

Superintendent Report: April Board Meeting
Submitted on April 20, 2021

ADMINISTRATIVE WORK:

Standardized testing: The spring testing cycle began the second day after we returned from Spring Break. In all, we will be doing comprehensive testing over the coming weeks for students in Grades 3-11. We are doing our best to both meet the requirements and also to accommodate the needs of the families.

Due to the number of students who were quarantined for the PSAT/SAT testing, we may need to cancel school again for certain MS/HS grade levels in order to have enough staff to proctor the retake. We put in for 11 substitute teachers for the retake day to see if we can make it work, but it is doubtful.

2021-22 Schedules/New Positions: We have continued working on creating the schedules for next year and also to work over the past few months on a strategy for recruitment for open positions for next year. This has been very strategic and intentional as we seek teaching candidates in such a significant teacher shortage. We worked with the DEA after establishing our best estimates related to the budget, to create job postings for the current posting, which is for a science position. We are starting all new candidates on the 3rd step of the salary schedule, have offered the chance to reach out to current teachers to talk about the district and shared much more information about our benefits package. I personally met with all of the teachers who were directly impacted by this change prior to sending out the job posting.

Planning for Physical Spaces/Resource Allocation: Due to the influx of students at the elementary, we will continue to keep our fifth grade students in the middle school building for the 2021-22 school year. We are doing this to create more balance in terms of student density and to maximize our learning spaces in ways that best serve our students as we continue to monitor our enrollment.

Fifth grade students will be located in a separate part of the MS building and not be given lockers, as they will still be considered elementary students. Mr. Cox will handle BK-4, Mrs. Graf 5-8 and Ms. Dupuis 9-12. There will be significant collaboration between Mr. Cox and Mrs. Graf to help ensure there is an “elementary feel” to the experience of our fifth graders.

More 2021-22 Planning: After speaking with our families, it has become clear that our plan to return in-person for the fall for grades BK-12 is in alignment with the plans of the vast majority of our families. We will offer what we have in the past for anyone who would like to continue online, but we do not have enough students interested in online learning to continue to offer it the way we did this year. Ultimately, we have seen for many years that the very best outcomes for our students have come from in-person learning and we believe that continuing to offer it in as safe a manner as possible is what is best for students.

End-of-Year Activities: We have spent quite a bit of time trying to stay on top of the most current MDHHS orders and then incorporate those into our most current plans for the end of year activities, such as prom, other senior activities, graduations, honors events, band concerts and more. This is very challenging, but I appreciate the effort of the staff to do our best to talk to the students about their ideas and also to try to make as many of these events happen as possible.

Benchmark Assessments: We are also working on getting our final screening data in both ELA and math for students in Grades K-8 as we approach the end of the school year. This data will be shared with the Board at the end of the school year.

Professional Learning re: Best Practices: The administrators and I have paused to review a recent education journal that is filled with articles by educational researchers with a focus on best practices for professional development. After dissecting this journal, we are looking forward to sharing this information with our DSIT teacher leaders and plan to use it as a springboard for reinvigorating our group's work next year around these principles. I am also hoping to include this in my superintendent goals for next year.

ATHLETICS:

Antigen Testing for Spring Sports: In compliance with the latest MDHHS order, we sent out district communication, posted for additional help and began spring sports antigen testing on Friday, April 2. Christy, Tania, Erin, Becky and I have expanded our roles to be trained and help with testing. We are then joined by five other staff members who were also trained and work with us on Monday mornings at 6:45 AM to provide this testing for our students to allow them to participate in spring sports.

Supporting our Community Needs: We had folks in the community reach out to get support for administering antigen testing/testing results. We worked to come up with a way to report out our testing results for our athletes to use for their travel teams and also connected our local non-school teams with resources to be able to test their athletes so they can compete. Thank you to Christy for helping with this process.

Accomplishments: Rachel Briggs was selected to be on the Dream Team for Gymnastics by the State Journal after performing well as the state meet, where she placed 8th in the all-around at the state finals as well as at the CAAC Championships. Rachel competed as part of a cooperative agreement on the Holt-Mason-Dansville team.

