



Cass School District 63 Community Connection

Board of Education

Michael Webster, President
Jackie Hynek, Vice President
Beth Lopez, Secretary
Pam Henry, Member
Rich Brandeis, Member
Bill Carpenter, Member
Shelly Camden, Member

Administration

Dr. Laura Anderson, Principal, Concord Elementary School
Paul Bleuher, Principal, Cass Junior High School
Robert Strande, Business Manager
Dr. Kerry J. Foderaro, Superintendent

Academic Excellence

Despite the significant reductions and cuts over the past two school years, Cass School District No. 63 has once again been honored by being named a "Bright Red Apple" recipient.

This is a special distinction that is bestowed upon school districts by an independent consulting firm as they evaluate all the school districts in the state of Illinois. Cass School District No. 63 has received this award for the last four years and six of the last eight years.

Cass School District No. 63 has also consistently ranked in the top 10% of school districts as measured by the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT).

Did you know...

... that approximately 60% of our teaching staff has a masters degree.

... that our Cass Principal, Paul Bleuher, hosts a coffee with the community once a month.

... that through the Cass 63 Foundation for Educational Excellence, Parent Teacher Club (PTC), Fine Arts Boosters (FAB) and teacher initiatives Cass District 63 receives close to \$100,000 in grants yearly.

October 2007

Dear Cass School District No. 63 Community Members:

This communication is one of several planned for this year to keep you abreast of current events in Cass School District No. 63. It is our belief, that as a community member it is imperative that you have a general understanding of your neighborhood schools.

The 2007/08 school year is under way and off to a great start. This year brings many changes and some challenges as we continue to strive to offer the children of our school community an excellent elementary and junior high school education.

We are a community school district and we want you, as a member of our community, to always feel welcome to attend and/or participate in any of our events or activities, such as concerts, performances, athletic events, Board of Education meetings, community meetings, fundraisers or even volunteer in our classrooms. To learn about Cass School District No. 63, please call the District Office at 630/985-2000 or visit our website at www.cassd63.org.

We sincerely appreciate your support and look forward to continuing to foster a positive relationship with you so we can continue to be proud of the educational services provided to the children of our community.

Sincerely,

*The Board of Education
of Cass School District No. 63*

Balanced Budget

For the past two years the focus of the Administration and the Board of Education has been the financial stability of the district. We are proud to announce that we have just completed our independent annual audit and have successfully balanced our budget for the 2006-07 school year. Balancing the budget has been a struggle due to increasing costs and a decreasing rate of revenue. This imbalance between incoming revenue and outgoing expenses has depleted our once healthy fund balances. The current Board of Education is committed to maintaining the financial solvency of our school district and has recently approved a balanced budget for the 2007-08 school year. Even though we are very pleased with the direction our school district is heading financially, we still have a long road ahead.

Over the last three school years we have had to borrow short-term Tax Anticipation Warrants (TAWs) in order to pay our bills. Even with the positive progress this Board has made, we will need to continue to borrow for the foreseeable future.

For more detailed information, the school district's budget is posted on our website.



Reductions and Cuts

While we are pleased with our recent fiscal success, we realize it has come with a price. Over the past two school years, we have cut more than \$2.2 million that has translated into over 20 staff positions and the elimination of bus service to and from school. We have also shortened the day at Cass Junior High School by eliminating study periods, and reducing electives, such as, foreign language and fine arts.

The elimination of bus services to and from school was extremely difficult, however, the decision resulted in a savings of \$338,000 to the district. The alternative to the discontinuation of this program would have resulted in the elimination of an additional six or seven educational programs which would have greatly affected the quality of education in our schools. In addition to these tangible reductions, our students, staff, parents and community have made significant sacrifices in order for us to address our financial needs.

New School Principals (cont.)

Principal Paul Bleuher has assumed the helm at Cass Junior High School where he has been a teacher for the past four years. During that time he taught Eighth Grade Social Science as well as Fifth and Seventh Grade Technology. Additionally, Mr. Bleuher coached Boys Track and Football at Cass Junior High School. Mr. Bleuher also served in various leadership roles such as School Consolidation Study Committee Representative for the school district, Eighth Grade Team Leader, Negotiations Team, Technology Committee, and Social Science Curriculum Committee. Prior to his time at Cass School District, Mr. Bleuher was an Independent Futures Trader at the Chicago Board of Trade for six years.

