



# Board Briefings

## ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S TUESDAY, FEB. 11 BUDGET WORK SESSION/MEETING:

- **STUDENT PLEDGE LEADERS** — Union Pleasant Elementary students Grace and John Beckett led the Pledge of Allegiance to start the meeting. They were selected for this honor in recognition of their mother's military service.
- **2020-21 BUDGET OUTLOOK** — With another year of insufficient state aid projected in the Governor's proposed budget, there will be challenges ahead as the district develops its 2020-21 budget. As explained by Superintendent Michael Cornell, the tentative state proposal directs 66% of the increase in education funding to downstate and the "Big 4" school districts. Under the current proposal, very few Western New York school districts would receive a significant increase in state aid, despite greater need (poverty), he said. Assistant Superintendent Barbara Sporyz also outlined the negative impact on overall foundation aid from a measure in the state proposal called the "community schools set aside." Other major issues affecting next year's school budget are limitations on raising revenue due to the tax cap and an increase in district contribution rates to the Teachers' Retirement System.
- **UPES PRESENTATION** — Principal Jackie Peffer introduced an example of modern learning in the classroom with a presentation by fourth grade teacher Jennifer Firth and her students Teagan Masterson, Andrew Neyman and Charlie Veatch. After building longhouses, the students used the Do Ink app to create videos in which they superimposed themselves to scale alongside their structures and discussed how they created their projects.
- **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** — Mr. Cornell congratulated Union Pleasant Elementary special education teacher Tracy Tone for renewal of her National Board Certification, one of the most respected professional certifications available in K-12 education. He also noted a recent *Buffalo News* article that showed Hamburg High School as having the highest graduation rate in Western New York (tied with Iroquois). The 98% graduation rate is one piece of evidence of the effectiveness of the district's instructional program, he said. Mr. Cornell also pointed out that a new eSports Club has been formed at the Middle School, with Patrick Wirth as advisor.
- **PERSONNEL** — The board granted tenure to Bridget Zygaj, math teacher at the High School, effective April 14, 2020. Appointed were: Amy Carter, teacher aide (part-time), Union Pleasant Elementary; Tammy Heeter, Food Service helper (part-time), Middle School; Brandi Sutherland, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Secretary to the School Board, effective March 9.
- **UPCOMING** — Hamburg vs. Frontier dodgeball on Friday, March 6 from 5-8 p.m. at Frontier High School, sponsored by Student Government to benefit the Luca S. Callani Foundation. First annual Claws vs. Paws Soup-Per-Bowl on Tuesday, Feb. 25 starting with setup at 4 p.m. followed by public tasting at 5:30 p.m., at Frontier High School, sponsored by the Hamburg Parent-Child Connection.
- **NEXT MEETING** — Tuesday, March 10 in the Middle School LMC: budget work session at 6 p.m., meeting at 6:30 p.m.

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Michael Cornell, Superintendent  
Feb. 12, 2020