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

Board Members:   Brian Lynch, President; Pam Strollo, Vice President; Rose Apgar; Mark Brinthaupt; Karen Boulas; Warren Conklin; James Jacobus; Doug Johnson; David Sadler; Austin Smith, student representative

Awards, honors, and recognition...

Superintendent Ralph Marino recognized the following:

- Intermediate School students Bradley and Blake Lawson, who gave a $25 gift card to diners at Applebee’s last evening. They gave the gift card and a note that said “Hope you have a happy day” to a couple at the restaurant and walked back to their seats. The couple tried to return the gift card or give the boys a few dollars, but they refused. Their mom told the diners that they had saved their money so that they could do this for someone. The couple found out the students attend the Intermediate School and told the story to a staff member they know.

- High School Students of the Month for November – the character trait is citizenship:
  - 9th Grade: Marah McCauley, Cameron Murray, Amorette Naters, Alexander Procopio
  - 10th Grade: Sruti Akula, Mitchell Blaszyk, Madison Capek, Takoda Richards
  - 11th Grade: Madison Haskins, Kailee McCreary, Darren Pollen, Joelle Yu
  - 12th Grade: Shane Buchanan, Christopher Salisbury, Gregory Valerio, Arianna Woodard

- The High School Marching Band earned third place at the New York State Field Band Championships at the Carrier Dome in Syracuse October 27. They competed against ten bands in their division.

- Three seniors and a graduate signed letters of intent last week:
  - Jessica Rutherford signed a letter of intent to play softball at Division I Binghamton University.
  - Ellie Leszyk signed to play basketball at Division II LeMoyne College in Syracuse.
  - Bailey Bourgeois signed to play lacrosse at Division II Limestone College in Gaffney, South Carolina.
  - 2012 graduate Mike Abrunzo signed to play baseball at Division I University of Buffalo.

- The Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes granted the Middle School $7,000 for an all-school reading project that will begin in February.

- Center Street collected some 4,500 pounds of paper in their recent community recycling outreach, and 749 food items in their food drive.
- Fifth-grader Evan Keister won first place in the 9-10 age group at the USATF Junior Olympic Niagara Cross Country Championships in Rochester November 10, qualifying him for the regional championships at Slippery Rock University this weekend.
- The Intermediate School raised $545.67 in a coin drive for Mr. McCarthy and his family.
- Center Street will receive a $400 donation from JC Penney for their school clubs.
- Center Street’s Christine Behnke and her husband Ryan, team leaders for a Making Strides Against Breast Cancer team, helped the school raise more than $500 for the team.
- William “Stick” Kowulich, who ran the chains at Horseheads football games for the last 32 years, retired from this job after the last JV game in November. Mr. Kowulich was honored at the 50-yard line at the game. His four children graduated from Horseheads and participated in athletics.
- 2008 graduate Chad Lefkowitz-Brown had his photo in lights in New York City’s Time Square recently. The billboard highlighted the website builder Chad’s manager used to build his website. Chad is a saxophonist and composer. He just returned to the US after a tour in the Netherlands and Belgium.
- 1998 graduate Guilian Gary, a standout athlete at Horseheads and now professional athletes manager at Under Armour, donated receiving gloves to every member of the Varsity Football Team.

From Center Street...

Center Street staff and students presented highlights of their school year.

Stacey Huftalen, PTO president, shared how the parent group supported the purchasing of the book for the Site Base Team and financially helped to support the teachers attending a workshop in NYC. The PTO also created new character education teaming games for the Fall Festival.

A group of teachers shared information on a variety of topics:
- Elizabeth Sutton showed a video about 21st Century Learning and purposeful writing. The video showed a Skype session students had with Dr. John Sutton, technical writer for General Electric, and Jennifer Sotero Batt, senior engineer. They talked with the students about the importance of writing, revising, and adding details.
- Kristen Miller shared information on a free writing conference ten staff members attended in October. They are currently are sharing what they learned with their colleagues.
- Shelby Lese shared the book Essential Question, Opening Doors to Student Understanding the CS Site Base Team is reading. She also described the Terrific Writers program.
- Sarah Potter described the school clubs including Homework, Sign Language, Yearbook and Newspaper Club.
- Kate Williams and Kelli French shared their love for teaching writing and all the positive teaming going in in the building in grades, 1, 3, and 4.
- Lorraine Packard, Student Council advisor, presented the student council officers, who shared information about what they do and the many activities they lead.
- Terri Standish highlighted the Character Education program and its activities, including filling students’ buckets and the “I can” focus. “I can” statements include “I can be anything I want to grow up as I am learning at Center Street.
- Jennifer Bryant showed a video clip of the school’s morning news show, WCSN News.

