



October 12, 2011 meeting

Summit Hill District 161 Board Briefs

Serving 3,484 students living in portions of Tinley Park, Mokena, and Frankfort

For additional information, please contact Interim Superintendent Barb Rains at 815.469.9103

Board informed of new laws pertaining to employment of teachers in Illinois

Board members were informed of the new teacher performance evaluations, evaluations of tenure, and reduction in force changes that will be implemented as part of the state's recent Education Reform legislation. By Sept. 2012, new certified staff evaluations must be in compliance with the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA). The new evaluations will include consideration of teacher attendance, planning, instructional methods, classroom management, and subject matter competency. Teacher duties and responsibilities and the standards to which the teacher is expected to perform will also be included. Additionally, a performance rating scale of "Excellent", "Proficient", "Needs Improvement", and "Unsatisfactory" will be utilized. An additional factor pertaining to the new evaluations is the incorporation of data regarding student growth. The deadline to include the student growth component is no earlier than 2013 and no later than 2016.

Evaluations of tenure will also be modified. Probationary teachers must receive an overall performance evaluation rating of at least "Proficient" during four consecutive years. If not, the law mandates the teacher be dismissed at the end of the fourth year. High performing probationary teachers with three years of overall "Excellent" ratings would receive tenure in three years. Tenure portability will be an option for teachers who previously attained tenure in another district.

In terms of reductions in the teaching force, the new process includes the replacement of seniority lists with Sequence of Honorable Dismissal lists which are categorized by position. All teachers – whether tenured or not – are placed into one of four groupings in each position for which they are qualified based on performance ratings. Honorable dismissals are made in order of the groupings with teachers in Group 1 dismissed first and teachers in Group 4 dismissed last.

Within the next few weeks, Board representation and union representation on the Joint Committee will be determined and the date of the first meeting set so as to begin the process of revising evaluations, developing a means for measuring and gathering student growth data, and discussing honorable dismissal grouping criteria.

Board hears preview of October 18 half day staff in-service program

During the afternoon of Tuesday, October 18, staff members will be participating in a variety of workshops led by District staff as part of its in-service program. Teachers in Grades K-4 will have the opportunity to learn about such topics as writing strategies, problem solving for students using the conflict resolution bridge, energizing brain breaks, math strategies, how boys and girls learn differently, working with gifted students, and skill streaming. Staff at Walker School will focus on Six Traits Writing and staff at SHJH will focus on interventions.

Board to expand range of questions on annual Parent Conference Survey

Members of the Board discussed adding questions on a variety of topics to its annual Parent Conference Survey. Parent input will now be requested on the virtual backpack, the PBIS program, bullying prevention, school uniforms, and qualities they would like to see in the next District 161 Superintendent. The survey will be available on conference days in each school's media center. Additionally, parents will have the opportunity to access the online survey from November 7 through November 11 via a link on the District's home page as well as on each school's home page. Paper surveys also will be available for those without computer access.

In other matters, the Board

- recognized the Summit Hill Boys Baseball team who placed second in the IESA Class 3A state tournament;

- offered input on resolutions that will come before the Illinois Association of School Board Delegation Assembly in November at the IASB Convention;
- accepted the Fiscal Year 2011 audit;
- authorized publishing the Annual Financial Report;
- heard that the District is fully staffed including hires for all leaves of absence; and
- heard that there currently are 3,484 students in grades K-8 and that we continue to remain within Board class size planning guidelines.