

**Superintendent Report: May Board Meeting**  
**Submitted on May 20, 2021**

**ADMINISTRATIVE WORK:**

**End of Year Work:** The administrators have been working hard to re-vision all of our year-end activities (honors nights, graduations and other celebrations) to try to create events that are special for those involved, but also safe and in compliance with the current guidance. It has been particularly time intensive because after significant planning, the guidance often quickly changes and we oftentimes have to start over.

Administrators are working on teacher evaluations, other staff evaluations and final classroom observations as well. It cannot be overstated how much the district appreciates the work that Tania has done to make an in-person, COVID regulation compliant, outdoor graduation for our seniors. Please take the chance to thank all of these Aggies when you get the opportunity! The administrators also coordinate special events like the daily celebrations that are planned for teachers every day of Teacher Appreciation Week, which happened since last we met.

**2021-22 Schedules:** We have not yet finalized a decision regarding our elementary behavior room, but due to the number of students who are in need of that service, we may be redeploying our staff to provide special education services and 504 support for other students for next year. We will continue to analyze the needs of our students as we meet regularly regarding students with special needs. We will move forward with the decision that is best overall for our students, while continuing to communicate regularly with those directly impacted.

**Planning for Physical Spaces/Resource Allocation:** After sharing with our families that the 5<sup>th</sup> grade will be housed in the middle school building next year, Mr. Cox received one phone call from a concerned parent. He has talked directly with that parent and also reached out proactively to a few others to answer any questions that may be circulating. Mr. Cox, Mrs. Graf and I met after discussing plans with the teachers to talk through more details about this move and additional information will continue to be shared at the building level as we get closer to the fall, when more of our protocols are finalized.

**End-of-Year Activities/Make-up Opportunities:** We have held prom, created new experiences for our seniors to help make up for some that we couldn't do, created different honors events, outdoor band concerts and have been working on a way to provide a fifth grade camp experience to the current 5<sup>th</sup> graders. We are also offering a multi-year possible Washington DC trip after school gets out next year to give the opportunity to anyone who missed it and Mr. Cox is sharing the Mackinac Island trip itinerary to families who weren't able to have the 4<sup>th</sup> grade trip, in case they would like to experience it on their own. We were also excited to be able to honor last year's three retirees along with this year's retiree, Jan Baker, at our recent Retiree Open House Celebration.

**New Events May Be Sticking:** What is exciting is that we are getting feedback about some of these re-visioned events that parents like some of our new ideas even better than the traditional events! One example of this is how we have handled our academic honors events the past few times. Another is parent-teacher conferences. We will continue to explore these events in light of this feedback and hope to strike the right balance moving forward, given all we are learning.

**Spring Testing:** The spring testing cycle is nearly complete. This is quite an effort by our staff every year and it has been even more time intensive this year as we have worked to accommodate all of the online students who have come in for testing.

### **ATHLETICS:**

**Aggie Participating in Collegiate Athletics/Ms. Minnis:** There are several Aggies who are participating in collegiate athletics in various ways at different levels next year. We held some “signings” for these students via Zoom in the fall, but have since offered an in-person option as well. These student-athletes will be present at the Board meeting on Monday night, as they will be featured as our special presentation.

**Athletic Updates:** We have continued to offer antigen testing on Monday mornings for all of our spring athletes who are ages 13 and up. This will continue for at least one more week.

Christy and I continue to meet weekly to work through plans for athletics. We will begin working on a transition plan as well as we look to begin our interviews for the next athletic director sometime during the first week of June.

We were just notified of a request to host the MHSAA Volleyball Regionals for next year, which would be a first for our district. We have seen a significant increase in the requests for hosting since our new fields and gym have been completed. This has several benefits for our teams, our fans, our community, our local businesses and generates additional revenue to offset athletic expenses.

### **BUDGET UPDATES:**

**Planning:** Raelynn and I continue to communicate regularly as we work on the budget planning both for Revision 2 of the current budget and our first swipe at the 2021-22 budget. I will be sharing our budget info in more detail at the Board meeting on Monday night as a discussion item. While this isn't a required part of the budget cycle, it is a step that we have incorporated to help inform the Board of where we are financially prior to the mandated meeting in June. The next step in the budget cycle will be the June budget hearing (that is required by law) that will take place as part of the June meeting.

We are currently still budgeting for 740 students (a slight increase from this year) and have penciled in predicted numbers greater than 750 as our best guess. We don't get our final enrollment number until after Count Day in October, so we do our best to be both conservative and reasonable when establishing this number for budget purposes.

**Contracts:** We have reached a tentative agreement with the DEA (the teacher's union) and DESPA (support staff union). More details will be shared in closed session with the Board.

**Other:** I met recently with our representative from Set Seg to talk through our insurance coverage, safety training that has recently become available and to answer questions about existing practices and training. We are working on adopting a new system called KnowB4 that helps train staff regarding how to identify phishing attempts and to protect the district again cyberattacks.

**Related Follow Up:** As a related follow up on this, I found upon talking with our tech director Jon Harpst and doing some digging, that we believe our website host company initiated some of the changes in our practices such as the start of the CMS website forms that the community uses to contact staff and board members. Other districts experienced that publishing private connections to board members such as non-district email and other identifiable information (private phone numbers, etc.) comprised the security of the district such that hackers were able to "scrape" the data and use it for their phishing attempts quite successfully.

In one case, I believe there was a situation at a school where a staff member purchased hundreds of dollars of Apple gift cards at what they believed to be was the request of another staff member or maybe a board member and then the hacker took the codes and emptied all the cards. There has been a significant increase in cyberattacks on K-12 and higher education institutions where data is held hostage and bitcoin is demanded.

