have been completed in recent years in all ten schools including access controls, duress alarms, impact resistant film on exterior glass door panels and certain ground floor classroom door windows, a clock/speaker communication system, fire alarm systems, secured doors, evacuation diagrams, and additional cameras. Mrs. Sullivan said the installation of new doors with upgraded security features is underway at the high school and intermediate schools; these upgraded doors at the elementary schools, which currently have quick lock technology, will be installed next year. Security gates to restrict access to certain areas of each school during community use at night also are being installed.

Mrs. Sullivan outlined more stringent security procedures for visitors and staff during school hours and for after school events. The new procedures have been communicated to our parents and staff and also can be found in Mrs. Sullivan's [presentation](#) which is posted under the Board tab on the [district website](#).

Board members asked questions about the new procedures and heard from three members of the public who expressed appreciation for the updated security protocols but indicated concern that additional measures had not been implemented. Among the measures suggested by residents who attended the meeting were employing an armed security guard or police officer in each of our schools, using an electronic visitor management system, and installing security vestibules in the entryways of each building. The residents sought clarification on the new security procedures and asked questions about the role of StoneGate, the district's security consultants.

District architect George Duthie provided [preliminary building plans](#) for a proposed project to construct additions at Jefferson and Washington Elementary Schools in order to accommodate additional classrooms and related spaces needed for the district's possible implementation of full day kindergarten. The Board will formally vote in the next few months on whether to hold a bond referendum in March 2020 to request funding for the project with voters deciding on whether or not to proceed.

**PERSONNEL**

The Board accepted with regret the retirement of Jefferson School lunch aide Jean Deland whose last day of employment was June 30, 2019.

**FACILITIES**

Facilities Chair Gretchan Ohlig reported that the district architect will present draft plans for possible renovations to school entryways for security purposes when the committee meets on September 6.

Mrs. Sullivan stated that renovations to Kehler Stadium are nearing completion and stressed the importance of people staying off the track and field until work is complete in time for a re-opening ceremony on September 14. Bathroom renovations at intermediate schools are expected to be done by the end of this week. Work on the WHS television studio, new door installations, and middle school lobbies are well underway and on schedule. Any ongoing work will not disrupt school operations, Mrs. Sullivan reported. Emergency generators are up and running; generator enclosures will be installed and volt servers to provide digital electricity to the buildings will be delivered and connected to the generators this fall. Mrs. Sullivan also stated that work to replace the McKinley School gymnasium floor, under which moisture was discovered over the summer, will continue into the fall and that principal Dr. Marc Biunno has prepared alternatives for instruction and events that typically take place in the gymnasium.

Board member Amy Root and I echoed the need for all coaches, teams, students, and members of the community to remain off the track and field at Kehler Stadium until the renovation is complete. Mrs. Oster asked that members of the public help to share this request, adding that all will be welcome to enjoy the beautiful new stadium once it is re-opened in mid-September.

## **POLICIES**

The Board approved for second reading the following policies:

- 7434 Smoking on School Grounds (Property)
- 7435 Alcoholic Beverages on School Premises (Property)
- 8500 Food Services (Operations)
- 8630 Bus Driver/Bus Aide Responsibility (Operations)
- 8830 Flag Display (Operations)

## **CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND PROGRAMS**

The Board approved anticipated district field trips as correlated with curriculum.

The Board approved for second reading the following curricula:

- Science
- AP Physics I
- Physics II AP-C Mechanics

- Social Studies
- Elementary Social Studies, Grades K-4
- Humanities, Grade 9

The Board approved voluntary Student Teacher/Intern candidates for the 2019-2020 school year.

## **FINANCE**

The Board accepted with gratitude a gift in the amount of \$431.96 from the Franklin School PTO to purchase a table and a rug for a fifth grade classroom.

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

Mrs. Oster noted that each Board member is assigned as a liaison to our school Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs). She reminded members to establish a relationship with their assigned

school PTO so that parents know the Board member is there to represent them and to listen to their concerns.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHTS**

The Westfield Public School District will welcome parents to Back-to-School nights at each of our 10 schools from September 10 through October 3. Please check the calendar on each school's website for exact dates and times.

