

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

ADMINISTRATIVE WORK:

We have continued intensive work over the past month preparing for staff and students to return. Each aspect of every event we have held so far was examined through the lens of trying to include mitigation strategies that included spacing as much as possible and holding events or parts of events outside whenever possible. In spite of our best efforts, there have been times after the attendees have arrived that our plans didn't work as we had hoped and without exception, we have acknowledged what we could have done better and debriefed about what we can do to improve moving forward. More effort than can be seen outside of events is going into these types of planning and improving conversations.

We had our Administrative Orientation meetings on August 5th and 12th during which time we revisited the District Improvement Plan that is based on the work we did over the course of last year. We also talked through our special education staffing and plans for the upcoming year while also working on hiring in key roles within this area.

We held nearly a day-long New Teacher Orientation for our new teachers on Friday, August 6 where we were joined in the afternoon by their mentor teachers. We then had our first DSIT (District School Improvement Team) meeting of the year on Monday, August 9th, where we reviewed the continuous improvement cycle, finalized the DIP and planned the first two PD sessions for teachers. We held district-wide Registration Day on Tuesday, August 10th combined with/ followed by orientations for 6th and 9th grade students.

Throughout the past month, meetings and back-to-school planning has also taken place with our tech director, our maintenance staff, our cleaning staff, and our athletic director. We also had an athletic orientation meeting for the entire coaching staff that took place during the evening of August 5th that coincided with our onsite offering of sports physicals for our athletes.

The Back-to-School Bash for students in Grades BK-5 took place the evening of Thursday, August 12th with an outdoor dinner option as well as the chance to check out a bus and the location of our specials programs. Most of our families take advantage of these back-to-school opportunities and it was great to see them all back in person.

We launched the school year for staff on Monday, August 16, 2021 with the Welcome Back/Staff Recognition Breakfast followed by teacher professional development. Some of the artifacts and this year's theme that was presented at the Welcome Back Breakfast will be shared with the board at the meeting. A second half-day of PD took after the first half day of school on Tuesday, August 17th.

We introduced our fall athletes at Meet the Aggies in the evening on Wednesday, August 18th with the event happening at Fuller Field. This is another example of our attempt to hold events outside as much as possible as we continue to navigate the return to school in the midst of also dealing with the ongoing risk of exposure to COVID-19.

The district staff are serving on one of four K-12 Aggie Improvement Teams to work on our goals for the 2021-22 school year. Our plan continues to focus around areas identified through looking at our data, at the research regarding best practice and listening to the feedback from the staff. The teams are: Rigor, Relevance/Relationships, Literacy and Social Studies. The details of this work will be shared at the Board Meeting, where the entire District Improvement Plan will be distributed.

Administrative team goals should be finalized next week and then Superintendent Goals will be shared with the Superintendent Evaluation Committee prior to the September Board meeting.

ATHLETICS:

Former MS track coach Ashley Shoup was hired as the Varsity Cheer Coach and former assistant Frank Carpenter was hired as the JV football coach, which completes our coaching staff for this year.

Our fall sports teams are back in action. Due to the numbers, our JV football team will have 8-man competitions this year. This was a decision that our coaches and athletic director made together to prioritize safety and opportunity for the players who are participating this year.

The athletic department summer golf outing was very successful in raising funds to help support our athletic teams. Thank you to former AD Christy Minnis, who finished out her time here by running this last event. The Boosters are back in action this fall raising funds for our athletic department as well, which is much appreciated!

BUDGET UPDATES:

The current priority is to complete the annual audit work in preparation to share with the board this fall. Everything we have heard so far from the auditors has been very positive, but they will share their final report with the board directly.

We have also continued to work on revisions and finalizing enrollment numbers. There are still students who have had changes of residency or who are joining us as of this report, so more final numbers will be shared next month, but enrollment seems to be up by as much as 20 or more from what was budgeted and is anticipated to be up overall from last year. Last year our enrollment was approximately 744.

COMMUNICATION:

Much effort was put into the district-wide communication that was sent out on Monday, August 2nd. It was our intent to create a one-stop option for all three buildings, food service, athletics and more. We have several ideas of ways to make it better for next year, but it was effective overall and we received a lot of positive feedback. We have also continued to have conversations daily with parents, grandparents and other community members about a number of different aspects of our return-to-school. We so appreciate folks reaching out to us directly so we can best answer their questions and help them hear factual information, but also our passion to serve our children in each of these conversations.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH/PARTNERSHIPS:

Several community groups were represented at our Elementary Registration Day, as this is the best chance for families of young children to get to know about programs and opportunities we have in our school and in the community. Our PTO, CADL and others were part of this event. These groups traditionally join our Back-to-School Bash, but due to the longer timeframe and decreased crowding at Registration Day, these additional groups joined this event instead.

The Class of 1970 will be meeting me on Saturday, August 21 for a tour of our campus as part of their class reunion. This is something we have done for many years and is a great opportunity to

thank those participants who are local for the investment they have made in our school and also to help celebrate the contributions of all Aggies to making our school such a special place.

We were contacted by a local church inquiring more about our Many Hands program as they were considering contributing to the fund. This is the fund used to provide the weekend survival back packs and to help with other needs our students have as they arise.

CURRICULUM/TRAINING:

Our elementary teachers had a half-day Amplify Science training on Wednesday, August 11th. We are very excited that we have expanded our implementation of this amazing science curriculum fully for grades K-5.

