



September 9, 2009 meeting

## Summit Hill District 161 Board Briefs

*Serving 3,687 students living in portions of Tinley Park, Mokena, and Frankfort*

For additional information, please contact Superintendent Keith Pain at 815.469.9103

### **Board hears new approach to all school Science Fair**

At its Sept. 9 meeting, members of the Board heard a proposal for the 2009-10 school year concerning 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science instruction. The proposal, presented by SHJH Principal Beth Lind and Science Teachers Lorine Szymanski and Sandra Schlesselman, focused on a new approach to the all school science fair.

Ms. Szymanski shared that students in the gifted program would be required to compete in the IJAS level of the science fair, honors students would be required to complete a science fair project and be encouraged to compete in the science fair, and students in science classes would be required to complete a Problem Based Learning (PBL) project and could choose to do a science fair project as an extracurricular option through Science Club.

Afterwards, Ms. Schlesselman explained that PBL is a student-centered instructional strategy in which students collaboratively solve problems and reflect on their experiences. She said that in PBL, learning involves real world problems which are designed to challenge learners to develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Ms. Schlesselman also shared several examples of PBL in the classroom.

Mrs. Lind concluded saying that with science fair and PBL, all students would follow the scientific method of answering a question, hypothesizing and researching all aspects of that topic, and then analyzing data and preparing to share with others via a written expository research paper and oral presentation. "PBL is a motivating way to learn as learners are involved in active learning, working with real problems. What they have to learn in their study is seen as important and relevant to their own lives."

### **Funding for additional two pre-school classes approved by state**

Principal Christine Carey updated the Board at Wednesday night's meeting on the District's pre-school program. On August 20, Mrs. Carey said that the District received notification from ISBE that funding would be available for two additional classes in the program. Within 11 days, personnel were hired, screening completed, and parents informed of acceptance into the program. Mrs. Carey said that orientation for new students took place at Frankfort Square School on Aug. 31, with Sept. 1 being the first day for all four sessions of pre-school. District 161's program serves eligible three and four-year-olds living within its school boundaries.

### **In personnel matters, the Board:**

- accepted the request for family and medical leave for two tenured teachers;
- employed Elizabeth Westhus as a speech pathologist for the 2009-2010 school year;
- employed Debra Berg as a paraprofessional; and
- employed Janet Broda as a lunchroom supervisor for the 2009-2010 school year.

### **In other matters, the Board:**

- held a public hearing and then adopted the District budget for the 2009-10 school year;
- heard from Supt. Pain about preparations in place in the District for a possible H1N1 outbreak during the 2009-2010 school year. Supt. Pain noted preparations are based on recommendations from the Will County Health Department;

- heard a report on the recent Frankfort Township Planning Commission meeting;
- was made aware of the continued utilization of the District Excellence Team and District Improvement Team; and
- was made aware there currently are 3,687 students enrolled in District schools.

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