GREECE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Briefs

INFORMATION FROM THE JANUARY 2, 2024 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Bilingual Education Program Launch Planned at English Village in 2024-25

Assistant Superintendent for Student Achievement and Family & Community Engagement Valerie Paine, Director of Multilingual Education Shawnna Sweet, and English Village Elementary School Principal Jason Lewis provided the Board with **an update on the district's bilingual program**. When the district moved away from the Signature Schools model in 2017, the bilingual program offered at English Village and Lakeshore was paused. In 2021, the district began exploring the reestablishment of the program.

An advisory committee, engaged to review options, has recommended the incremental implementation of a bilingual program to begin at English Village in 2024-25 with two sections of incoming kindergartners. Students in the program would receive half of their instruction in English and half in Spanish and include students from both English- and Spanish-speaking homes. Sweet said the goal is to expand the program by one grade level each school year; the objective being students who are fluent in both English and Spanish by graduation.

New York State regulations require the establishment of a bilingual education program in districts where 20 or more English Language Learners in the same grade level at the same school speak the same home language. In Greece, the number of students with Spanish as their home language has been steadily increasing across most grade levels and more than 19 percent of Greece students are Hispanic. Spanish is also the most in-demand foreign language sought by U.S. employers.

The new bilingual education program would be different than what was offered by the district previously. The new program would have a strong focus on literacy and follow the five basic components of reading instruction. Classes would utilize a three-teacher model and receive additional support from learning specialists, a world languages teacher on special assignment, a literacy and culture coach, and a bilingual parent coordinator. Students would still learn the same material as their peers, but some lessons would be taught in Spanish.

Other News

2022-23 Reserve Fund Analysis

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administrative Services Romeo Colilli provided the Board with an analysis of **2022-23 reserve funds**, which are a mechanism for legally saving money for future specific purposes. The use of reserve funds is determined by the Board of Education. Reserves can help reduce long-term borrowing costs, smooth tax rate fluctuations, and provide a safety net for financial uncertainties.

As of June 30, 2023, the district had a total of $115,991,705 in reserve funds and fund balances. The district continued to strategically revisit and review reserves annually to ensure financial stability and sustainability. Reserves play a critical role in budget planning with uncertainty around the continued full implementation of New York State's Foundation Aid formula and the expiration of COVID-era stimulus funding.

Colilli also noted that the district has been able to sustain an Aa3 Moody's Investor Service credit rating, which is reflective of Greece Central's standalone credit quality and strong financial position over a period of several years.

STAFFING

The following staffing recommendations were among those approved during the January 2, 2024 Board of Education meeting.

Appointments

- Courtney Afarian, Acting Assistant Principal, Longridge Elementary School, effective January 3
- Tellis Lott, Acting Assistant Principal, Longridge Elementary School, effective January 3
- Taylor Ryan, Crisis Intervener, Arcadia High School, effective Dec. 4, 2023

Resignation

- Jessica Legere, Assistant Principal, Longridge Elementary School, effective December 29, 2023