### **DISTRICT**

Thank you to all parents and guardians who have completed the required forms in the Parent Back-to-School Packet on the Genesis Parent Portal. For those of you have not yet had a chance to do so, please log on to the parent portal on the district website no later than September 6 to complete the forms.

Twenty-six new staff members are joining the Westfield Public School District. They are attending a two-day, in-house orientation today and tomorrow as part of the New Staff Institute, a two-year program designed to support first-time educators and those who are new to the district. Dr. Dolan and other members of the administrative team were on hand to welcome everyone this morning. A special thank you to Human Resources Specialist Barbara Ball, her assistant Carla Wolf, and the leadership team comprised of seasoned Westfield educators who run the comprehensive NSI program.

There were drones in the hallway and robots in the classroom, marshmallow toasting in hand-made solar ovens, and painstaking stop motion animation at the Westfield Public School District's STEM Camp, which was in its 7th year this summer and offered courses designed to promote awareness of careers that integrate the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math. Special thanks to Assistant Superintendent Paul Pineiro, STEM Camp director Sean Bonasera, Edison computer technology teacher Laura Paiva, and the skilled Westfield educators who help to make this popular camp a huge success.

In its 17th year, the Extended School Year Program in the Westfield Public School District maintains and strengthens the academic skills of our students who have been identified as those would benefit from additional instruction and related services over the summer. Thank you to the many Westfield teachers and paraprofessionals who worked with approximately 32 students in grades 6-12 and about 130 students enrolled in the preschool to fifth grade program to help ensure their success for the coming school year.

Our English Language Learners studied animals and their habitats as part of a weeklong summer camp that provides meaningful enrichment activities to help students continue their English language acquisition. This year's ELL program welcomed 15 students in grades 1-5 whose native languages are Spanish, Russian, Ukranian, Polish, Portuguese and Chinese. Campers concluded the week with a trip to the Turtle Back Zoo in West Orange for a chance to see firsthand some of the animals they had studied. We extend our thanks to Edison world language teachers Jillian Martinez and Mercedes Poyntz, who run the ELL program, and to K-12 World Languages and ELL Supervisor Enrique Pincay.

### **COMMUNITY**

The Westfield Green Team will be collecting gently used backpacks and lunch bags on Wednesday, September 4 and during the morning drop off ONLY on Thursday, September 5. Clearly labeled bins will be at the entrances of Tamaques, Roosevelt and Westfield High School. Residents who do not have children at these schools can avail themselves of the Wednesday drop off to avoid the first day of school traffic on September 5. The Green Team will pick up the donations promptly at 10 a.m. on Thursday and deliver them to Bernice's Place in Elizabeth in time for the items to be sorted and distributed to students in need.

#### BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

The following Westfield residents have declared their candidacy for five seats on the Board of Education: Andrew Bauer, Michael Bielen, Patrick Justin Fahey, Brendan Galligan, and Amy Root will be on the ballot in November for 3 three-year seats; Robert Garrison and Noelle Ebler for a two-year unexpired term, and Brian Morrissey for a one-year unexpired term. The two-year and one-year terms represent the remainder of the unexpired terms of two former members who resigned in January 2019. Board of Education members whose terms are expiring as of January 2020 are Michael Bielen, Brendan Galligan, and Amy Root. The election will be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2019. A Board of Education Candidates Night -- sponsored by the Parent Teacher Council -- is scheduled for Wednesday evening, October 23, at Westfield High School.

#### NEXT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

The next meeting of the Westfield Board of Education will be held on Tuesday, September 17 at 7:30 p.m. at 302 Elm Street. The complete agenda will be available on Friday, September 13 on the Board section of the district website.

**Have a safe and enjoyable holiday weekend. Remember -- schools open on Thursday, September 5. We wish all of our students and their families a great start to the new school year!**

**Margaret Dolan, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools**

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