



July 27, 2011 meeting

Summit Hill District 161 Board Briefs

Serving 3,333 students living in portions of Tinley Park, Mokena, and Frankfort

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

Board adopts Goals for Student Achievement

The Board adopted four goals for student achievement for the 2011 - 2014 school years. The goals include: 1) Improve student achievement by developing and implementing a challenging curriculum; 2) Ensure a safe, inspiring, and welcoming environment for students, staff, parents, and community members; 3) Strengthen communications and connections by establishing a communications program that directly helps the District achieve its goals; and 4) Maximize time, talent, and finances by aligning these resources to the mission and goals of the District. Board goals set the vision for student learning and articulate beliefs about students and learning. These goals serve as the foundation for District goals and direction for school improvement. The goals, complete with strategies and progress targets, can be found at: http://www.summithill.org/Documents/Ctrl_Hyperlink/goals_uid7292011933341.pdf

District receives financial recognition from the Illinois State Board of Education

District 161 received the Certificate of Financial Recognition from the Illinois State Board of Education, the highest category of financial strength from ISBE. Since the 1980s, the State Board of Education has been monitoring the financial conditions of school districts via the School District Financial Profile to identify which districts are in or are moving toward financial difficulty. Financial Profile indicators include fund balance to revenue ratio, expenditure to revenue ratio, days cash on hand, percent of short-term borrowing ability remaining, and percent of long-term debt margin remaining. District 161 has once again earned the highest category of financial strength obtainable for the School District Financial Profile with a total score of 3.7 out of a possible 4.0. Given the economic difficulties school districts are facing, the State Board noted that this is a significant accomplishment.

Pilot focuses on maintaining classroom atmosphere conducive to learning for all students

Based on input from teachers from the Board Survey, recent conversation with local police liaisons, and conversations with some Principals and Directors, the District has been reviewing its efforts to maintain an orderly learning environment which is an essential part of each teacher's instructional responsibilities and educational effectiveness as noted in Board Policy 5:230. Earlier this summer, the District began investigating the possibility of utilizing a School Resource Officer to support student discipline. But after reviewing the information and potential costs, the use of an SRO was not a good fit. The District is returning to its model of creating a room at Walker School and Summit Hill Jr. High designated for students who exhibit disruptive classroom behavior and well as those who must serve suspensions as a consequence of their actions. The model targets the 1st and 2nd Board Goal for Student Achievement.

When student behavior interferes with classroom lessons or participation of fellow students, a teacher may remove a student from the learning environment in accordance with Board policy and administrative procedures located in Board Policy 7:190. Under the model proposed, if disruptive behavior in the classroom occurs, the student would immediately be sent via a pass to a designated room so as to minimize the disruption of learning for the rest of the class.

The Board approved the proposal for a one-year pilot program to be implemented at the start of the school year at Walker and SHJH which includes staffing the room with a permanent substitute teacher. The District will assess the effectiveness of the pilot via surveys to staff and parents at Parent-Teacher Conferences and at the end of first semester so as to have data to review at the Board Planning Meeting in February, 2012.

District to continue its residency investigation program

The Board approved the continuance of its agreement with National Investigations, Inc. to investigate the residency of suspected families who do not live within the district boundaries. In the District's first year with the firm, the goal was to raise the level of awareness of the issue. From the initial database search, approximately 125 families were red flagged. Approximately 15 students immediately left the

District while approximately 11 families chose to appeal the findings via a hearing with the Board. In order for a child to attend District schools, the family must live within District boundaries. The cost to educate one student is approximately \$8,468.

District adds Key Communicator Program to connect with the wider school community

The Board approved implementing a Key Communicator Program for Summit Hill School District. The Key Communicator program is a network of highly organized and strategically placed point persons who are well-connected to both the schools and the community. The idea is to promote a continuing two-way exchange between key communicators and the schools in discussions about teaching and learning. Three to four times during the school year, the District will share pertinent information via an e-mail so that these individuals are informed first hand of important issues. Each key communicator would then share the information and e-mail back a comment or concern. Initially the District will invite area legislators, local mayors, Chamber of Commerce presidents, Village Board presidents, local School Board presidents, local Township Trustees, local first responders, and Lincoln Way North administration to become Key Communicators. The network will serve to keep the district grounded in community values and beliefs to monitor and proactively manage issues.

District 161 and District 843 budgets presented to the Board

Director of Business Dean Gerdes presented and discussed District 161’s proposed budget for the coming school year. The budget will be on display for public review beginning Friday, August 26. Mr. Gerdes noted that the District is in a similar position as it was this time last year, noting that the fund balances are positive. Additionally, Dr. Sally Bintz, Director of Special Education District 843, presented an overview of 843’s proposed budget. Each year, the cooperative reviews its budget with member districts prior to its governing board’s final approval in August.

In personnel matters, the Board

- approved the employment of teachers Kaaren Bailey, Christine Olsen, and Jen Medendorp;
- approved the employment of Julie Hein as clerk at Walker School and Nancy Kirschsieper as clerk at Summit Hill Jr. High;
- approved the employment of Judy Radusewicz, Colleen Schau, Christopher Mena, Joanne Pappas, Christie Dziedzic, and Michael Doyle as paraprofessionals and Sakinah Kelly as a substitute nurse;
- approved the employment of Andrea Houk and Laila Olsson to fill leaves;
- accepted the resignation of Summit Hill Jr. High Assistant Principal Ryan McGuckin; and
- accepted the resignations of library media aide Joanne Pappas and teacher Christine Olsen so they may be employed in other capacities in the District.

In other matters, the Board

- approved the second reading of Board Policy 2:150 to establish new committees;
- accepted the bid of Do All Fencing for improvements to the ball fields at the junior high; and
- noted the District was not granted Preschool for All funding from the state this year to add two additional sections. However, the District will continue to serve 40 students in the Board-funded program at Frankfort Square School this fall.