

Superintendent Report: April Board Meeting
Submitted on April 12, 2019

Administrative work:

We have continued looking through research and best practice while also assimilating the feedback and suggestions we received from the staff via the individual meetings to start establishing short and long-term plans for improvement for each school/the district. We have moved forward with the reconfiguration of the secondary administrative positions, with Erin Graf now moving into the Middle School principal position and Tania Dupuis handling the HS principal duties.

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 were very excited to have 100% attendance and no tardies for students in grades 8-11 for the main day of PSAT and SAT testing on Tuesday, April 9th. To thank and reward them, the principals provided coffee and hot chocolate throughout the day for the HS and free popsicles for the 8th graders after lunch today. The kids seemed to genuinely appreciate the acknowledgement.

Planning is underway for all of the end-of-year events/activities in each building. The elementary has a number of field trips, an art show and fifth grade graduation. The MS is in final preparations for the DC trip and then honors/8th grade graduation while the HS is finalizing plans for the art show, Honors Night and then all senior festivities and graduation.

We are excited about the progress of our students who have been working through Spring Math classwide and individual interventions throughout this year. We will be doing the spring benchmark testing later this spring to further measure our students' outcomes.

Andy and I have a conference call on Friday with experts in summer school programming to ensure we are utilizing best practices in our planning and implementation of these intervention periods.

Athletics:

In spite of tricky weather as we have launched into spring sports, all of our teams are underway. We are frustrated with the lack of progress on the soccer field, although the field itself is ready to play. We are waiting on siding and final grade, fencing and bleachers.

Logan Kehres finished 7th in the state at the state wrestling competition and Caleb Hodgson earned several first team all-state recognitions and played in an all-star game called The Mitten Classic in Detroit over spring break.

The Staff/Student Basketball Game took place just before Spring Break and was a nice fundraiser for the athletic department and fun for those involved.

Budget Info:

We are currently budgeting for 710 students for next year. We had 724 this year. We have been giving several tours to potential new students, however, and are hopeful this number will increase before fall.

I have met with each principal and also with Raelynn to go through the details of the budget in preparation for both the 18-19 Revision 2 budget as well as the 19-20 Proposed budget. After listening to the legislators this morning at the Legislative Breakfast, it seems we may not see a final budget from the state until possibly after July, as they are wrestling with major issues related to road and school funding solutions. This will make our initial budget that is due June 30, 2019, particularly challenging. I will share budget projections at the May board meeting.

Communication:

We have sent out the winter newsletter to the community after posting the PDF online as soon as it was finalized, in an effort to get the sinking fund information out ASAP. I greatly appreciate the effort Becky made to get multiple bids for the printing of the newsletter this time, resulting in a nice savings for the cost of production.

We had elementary parent-teacher conferences the week before spring break, which were well-attended.

We are still waiting on anticipated legislation related to snow day forgiveness, as we will then apply for the waiver and be able to announce the plans for the last week of school. I have been talking with the union about the 19-20 calendar and plan to share it with the board on Monday. The new calendar reflects our efforts to also incorporate what we've learned from the research we've been doing.

Community Outreach/Partnerships:

We are thankful for our partnership with the Education Foundation, as they are getting ready to hold their Aggie Stars fundraiser and will be designating the funds to be used for replacement of kindergarten equipment and furniture.

We are getting ready to hold Community Day on Friday, May 3rd. We chose this date to serve the community because it is the three-year anniversary of the bond passing and will allow us to take advantage of better weather conditions (hopefully!). We will be providing scrap metal recycling for the community and also doing service projects throughout the local neighborhoods and beyond.

Curriculum/Training:

We continue to work on building the master schedules for each building. After discussion with the staff, we are moving forward with the high school switching to a six-period day. One exciting new development is that Jerrod Braman was given another scholarship to attend training this summer to add another computer science class to the high school offerings. This will be more of an introduction to computer science that will be offered to underclassmen.

After more consideration, we will be including both 7th and 8th grade PLTW courses for students who are hoping to earn their STEM Endorsement not just for this year's seniors, but for all students moving forward. This gives students a chance to earn 2.5 more credits to add to their HS courses, helping them earn the STEM endorsement. We feel this will help students attain this endorsement even though we are moving to a six-period day and this is allowable based on the law that was enacted.

Data:

We continue to monitor the Spring Math progress data weekly and provide additional supports as needed to ensure ongoing progress and/or problem-solving.

Facilities:

Work continues to complete the punchlist and on the outdoor aspect of the projects. We received the fitness room equipment over spring break and are thankful to the volunteers who came in to help move and assemble it. This was a savings for the district.

In addition, significant work has been done to finalize paperwork and train staff to move us closer to opening the track and fitness room. This is much more involved than it may seem. We needed to have the attorney review the risk and release language as well as create systems to handle the memberships and the coordination with the door systems. This has resulted in some tweaking to the membership drafts that were presented to the board last month, including that we are not going to offer any one-day passes. The required background checking and key preparation will most likely take more than one day and the work involved makes the one-day pass not feasible.

Personnel Update:

We are very excited to share that we hired Kelli Pfiester as our new speech pathologist for the 19-20 school year. Kelli was here during the 17-18 school year for an internship she did under the tutelage of experienced and outstanding speech professional, Nancy Gatesy. We also hired Nicole Skouby as our new recess paraprofessional. Nicole is a parent of current Aggies and we appreciate her willingness to step into this new role.

Policy Update:

I think it would be beneficial for the policy committee to consider a revision to the school trip policy that would allow the superintendent to approve in-state overnight trips, while requiring out of state and international trips to be approved by the board. This is common practice in area schools. Please let me know if you have concerns in discussing this change.

Safety:

After additional consideration and review, the district will move forward with ALICE training for the staff next fall. This is a more detailed approach to the run, hide, fight approach the district adopted several years ago that allows the staff to have conversations with older students during lockdown drills to make sure everyone is aware of their options given different scenarios. Steve Rusnock will head up this training for the staff in September.

The district received information that our resubmitted safety grant proposal was rejected. We learned that they again didn't fund any schools that previously received the grant, which we did in the very first grant cycle.

Our district is participating in the Handle with Care program that has been recently launched in Ingham County in cooperation with the Ingham County Sheriff's department. It basically establishes a channel of communication through which the police can contact the school to give us a heads up if any of our

students have been involved in a traumatic incident involving the police. We are not given details, but rather just asked to provide additional support for the student(s) who were involved.

Teaching and Learning:

The district is interested in becoming part of the Reading Now Network (RNN). A brief description of the RNN was included in your packet and I will be sharing a video and talking more about it during the board meeting on Monday. It is our hope that the board will adopt this resolution as we continue to learn more and strive to improve our reading outcomes for all students.

Technology:

Since standardized testing is done online, students use both Chromebooks and computers to complete their tests. This requires a strong partnership with our tech support folks and we are very appreciative of their help during this time.

We are also in the process of trying to figure out how to replace the aging, donated Smartboards in the elementary school. They are showing their age and are in need of replacement. It is our hope to begin replacing them starting in the kindergarten classrooms as soon as possible.

Upcoming Dates of Note:

High School Honors Night: April 16

Community Day: May 3

Graduation: June 2

Budget Hearing: June 17

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