Connor Bramble, a junior at DHS, qualified to compete at the state wrestling meet this year and from our bowling team, Kevin Every placed #8 and Jacob Van Douser placed #42 at the state meet.

We hosted a distanced signing for Carson Voss, who secured a preferred walk on spot on the football team at Western Michigan University for next fall.

We held a virtual signing earlier this year for Lexi Krumbach who will play volleyball next year at Rochester University in Rochester Hills, MI. We have more signings in the works as our athletes move on to compete at the collegiate level in various sports.

Grand Opening: We held a grand opening for the softball field on Tuesday, April 13. Mr. Don Brown, who started the softball program in Dansville in the early '70s was honored as was Michigan Softball Hall of Fame coach Mick Ream, who also threw the opening pitch. The girls won both games in this home opening double header.

We are hoping to host a grand opening event for baseball this evening (4/21). They will play one game against Mason at 5 pm.

BUDGET UPDATES:

Planning: Raelynn and I met to go through the budget line-by-line earlier this month to create estimates for Revision 2 of the current budget, to finalize the application for grant funding for HS summer school and to work on the first draft of the 2021-22 budget.

Uncertainty generally exists at this time of year when we lack information about the foundation allowance for next year, coupled with the need to guess the student count upon which our funding is based. With these things in mind, we will discuss more in closed session about our proposal for the non-bargaining unit, DEA and DESPA as it relates to negotiations.

Schools of Choice Data: The ISD recently shared updates regarding Schools of Choice data for the 2020-21 school year and we have 21 more students opting to come to our school than we have opting to go elsewhere. Most of the students that opt in come from Mason, Leslie and Stockbridge, while those who opt out primarily go to Mason or Williamston. As we have explored this through the years, many of these decisions are made based on location within our district (house borders a neighboring district/address in a neighboring district), having parents who attended a neighboring district and want their kids to attend the same district, etc. We continue to explore what we can do better with every family that leaves as well as learning what attracts new families here as ways to ensure we are listening and continuously seeking to improve.

COMMUNICATION:

Newsletter: The winter newsletter hit mailboxes, Facebook and the website since our last meeting. We continue to get quite a bit of positive feedback regarding this publication and are grateful that Becky will be able to continue this work moving forward.

Other Communication: Over spring break, there were ongoing communications with the health department about our positive cases and about their recommendations for in-person learning and spring sports. We in turn continued to send out several district and building-specific communications regarding our pause to in-person learning, our plans for antigen testing and positive COVID cases.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH/PARTNERSHIPS:

Grant: It was very nice to meet Mark Voss from Farm Bureau when he brought a presentation check that represented the \$2500 grant we were awarded. This grant will help us add fresh food to our summer survival kits for our families who continue to deal with food insecurity.

DSEF: We are thankful for the ongoing efforts of the Dansville Schools Education Foundation, as they have recently launched their Truffles for Teachers campaign. They hope to show teachers appreciation and also raise additional funds with this effort and it is greatly appreciated! I wrote/sent thank you notes to each member of the DSEF board, on behalf of the school, to thank them for all they have done for our Aggie Family this year.

Support Provided: We have continued to meet with and help several families and students who have struggled with health-related issues, technology, motivating their students or just overall mental health. We are working to connect people with mentors, counselors, resources or whatever else may be helpful as we continue to navigate these difficult times together.

CURRICULUM/TRAINING:

PD: Our March professional development included Aggie Improvement Team work and work in buildings working on a range of topics from training regarding teaching and assessment expectations to identifying student needs for placement to reflecting on what is worth keeping and what isn't from this year of pandemic learning.

DSIT: Led a meeting with our DSIT folks to plan the April Professional Development day. We will again spend more time in Aggie Improvement Teams to allow teams work time to help them accomplish their goals, to reflect on their overall accomplishments from this year and to identify ongoing work for next year. This becomes part of their June Board presentation and the information informs the development of our District Improvement Plan (DIP). Teachers will also meet again as elementary and secondary groups to focus on improvement targeted at the building level.

