A summary of Thursday’s Horseheads Board of Education meeting...

Board Members: Brian Lynch, President; Michael Buck, Vice President; Rose Apgar; Mark Brinthaupt; Mary Anne Holleran; James Jacobus; John Lively; Ruth Miller; Daniel Strack (student representative); Pam Strollo

Awards, honors, and recognition...

Superintendent Ralph Marino recognized the following:
- The entire staff of the Horseheads district “for a wonderful school opening and first month” of the 2010-11 school year.
- The staff of Gardner Road Elementary School and Student Services staff members Kim Williams, Shawn McDonough, Theresa Woodworth, and Kelly Squires for their hard work in helping students meet Adequate Yearly Progress last year, a year after being named to the Schools in Need of Improvement list by the state.
- Senior Philip Patterson on earning semi-finalist status in the National Merit Scholarship® program, and seniors Abigail Braiman and Danielle Burgess on receiving letters of commendation from the program.
- 1999 graduate Becky Sell, whose photographs from the month she spent with Marine soldiers in Afghanistan were featured in the Washington Post, including the front page.
- Twenty-three bus drivers attended a hands-on safety training class last Saturday in Ithaca.
- The Ridge Road Grade 4 Car Wash last Saturday resulted in more than $2500 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. The students chose JDRF because one of their classmates has juvenile diabetes.
- Senior Kendall Harter attended the National Student Leadership Conference in Indianapolis in July.

At the August 26 meeting, Ralph recognized the following:
- The Transportation Department was recognized by the state Department of Transportation for meeting the goal of at least 90% of vehicles passing the department’s semi-annual bus safety inspections in 2009-10. The district’s rate was 94.1%.
- Middle School Social Studies Teacher Jason Schrage was the featured member in the August issue of Learning and Leading with Technology, a magazine produced by the International Society for Technology in Education. [Here’s a link to the article: http://www.iste.org/learn/publications/learning-and-leading/issues/Member_Profile_Jason_Schrage_Making_School_a_Little_Less_Painful_through_Technology.aspx.]
Graduate Christian Li performed at the Newport Jazz Festival in August as a member of the prestigious Berklee Global Jazz Institute.

Junior Paarth Shah is a local winner of the Kohl's Kids Who Care program for his volunteer service. He was nominated by Guidance Counselor April Cook.

The Class of 2010 earned $3.9 million in scholarships.

External audit report…

Gerald Archibald of the district’s external audit firm, the Bonadio Group, reported on the 2009-10 External Audit. He explained that the district received an “unqualified opinion,” which is the highest rating in accepted accounting principles and means that the district is in sound financial condition.

He did identify concerns with year-end projections, noting that there was a projection error in Fiscal Year 2010. He stressed that the district must do a better job indentifying deficit and surplus amounts. He also said the district should show better documentation of the disposal of capital assets such as old equipment.

The board approved the external audit as presented. [Note: the full audit report is on the Board of Education section of the district website in the Board Meeting Documents folder for the September 30 meeting.]

Transportation update…

Supervisor of Transportation Ella Preston reported on the new transportation software, noting that it is going well. She said the software provides many options that allow the department to maximize their routes and resources. She also noted that the new software will merge with the new student information program as well.

Perfect attendance…

The board approved the elimination of the PreK-6 perfect attendance procedure, recommended by the board’s Outcomes and Assessment committee and supported by the district’s physician, Dr. Ken Sobel, and the New York State Health Department. The district urges parents to keep their children at home when they are ill in order to avoid the spread of illnesses in school, so to also have a perfect attendance policy gives mixed messages to parents and students. Additionally, the number of students qualifying for special education each year is just three to five students.

Summer Learning Academy…

Intermediate School Teacher and Summer Learning Academy Coordinator Mike Bostwick reported on the program. Funded by federal grant monies, the program served some 100 K-6 students at Gardner Road Elementary School Monday to Thursday mornings. Eleven teachers and a nurse made up the staff. Students qualified for the program based on teacher recommendations and Academic Intervention Services. The goals were to work on skill deficiencies in reading, writing, and mathematics, and to decrease summer learning loss. Results from this first year showed 75% of the students remained at the same level, with 65% showing improvement in at least one of the assessed areas. Parents surveyed at the end of the summer gave the program high marks, with 96% who strongly agreed or agreed that the extra help was beneficial to their children and offered a good balance of academic skills and fun. Some 98% said that their children liked the learning activities and enjoyed their experiences.
Update on the Strategic Plan Implementation Team…

Assistant Superintendent Alice Learn reported on the implementation team’s first meeting of the school year. The team heard an overview of summer work and discussed the upcoming student survey. They also discussed 21st Century Learning. The group has decided to enlist the assistance of three study groups/task forces: Character Education and Wellness, 21st Century Learning, and Green, a standing task force.