Dr. Laura Anderson is the new school principal at Concord Elementary School. Dr. Anderson has 15 years of educational experience with the past nine of those years as an educational administrator. Before becoming Principal of Concord Elementary School she was employed by Plainfield Community Consolidated School District No. 202 where she served as the Principal of River View Elementary School for four years. Prior to her experience in District No. 202, she served as Principal of Wilkins Elementary School in Indian Springs School District No.109. Dr. Anderson started her educational career in New Lenox School District No. 122, where she spent 10 years in a variety of educational roles. She was a middle school Language Arts and Science Teacher, Cross Country Coach, Teacher Mentor, Assistant Principal, and Curriculum Director.

New faces on the Board of Education

Last spring, our school community elected Rich Brandeis, Bill Carpenter, Shelly Camden and Beth Lopez to the Board of Education. These volunteers assumed office in May of 2007 and will be in office until April 2011.



Rich Brandeis



Bill Carpenter



Shelly Camden



Beth Lopez

New School Principals



Paul Bleuher
Cass Junior High



Dr. Laura Anderson
Concord Elementary

Both of our new principals are extremely excited about their new roles and have already had a significant impact at their respective schools.

Continued Funding Efforts

As the school district's costs continue to rise, we continue to aggressively seek alternative funding. We have continued to lobby at the national level to receive Impact Aid funding for the part of Argonne National Laboratory that resides in our school district. If this land was residential or commercial, the school district would receive significant additional tax revenue. The Impact Aid Program allows us to collect a small portion of those lost dollars from the government. Last year, as a result of our lobbying efforts, Cass School District No. 63 received outstanding payments due the district in the amount of \$44,248 for 2003/04, \$338,792 for 2005/06 and \$317,002 for 2006/07 which totaled approximately \$700,000. This was key in assisting us to balance the district budget last school year.

School district officials have also been working at the state level to secure additional funding. State Representative Jim Durkin has recognized our financial needs and has placed in the State's budget \$338,000 to allow us to reestablish bus service in our school district. Unfortunately, these dollars have been tied up with the political budget process in Springfield and we are not sure when, or if, this money will be made available to us.

Locally, parents and community members in the school district, PTC, Cass 63 Foundation for Educational Excellence and FAB have raised thousands of dollars over the years that have been invested in programs, technology and other enhancements for the betterment of children's education. Our local Target Department Stores, Rotary Club, Scout organizations and private citizens have made significant donations to our school district. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in contributing to Cass School District No. 63, please contact our District Office.

Consolidation Study

In the winter of 2006 the Cass District No. 63 Board of Education and Administration was approached by Darien School District No. 61 to explore the possibility of merging the two school districts. A Consolidation Committee was formed and comprised of parents, community members and teachers as well as both superintendents and aldermen from each school district. This committee worked very closely with the Illinois State Board of Education.

The purpose of the committee was to explore the potential cost savings consolidation could offer to the tax paying community, the affect consolidation would have on the education of our children and to map out the possible process of consolidating two school districts.

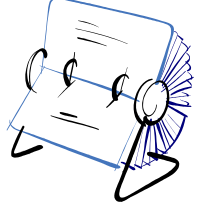
In June of 2007, after a year of considerable work, the Consolidation Committee presented its recommendation to both Boards of Education. Some of the committee's findings were:

- *that both school districts have high performing students as reflected in test scores;*
- *that there would be minimal savings in administrative costs;*
- *that consolidation would take a minimum of three years if the community voted to move forward; and*
- *that the tax rate for District 63 property owners would increase by at least \$0.40.*

With these and other factors in mind, the recommendation of the committee was for both school districts to conduct a professional feasibility study, which is required by the State of Illinois should the districts decide to pursue consolidation. The cost of this

Consolidation study (cont.)

study is approximately \$20,000 and would take about one year to complete. Both school districts are currently debating the merits of hiring an independent group to conduct this study.



Please feel free to contact us!!

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