Additionally, Students from the Newspaper Club handed out the recently printed first edition of the Center Street Times. Throughout the presentation, students photographers took photos for the school yearbook.
**Thailand visit...**

English as a Second Language Teacher Cindi DeRichie reported on her trip to Thailand as part of the Thailand Educator Exchange through the US Department of State and the Fulbright organization. A teacher from Thailand visited the area and stayed with Cindi last fall, and in July she travelled to Thailand for two weeks to complete the exchange. The goals of the program are to support mutual understanding between teachers and principals in the U.S. and abroad, provide educators across the world with the opportunity to interact with one another, and support the internationalization of school curricula. Cindi explained Thailand’s educational system and shared information about Thailand and the region she visited. She then shared photos and stories about her visit. She said she learned a great deal about Thailand and more during the visit: that we all want the best education for our students and will do our best to ensure that, that we must enjoy our lives, that our students can learn so much from learning about other countries, cultures, and educational system; that it isn’t until we realize what others don’t have to begin to appreciate all the wonderful things we do have. She also said she now understands how her students feel when they come to our schools from other countries.

**Next steps...**

The board discussed the next steps in the Facilities Use/Grade Configuration Study and the Consolidation Study Grant with the Elmira Heights district. Consultants presented the report from the October focus group ranking the 16 options. The board’s Policy and Development Committee will look at the entire plan and the timeframe to see if adjustments are necessary. At the same time, the board will be working with the Elmira Heights Board of Education to determine the next steps in the consolidation study process. The state recently approved a $49,500 grant to the Heights district for the study.

**Other items...**

- The board approved July 1, 2014 as the date for the annual organizational meeting, and January 14 as the date of their mid-year retreat.
- The board approved the Varsity Baseball Team’s overnight trip to South Carolina April 12-19, 2014.
- The board received an update on the district initiatives.
- The board approved the IT Audit Corrective Action Plan.
- The board approved a donation to Ridge Road Elementary School from Target.
- The board approved the Local Assistance Plan (LAP) for the Intermediate School.
- The board approved disposals of property.
- The board approved several increases in appropriations to reflect donations from the Ridge Road PTO, Center Street PTO and staff, Gardner Road PTO, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association, My Locker, Target, Ohiopyle, and a grant from the Community Foundation to the Middle School.
- The board approved the 2013-14 GST BOCES Cooperative Bids Agreement and the 2013-14 Tax Collector’s Final Report.
- The board approved a resolution to dissolve the Class of 2012 and Class of 2013 accounts.
- The board approved the Five-Year Budget Projection and the Reserve Fund Report.
- The board approved budget transfers of over $10,000.
The board approved the October Claims Auditor Report, High School Extra-Classroom Treasurer’s Report, Middle School Extra-Classroom Treasurer’s Report, Athletics Extra-Classroom Treasurer’s Report, Budget Transfers Report, and Revenue and Expense Reports.

The board approved the business associate agreement with Employee Benefit Solutions (EBS-RMSCO, Inc.).

The board approved the Human Resources Sub-Committee recommendations.

Director of Human Resources Judy Christiansen reported on the proposed retirement incentive, noting that the deadline to notify the district was November 15. As such, she doesn’t have definitive savings at this point. She believes, from first glance, that the required savings will be met. If so, the resolution will go before the board at the December meeting.

Paige DeRichie, alternate student representative, reported on High School activities, including the Student Council Food Drive, the Greenroom Players Benefit Concert this weekend, the National Honor Society Plant Sale, the December 13 Snow Ball, and upcoming concerts: Wind Ensemble with the Middle School Select Choir December 4, High School and Middle School concert Bands December 17, and the Choir Concert December 18. At the December 17 concert, audience members will be asked to bring canned food for the Food Pantry.

The board approved the Common Core Module Resolution:

Be it Resolved, that for the 2013-2014 school year the District will continue to use the adopted programs/textbooks that are currently in place for Pre K-12. At this time the District will not be adopting, purchasing or implementing the K to 12 Common Core Modules or any of the accompanying materials.

We believe that it is important that the District begin to explore the modules and their contents so that all are better informed. In addition to some Site Teams exploring these modules, informational sessions will be offered for both English Language Arts and math modules during the next few months.

Additionally, as the modules are explored further, the Superintendent may direct the creation of study teams to determine what, if any, use the modules may be in supplementing the District’s current Board-approved programs.

The board approved a revision for the High School government and Politics and Comparative Government Course.

The board approved changes to several policies: page 9 of the Code of Conduct, Policy 1530—Smoking on School Premises, changes to Policy 9330—Smoking on School Premises by Staff, Policy 1900—Parental Involvement, Policy 4321.4—Independent Educational Evaluations, 5420—Student Health Services, Policy 6700—Purchasing, and Policy 5152—Admission of Non-Resident Students. The board also approved a newly developed Exhibit 1900-E.1—Parental Involvement, Title I.

The next regular board meeting is Thursday, December 19, at 6pm at Horseheads Middle School.

Note: Board meeting documents are on the Board of Education section of the district website. Click here to see the documents.