School Improvement Work: In preparation for the upcoming PD, our Social Studies AIT leadership team met twice to plan our next/last meeting of this school year. We will present a journal to everyone on our team for reflection and to capture new learning, we will read an article with time to share out in small groups to help establish a shared understanding of this work.

I will also be meeting twice with the leaders of the Rigor Aggie Improvement Team to talk through the plan for the remainder of this school year and plans for next year.

Our county instructional leaders meeting was held last week and the admin team joined as we prepare to complete brand new state reports in a new platform called MICIP in June. We also discussed several other topics related to curriculum and instruction.

DATA:

Engagement: Updated data regarding student engagement was shared in the Board packet, in accordance with the legislative requirement.

Kudos to Dansville Schools: I was asked to be part of a recent presentation that took place on 4/15/21, that was put together by AASA (the American Association of School Administrators), which is the national school superintendent association. It was about Leveraging Federal Funding and featured a few speakers who focused on the details of the federal funding, some info from Johnson Controls, the founder and creator of Spring Math, Amanda VanDerHeyden and one other superintendent from a huge county district in Florida. It was an honor to share the grit and perseverance of our staff in implementing Spring Math this year. Part of the presentation included the data showing that our second graders this year outperformed last year's second grade in terms of growth and basically made up the difference in spite of their lower baseline data that could be attributed to the shutdown last spring.

State Testing: It was really helpful that so many of our students came in for state testing over the past few weeks and we look forward to analyzing the data to determine if there will be information that can inform our instruction.

FACILITIES:

Update: Much work was accomplished over spring break, including installation of the ladder to help us access HVAC at the HS, numbering/renumbering of all of our exterior doors for safety purposes and several other maintenance projects throughout the district.

PERSONNEL UPDATE:

Hiring: Interviews are taking place this week to hire a new HS Office Manager and an Elementary Office Paraprofessional position. We look forward to introducing new members of our Aggie Family soon! We have also hired some temporary long-term subs in paraprofessional positions to help us get through the rest of the school year.

POLICY WORK:

Update: Met with our new NEOLA representative at the end of March to receive the Spring Policy update. Possible meeting dates/times for the policy committee will be shared on Monday night.

SAFETY:

Drills: We conducted both fire and tornado drills since the last Board meeting. We also continue to evaluate all of our daily cleaning and mitigation strategies and make changes if necessary.

Partnership: Our admin team met again with our school liaison officer from the Ingham County Sheriff's Department to ensure we are all on the same page and that we are best utilizing this resource for the benefit of our students.

TEACHING AND LEARNING:

Extended Learning Plan: Please see the Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan in the Board Packet, as per legislative requirement. There are no changes for this month besides our reporting of the secondary pause to in-person instruction. There are no anticipated changes for the remainder of the school year.

Classroom Visits: The principals and mentor teachers have been getting into classes, both online and in-person, to observe and give teachers feedback. These observations become part of the teacher evaluation after discussion with the teacher takes place to reflect on the lesson together. This improved process we established over the past few years has been much more effective and will remain in place moving forward.

Collaboration: I am continuing to have discussions, both locally and beyond, regarding the effectiveness of Spring Math. Other local districts will be exploring its use and conversations will be had at the state level as well.

Special Education: Our team meets monthly to talk about special education services as a whole. We examine data, caseload numbers, problem solve and discuss any topics that are introduced at the county special education director meetings.

We recently signed off on an Early Childhood Special Education waiver that was submitted on our behalf by Ingham ISD that addresses hours of programs that operate outside of 185 days.

TECHNOLOGY:

We are waiting to finalize funding and analyzing a needs assessment before we order new computers, devices and/or Promethean Boards. More information should be known after this week.

Upcoming Dates of Note:

- *Graduation: May 23 (Please plan to attend)
- *May Board Meeting: May 24
- *Last Day of School: May 28
- *Budget Hearing/June Board Meeting: June 28

Check out the Aggie App Calendar to find upcoming school events!