



# North Shore Schools

*Discovering Your Dreams*

## BOE Meeting Summary

November 18, 2010

### **Discussion/Presentations:**

#### **SIEMENS SEMIFINALIST RECOGNIZED: Charles Sharkey**



**Dr. Melnick along with Trustee Anna Sharkey and Director of Science Dr. Carol Smyth recognized Siemens Semifinalist, Charles Sharkey.**

### **1. UPDATE ON THE HIGH SCHOOL**

High School Principal, Albert Cousins, updated the Board on changes in the high school Programs. Discussed changes include courses/ elective selection in the senior year, as well as support systems for students and professional development for faculty and administrators. He also reviewed the online support available for parents and students.

The board had a brief discussion in regards to eliminating ranking of students (which is a common practice in other local high performing districts) and the effect on college admission. The Valedictorian and Salutatorian would still be announced at North Shore. The issue of an open campus was discussed as well as elective courses for next year. Dr. Melnick emphasized that there will be no increases in staffing for additional electives and there must be a minimum of 15 students for an elective to run.



### **2. ROLE OF NYS ASSESSMENTS IN MEASURING QUALITY INSTRUCTION**

The Board had a lengthy discussion in regards to assessments and the goal of improving quality of instruction. Specifically, current beliefs and practices related to how the district views the NYS Grades 3-8 ELA and Math assessments and the current Board policy regarding assessments.

The board reviewed how student performance is currently measured and how to proceed going forward. Dr. Melnick recommended that all assessment data be used to triangulate evidence in creating an accurate picture of how our students perform. He recommended analyzing qualitative and quantitative data both vertically and horizontally to ascertain a full reportable outcome of student achievement. This would also provide a comparison of North Shore students to other local high performing districts and would give a picture of how North Shore students compare nationally and internationally.

Trustees also discussed current practices at North Shore as well as the recommended assessments and practices to be adopted. Dr. Melnick recommended a **“balanced approach”** in addressing the one year decline in our test scores. The Board agreed that **test scores are important in measuring success but they do not want the emphasis to be on teaching to the test or test-taking tricks**. Additionally, **they all felt that it was important that our students become critical thinkers and are prepared to succeed in the global market**.

### **3. BUDGET GOALS**

Dr. Melnick reported that contributions to the New York State Teacher Retirement System will be increased from 8.62% to 11.5%, to the New York State Employee Retirement System from 11.97% - 16.37% and health insurance contributions will increase 16%, this means a 3.5% budget-to-budget increase for retirement and health insurance alone. In addition, contractual obligations, including salaries, BOCES programs, occupational programs operating expenses such as materials and supplies would bring us to a budget-to-budget increase of 6.8%.

He asked that the Board give some direction of priorities for the budget formation process. They all agreed that it is important to ascertain what the community’s priorities are during the upcoming pre-budget discussions. It was noted there may be less to give back to the taxpayer at the end of the year if the budget is cut close resulting in a lower than usual fund balance. Ms. Buatsi noted next year should be at the peak of the economic issues and retirement and health costs should level off. After meeting with the community at the pre-budget discussions scheduled in December 2010, the Board will take the questions and suggestions that are raised to assist in formulating the budget.

**(For further information regarding this meeting, please see the North Shore Board of Education Minutes for November 18, 2010 at [www.northshoreschools.org](http://www.northshoreschools.org). Complete BOE Minutes are available in the Central Office.)**