It was nice to reconvene with the county curriculum directors on Wednesday, August 11 to talk about professional development, testing and school improvement priorities/plans for the upcoming school year.

DATA:

We collected data related to our June Intervention (K-8) and summer school (9-12) programming that we wanted to share with the Board. We are so fortunate to have had staff members willing to invest this extra time over the summer in teaching these students and thankful to our parents for partnering with us to make it all possible.

Elementary School: June Intervention Info and Data:

- In the Kindergarten group, students' needs were mainly addressed individually. Students worked on letter names/sounds, differentiating between upper/lowercase as well as number identification. Each student demonstrated growth during this intervention. Strategies that were used involved Heggerty, Lively Letters, Headsprout and Spring Math. 14 students attended.
- In the 1st grade group, all students demonstrated growth in learning sight words...all but one student experienced double digit growth. Growth occurred with addition and subtraction fact fluency, but it was minimal. A lot of phonics and phonemic awareness activities were done with this group, mostly from Heggerty. Mental math strategies were a big focus for 1st grade as they learned about doubles, counting up by 1, doubles +1, etc. Spring Math proved beneficial as well. 13 students attended.
- In the 2nd & 3rd grade group about half of the students made significant improvements in their words per minute fluency score ranging from 5-22 words. Basic addition/subtraction facts were practiced with this group. Again, nearly half of the students demonstrated growth and gains were significantly tied to consistent attendance at the program. Headsprout was used regularly for literacy. This group was built around a Daily 5 structure of various reading and writing activities including word work, silent sustained reading, writing and reading to someone else. Small group instruction took place while students completed their Daily 5 activities. Spring Math was used daily along with a variety of math activities, games and websites to develop fact fluency. 12 students attended.
- In the 4th & 5th grade group all students who attended regularly improved their words per minute fluency rate. The minimum amount of improvement was +5 wpm while the maximum was +62 wpm. All 4th & 5th grade students showed improvement in their math fact fluency improving within a range of 2-45 additional math facts within a 3-minute time period. 6

Minute Solution, Headsprout and daily oral reading with the teacher were the primary strategies used for this upper elementary group. Spring Math in addition to a variety of math fact practice activities were used to provide many repetitions for building math fact fluency. Color coded paragraphs were also explicitly taught to the group. 12 students attended.

Middle School: June Intervention Info and Data:

- 24 students worked on intervention in math and/or reading and writing
- Students participated in Spring Math intervention for Math and for Reading/Writing intervention we used Rewards and/or Close Reader Collections for Comprehension/Fluency work.
- Attendance was approximately 80% daily and those students who attended regularly made academic gains.

High School: Summer School Info and Data:

- 33 HS students enrolled in the Summer School program
- 61 Credits were recovered by students
- The number of students needing to recover credits this year was more than usual due to a combination of things related to the pandemic, including the fact that we could not offer in-person credit recovery during the summer of 2020.

FACILITIES:

Ongoing conversations are occurring related to the drainage improvement we are planning to make between the elementary performance area and the HS gym.

Much work has been done in preparation for the return to school in the area of maintenance. Clean Team was able to get all of the interior and exterior windows cleaned, all classrooms and common areas were cleaned and all floors were thoroughly cleaned before the start of school.

Building plastic dividers for the elementary school and working on other projects as requested by teachers and principals consumed most the time for the maintenance department as school approached. The focus then turns to fixing lockers and adjusting chairs/desks when the students return.

PERSONNEL UPDATE:

We have welcomed several new paraprofessionals, food service staff and teachers to our Aggie Family this fall. Our new teachers will be introduced to the Board at the meeting on Monday night. We have highlighted our new Aggies in our district newsletter and via social media as well.

One existing teacher ended up taking a position at her former district right before our school year started and we quickly posted the position and hired a new teacher who will begin next week to teach in our Elementary Special Education Behavior Intervention Classroom. This is a center-based program where we invite students from other schools to join as part of a partnership with Ingham ISD, so we are extremely fortunate to have been able to find a teacher in such short time to fill this vacancy.

We also currently have posted proactively for a first grade teacher due to unanticipated change of circumstance with a current staff member and have already had inquiries about the position, so we are hopeful we can fill it soon to ensure a smooth transition.

POLICY WORK:

The Fall update is anticipated to arrive sometime later this fall. I will meet with the policy committee at that time and we will then bring the proposed policies forward to the board.

SAFETY:

Our new AD, Jeff Dassance, will be taking over our AED planning as part of his new role. This will include planning for replacement batteries and pads as well as planning for drills. We are grateful to Erin Graf for the work she has done in this area previously.

We are also working on getting our year-long drill schedule established that will then be shared with Ingham County Emergency Manager Rob Dale and our local fire department.

TEACHING AND LEARNING:

After our school year kick off, the teachers participated in building-level orientation meetings for the rest of the morning and then spent the remainder of the first day of PD working and planning at the building level. The second day included a district presentation about the DIP and our improvement process, the launch of our Aggie Improvement Teams and team building.

TECHNOLOGY:

There are still several technology pieces that are still delayed, but that is part of the world-wide shortages that were shared previously.

Our technology department put several additional security measures in place to start this new school year as they have received much more information about the cybersecurity risks K-12 schools are facing. We are adopting all of their recommendations.

Upcoming Dates of Note:

Homecoming: October 8

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