

FORT PLAIN CENTRAL SCHOOL

Home of the Hilltoppers INFORMATION NETWORK CO-OP

STAFF/MEDIA NEWSLETTER

In an effort to keep our community and staff informed as to decisions made by the Fort Plain Central School Board of Education, a newsletter is issued by the superintendent's office following each board meeting. Comments, questions and suggestions should be directed to Superintendent of Schools, Douglas C. Burton (993-4000x3500). Below, please find highlights of the Board of Education meeting held September 9, 2009.

CALL TO ORDER – President Fredericks called the Public Hearing to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Burton and Mr. Rockefeller presented information to the public regarding the upcoming bus proposition re-vote. They discussed the advantages of maintaining buses on a 5 year purchasing program vs. a 10 year program and answered questions from the audience regarding the advantages of bus purchases over lease; the difference between leasing and contract transportation; and the potential cost savings of continuing our District owned transportation system over changing to contract transportation. Mr. Capece made a presentation that precipitated a debate with Mr. Rockefeller on the merits of the 5 year vs. 10 year bus program and contract busing as an alternative to the District's current operations. Mr. Vance noted that he voted in favor of the re-vote because it saves on mechanics and bus expenses.

TIME FOR VISITORS – Representatives from the **Mohawk Valley Women's Association** presented the Board with a check in the amount of \$400. This money was raised throughout their garden tour and they divided the money between Fort Plain and Canajoharie School Districts. The board accepted the donation from the Mohawk Valley Women's Association.

Mr. David Blackwell, Bovis Lend and Lease, LLC, presented his monthly report regarding the Capital Project. He noted that everything is progressing well and remaining on schedule. He noted the Bus Garage facility will be torn down and removed beginning next week and construction at the Harry Hoag and Jr. Sr. High School are remaining on schedule. Mr. Blackwell answered questions from the Board and members of the public and noted that he will be continuing with reports each month during the project. The Board thanked him for his report.

Phil Martin and Alan Pole from Castallo and Silky, Education Consultants, presented a Merger Feasibility Study Proposal to the Board of Education. The purpose of the study is to address two questions: Should, from a financial or instructional program perspective, the St. Johnsville School District enter into a merger study with either the Fort Plain School District or the Oppenheim-Ephratah School District? If yes, with which district should merger be studied? The criteria for addressing these questions are enhancement of instructional program opportunities for students, reductions of taxes, or both. Mr. Pole and Mr. Martin explained that this is a feasibility study of a possible merger study, not a formal merger study conducted in conjunction with the state Education Department. There will be no public vote associated with the results of this study. If the study shows favorable results, then two districts will then decide whether to pursue a formal merger study. The cost of the study is \$30,000.00 which will be shared by the three districts. The Board authorized Mr. Burton to enter into a merger feasibility study performed by Castallo and Silky, Education Consultants at a cost of \$10,000.00.

BUSINESS MANAGER – Mr. Rockefeller noted that a recent article in the paper stated that election inspectors were paid for their service during budget votes and elections. Mr. Rockefeller noted that this statement is incorrect. The election inspectors volunteer their time during the voting to assist the school district.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – Mr. Burton provided the Board with information from the New York State Teachers' Retirement System regarding Employer Contribution Rate to be paid during the 2010-2011 school year. The bulletin noted that the Employer Contribution Rate has been set at 6.19% for the 2009-2010 school year. It is anticipated that the next year's ECR will represent a significant increase over the 6.19%. They will be providing more information in early November.

The Board approved the Athletic Policy and Procedures.

CONFERENCE REQUEST- Mr. Burton provided the Board with a conference request from Mrs. Susan Summerfield to attend the 59th Annual Association of Math Teachers of New York State in Buffalo, NY from Thursday Nov. 12th through Sat. Nov. 14th. The cost of the conference is \$608.00 and she does not have to pay for registration as she is the membership chairperson. The Board discussed the cost of the conference as well as the benefits of Mrs. Summerfield attending. It was noted that she has attended before and has shared a large amount of information with her colleagues. She will also be presenting a workshop for middle school teacher at this conference to middle school math teachers. It was noted that Mrs. Summerfield organizes the Math Nights for the Jr. Sr. High School Students and Parents and also that the Geometry Curriculum is changing and it would give her an opportunity to receive more information. After discussion, the Board approved Mrs. Summerfield to attend the Math Conference in Buffalo, NY.

CONSTRUCTION SPECIAL TESTING PROPOSALS – Mr. Burton provided the Board with a Proposal from CME Associates for Special Inspection and Structural Testing Services. Mr. Burton noted that CME was the low bidder and that they were approved by the Project Engineer. The Board approved the Proposal from CME Associates, Inc for Special Inspection and Structural Testing Services.

APPROVE BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS – The Board approved the Board of Education Goals for 2009-2010.

PUBLIC COMMENT- Members of the public and the Board discussed many items such as Handicapped Parking, Capital Project costs and equipment, Feasibility Study, Absentee ballots, and PreK Programs. Mrs. Janet Trumbull, Town of Minden Clerk noted that she was getting a numerous amount of phone calls regarding school taxes because there is no phone number on our bills. She asked that next year we look into adding that to our bills. Mr. Rockefeller will address her concern. She also noted that the STAR program is beginning to dwindle and the burden is being shifted back to the taxpayers. Mr. Fredericks made note that at one time the members of the Board of Education would have agreed with the thoughts Mr. Capece expressed in the recent article in the paper, however after seeing things in a different way and looking at the financial aspects they have changed their thinking and understand the savings to the district by using this program.

APPROVE HFM BOCES SUBSTITUTE LIST – The Board approved the HFM BOCES substitute list dated September 1, 2009.

EXTRA DUTY APPOINTMENTS - The Board appointed Donald Stockwell to the extra duty position of Modified Boys Soccer Coach.

APPOINT SCHOOL VOLUNTEER – The Board approved Elijah Braemer as a volunteer with the Boys Soccer Program.

APPOINTMENT (SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE WORKER) DAVI – The Board appointed Sally Davi to the position of Substitute Food Service Worker.

APPOINTMENT (SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE WORKER) TRAVIS – The Board appointed **Theresa Travis** to the position of Substitute Food Service Worker.

APPOINTMENT (SUBSTITUTE BUS DRIVER - TYMCHYN) – The Board approved **Richard Tymchyn** to the position of Bus Driver substitute.

ACCEPT LETTER OF RESIGNATION – The Board accepted the letter of resignation from Mrs. Barbara Warner from her position of part time teachers' aide effective August 31, 1009.