



BOARD OF EDUCATION *Highlights*

Highlights from the February 3, 2014 workshop meeting

To see the meeting video, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KteWj97Usw&list=PL437FAF3A8077265B>

Student Perspectives



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North High's (l-r) Teacher and Psychology Club Sponsor Carrie Roberts, students Heesha Kumar, Christine Greene, Laura Fierce and Principal Scott Kasik.

Members of North High's Psychology Club updated the Board of Education about their extracurricular club, which allows students to explore psychology topics more in-depth outside of the classroom and encourages a greater understanding of the field of psychology.

The club, which has been in place for one year and has over 100 members, has hosted guest speakers in a variety of professions, including a nurse specializing in addictions, a crisis counselor from Good Samaritan Hospital, a pediatric neuropsychologist, and a hypnotist. Students have explored topics such as dream analysis and subliminal advertising. The club is organizing its second annual "Brain Awareness Week," which will run March 10-16. The week helps to promote brain facts to students; club members also sell their popular "brain pops," different colored lollipops in the shape of brains.

"Your age group is among the highest incidence of traumatic brain injury," noted Board President Dr. Nancy Kupka. "Brain Awareness Week might be an opportunity to reinforce things like to wear a helmet or wear a seatbelt. A lot of young people have traumatic brain injuries because of reckless behavior."



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Board Workshop



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Quarterly Financial Report

Controller **Mark Staehlin** provided a status update about the District 99 budget, including current revenues and expenses. Compared to last year, fund balances reflect an increase of \$1.3 million, which he attributes to making fewer transfers from operating funds to debt service and capital projects as compared to last year. Approximately 91% of revenues have been collected and 46% of expenditures were made by the end of December. Overall, the budget is in line with expectations.

Staehlin did note that the district's interest income "remains horrible" due to the impact of the recession. Yields from both short-term and long-term investments remain extremely low; the District has budgeted interest income of \$147,000, whereas in past years expected \$2 million annually or higher.

Rather than considering the low interest income as a negative, though, Staehlin considers it as a "bright spot."

"[Despite the low interest income] we've been able to sustain our operations without any impairment to the services we provide," Staehlin said. Also, when the interest rebounds, the district will be able to use it to help fund some of the capital and maintenance projects in the future.

Total expenses paid so far this year are at 46%. The majority of the budget, 75%, represents staff salary and benefits. Staehlin noted that the district's tuition for special education and vocational training is currently 77% spent compared to 64% at this same time last year. He said the district will look for ways to avoid any possible overages, and will have a better idea by the end of March where the district stands.

To see the complete presentation and details, please visit:

[http://www.boarddocs.com/il/csd99/Board.nsf/files/9FRS9265D2D0/\\$file/Quarterly%20Financial%20Report.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/il/csd99/Board.nsf/files/9FRS9265D2D0/$file/Quarterly%20Financial%20Report.pdf)



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Literacy Coaching

Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning **Gina Ziccardi** introduced **Christopher Bronke**, English department chair at North High, who provided an overview of the literacy coaching program and how it will evolve in the future.

Bronke explained that the program was founded in 2005 at North High and 2008 at South High. The goals of the program include providing one-on-one coaching to other teachers ("liaisons") in



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all academic departments. Coaches, who are English teachers with specialized knowledge of reading and literacy, provide training to the liaisons. By pairing coaches with their fellow teachers in other academic areas, the district has seen improvement in students' reading comprehension and subsequent testing scores in a variety of subjects.

The majority of teachers at North High (70%) and South High (66%) have received literacy coaching. Four teachers described their experience as literacy coaches and how it has helped students:

- North High Teacher and Literacy Coach **Kathy Smith** described her arrangement with a social studies teacher. The two meet once per week to tailor reading strategies to student needs. She explained how Common Core curriculum will call for more critical thinking and rigorous text, and that the literacy strategies will support these more demanding requirements in the future.
- South High Teacher and Literacy Coach **Amy Stoops** explained how she coached a music teacher; both found that the result sparked more "genuine interest and more questions" from students.
- North High Teacher and Literacy Coach **Elaine Simos** has worked with math teachers, coaching them on how to expand students' vocabulary and problem solving skills. She explained how important it is for students to go beyond a simple math equation in order to find multiple ways to answer a question. The process ultimately helps students think more like a mathematician.
- South High Teacher and Literacy Coach **Barb Mazzolini** has worked with the physical education department, coaching the teachers on how to improve reading comprehension for articles shared in class. As a result, comprehension has improved and class discussions are richer and more in-depth than in the past.

Future goals include bringing the coaches together more frequently to collaborate, and learning more about the common trends in literacy and instruction. In addition, the coaches want to continue to contribute to the national conversation about literacy instruction, presenting at local, state and national venues. Recently, District 99 was recognized by the National Center for Literacy Education.

To see the presentation slides used, please visit

[http://www.boarddocs.com/il/csd99/Board.nsf/files/9FZJDM4CAB93/\\$file/Literacy%20Coaching%20020314.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/il/csd99/Board.nsf/files/9FZJDM4CAB93/$file/Literacy%20Coaching%20020314.pdf)



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Upcoming Board Meetings

February 24, 2014 – Business Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Administrative Service Center – 6301 Springside Avenue, Downers Grove

March 10, 2014 – Recognition Program 6:30 p.m.

District 99 Open House immediately following
North High School – 4436 Main Street, Downers Grove

March 17, 2014 – Business Meeting 7:30 p.m.

South High School - 1436 Norfolk, Downers Grove

*This publication is for information purposes only;
minutes approved by the Board serve as the official meeting record.*