District initiatives…

Ralph updated the board on the various initiatives happening across the district:

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<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Tentative Completion Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>10-Year Strategic Plan (Implementation Phase)</td>
<td>The plan was presented to and accepted by the Board on Dec. 3, 2009. The Implementation Team was approved by the Board on February 25, 2010, and will meet monthly through Dec. 2010.</td>
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<td>Curriculum Mapping (Pre-K – 12th)</td>
<td>Ongoing with continuous revisions, emphasis on ELA.</td>
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<td>Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Program Review and Study Group</td>
<td>Report was made to the BOE on Sept. 3, 2009. An implementation plan was developed by Dr. Walmsley. The implementation plan calls for a Steering Committee and Study Group to be formed. Dr. Walmsley made a report to the BOE on July 1, 2010. The Study Group is continuing with a tentative completion date of Jan. 2011.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemung County School Readiness Project</td>
<td>Ongoing.</td>
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<td>Technology: Wireless network; Interactive white Boards; Mastery Manager; Replacement plan; Virtual Learning Programs; Hand-held projects; Classroom Amplification Systems</td>
<td>Ongoing.</td>
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<td>Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten Pilot (3 classrooms) started Sept. 1, 2007</td>
<td>Ongoing.</td>
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<td>Response to Intervention (RTI) Task Force</td>
<td>The plan is currently being implemented.</td>
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<td>Comprehensive ELA Approach/Process/Program, PreK-6 (reading, writing, spelling, handwriting)</td>
<td>The Adoption Committee selected the MacMillan/McGraw Hill Treasures program in August 2010. The 2010-11 school year will focus on professional development and implementation will be September 1, 2011.</td>
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<td>Common Quarterly Benchmark Assessments, PreK-8 (formative assessments in the 4 content areas)</td>
<td>Ongoing; full implementation by September 1, 2013.</td>
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<td>Student Management Software System from SASI to School Tool Program</td>
<td>Conversion process began on July 1, 2010; fully implemented July 1, 2011.</td>
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<td>Professional Learning Communities and Instructional Leadership Conversation w/Administrators, Directors, Coordinators, and Teacher Leaders (Dept. Chairs, Grade Level Chairs, and Team Leaders)</td>
<td>Ongoing; 3-4 meetings per year. Upcoming meeting dates: TBD</td>
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Other items…

- The board approved the revised Strategic Plan Implementation Team roster.
- The board approved the revised list of 2010-11 Board of Education Sub-Committees.
- The board approved donations to Ridge Road Elementary School by the Horseheads Moose Lodge and Women of the Moose Organization, Target, and Terracycle.
- The board elected Rose Apgar to serve as the voting delegate for the 2010 New York State School Boards' annual meeting.
- The board approved the Claims Auditor Report for June, July, and August; the Treasurer’s Report for July and August, the High School and Middle School Extra-Curricular Treasurer’s Reports for August, and the Athletic Accounts Report for August.
- The board approved two increases in appropriations to the High School reflecting donations from Ohiopyle and Target.
- The board approved contracts with Watchdog Inc. for construction management and McDonald Montrose, architects.
- The board approved a rental agreement for Higher Hope Church for use of the facility at Broad Street.
- The board approved the Human Resources Subcommittee recommendations and ratified a two-year contract with the Exempt Confidential Secretaries group.
- Director of Student Services Kim Williams, along with Assistant Director Shawn McDonough and CPSE/CSE Chairperson Theresa Woodworth presented the Student Services Annual Report. The board approved the state-required Special Education Report, which lists the types of programs for students with disabilities and the program locations.
- Ralph read Student Representative Daniel Strack’s High School report, because Daniel was absent due to an athletic event. He reported on Freshman First Day, Spirit Week, Homecoming, senior magazine sales, junior candle sales, and upcoming events, including the ECOS Club’s e-scrap drive October 23.
- The board discussed the New York State School Boards Association’s proposed 2010 bylaw amendments and resolutions.
- Board members reported on subcommittee meetings, including the district facilities tour by the Visitation Committee on September 1 and the September meetings of the Audit, Finance, Outcomes and Assessment, Planning and Development, and Policy Referral/Review committees. [Note: The subcommittee meeting minutes can be found on the board’s section of the district website.]
- The board approved the following new policies and replacement policies: 4321.9—Availability of Alternative Format Instructional Materials for Students with Disabilities; 4321.12—Public Report on Revisions to District Policies, Practices, and Procedures Upon a Finding of Significant Disproportionality; 5312.3—Use of Tobacco Products by Students; 5313.4—Discipline of Students with Disabilities; 6650—Internal Auditor; 6655—Claims Auditor; 6660—Independent Auditor; 9330—Smoking on School Premises by Staff; and 1900—Parental Involvement.
- The board accepted policy changes for first reading: 6700—Purchasing and 6721—Construction Contracts, Bidding, and Awards.

The next regular board meeting is Thursday, October 28, at 6pm at Big Flats Elementary School.

Note: Board meeting documents are on the Board of Education section of the district website. Go to http://boe.horseheadsdistrict.com/default.aspx and click on Meeting Documents.