This is another reason why it is so important that our school partners with Ingham ISD for our technology services, as they have personnel and resources to educate, monitor and help us prevent and/or deal with this new threat to school districts.

### **COMMUNICATION:**

**Mask Update/Quarantine Guidelines:** We have continued to do our best to navigate the information that is being disseminated from the CDC, MDHHS and ultimately the ICHD. When we get the guidance confirmed, we have then communicated it with the staff and then our families. Most recently there was a change in both the quarantine guidelines and the outdoor mask requirement.

**County-wide Communication:** We have continued meeting as county superintendents every two weeks throughout this past year to talk through issues, to hear from the ICHD and to collaborate. These discussions have been very valuable.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH/PARTNERSHIPS:**

**Community Support:** Steve Moran, a Dansville alum who is amazing with sound, has been an invaluable partner over the past few weeks as we have been working on getting the right sound system in place for our outdoor graduation. This type of service and partnership is absolutely invaluable. We also appreciate the use of borrowed sound equipment from the HUB and the Morans to make it all happen as inexpensively as possible.

## **CURRICULUM/TRAINING:**

**PD:** Our April professional development included Aggie Improvement Team (AIT) work followed by work in buildings as teams work on curriculum, planning and intervention in preparation for next school year. Our Aggie Improvement Teams will present their year-end accomplishments and plans with the Board at the June meeting.

**DSIT:** Led a meeting with our DSIT folks to evaluate the April Professional Development day and discuss plans for the fall. We established our August meeting date and discussed the basic plan for each AIT for next year. I met with individual leaders from our AITs, upon their request, to prepare for the last meeting to ensure we were all on the same page. We are blessed with many amazing teacher-leaders in addition to our outstanding building principals, who also serve as leaders of these teams.

**Connecting:** I have had the opportunity to speak with the leaders of several statewide groups, including the Michigan Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the leader of MI-MTSS and the leader of the MI Assessment Consortium about the work we have been doing with Spring Math and whether it would make sense for our state to take a closer look at it for other school districts as well. This was borne out of my strong conviction that ultimately we want every student in our state and country to be successful academically.

**County Instructional Leaders Meeting:** Our county instructional leaders meeting was held the first week of May and the admin team joined as we continue preparations 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.

**Curriculum Adoption:** I met with the ISD math consultants to discuss when we might consider the exploration of a new core math curriculum. We are planning to wait until we get at least two years of standardized test scores that include our use of Spring Math prior to making a change.

**State and Federal Grants:** There was a half-day workshop this week that I attended to get the state update regarding federal grants, state reporting, the new NexSys system and more. Raelynn, Becky and Shannon also attended to help get us on the same page.

## **DATA:**

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

**Third Grade Reading Law:** This is the first year we are required to enact the Third Grade Reading Law. Preliminary state standardized test scores are released for these students and then there are several steps that must be taken with any student who may be flagged. Families are contacted directly by Mr. Cox, who explains the entire process and then a letter is sent from me explaining that their child may be retained and also their options. Families may choose to request that their child be promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> grade for one of the “good cause exemptions” as

defined in the law or, if those don't apply and the teachers involved with the child believe that promotion is in his/her best interest, there is a portfolio of data that must be completed and submitted for consideration for a final decision.

The research is clear that retention is not an effective strategy for helping students reach proficiency and in fact, has several other negative consequences. For that reason, it would be a very rare circumstance in which the district would encourage any child to be retained.

### **FACILITIES:**

**Updates:** We are so thankful for the help of Mike and Rick to go above and beyond to help us figure out and implement the plan for outdoor graduation. They have been invaluable to Tania.

Mike has been working with Mark Collins to get a maintenance program in place for the new ball fields and has been experiencing the first spring with all of the new grass in play, which is a lot of area to cover. He has done a nice job and takes great pride in his work.

Rick continues to plug away at our maintenance and repair work while also helping us create improvements as well through implementing new systems or creatively handling problems as they arise with a focus on reusing existing resources and being a good steward. He is able to do quite a bit of the work here himself, but also has built a network of contractors with the help of Steve Rusnock, to get additional support as needed.

### **PERSONNEL UPDATE:**

**Hiring:** Interviews are taking place to fill our open teaching positions. We are interviewing for a first grade position (due to the resignation of Kait Bujaki who is moving closer to family on the other side of the state), secondary science (a new position after completion of the secondary schedule) and secondary social studies (due to the resignation of James Finney, who is moving due to the relocation of his fiancée's work).

We are excited to have hired Aggie parent Kat Johnson to fill the elementary office paraprofessional position! We are still working to fill open paraprofessional positions and will be conducting interviews for the AD position in early June. We look forward to introducing new members of our Aggie Family soon!

We have been getting our new hires in for training as much as possible to ensure a smooth transition in each of these open positions for next fall.

Just a reminder that the superintendent evaluation committee meets between this meeting and the June meeting to review merit pay evidence.

### **POLICY WORK:**

**Update:** The Policy Committee met to review the Spring NEOLA policy updates and those are included in the Board agenda for discussion.

## **SAFETY:**

**Numbering:** As was recommended by safety experts in a training we attended a few years ago as well as by our local law enforcement, we have re-numbered all of our doors to include the new construction. We have also added a smaller number on windows to help identify specific classrooms from the outside. Thank you to Rick for making this happen.

## **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 and there are no anticipated changes for the remainder of the school year.

**Induction and Mentoring Program:** We held our final meeting of the year that is a culminating celebration where we honor teachers who have earned tenure, engage in reflection activities and where mentors share out about the growth of their mentees. It was a wonderful event and special education teacher Kelly Ryder was recognized for earning tenure.

## **TECHNOLOGY:**

**Purchases:** We will be purchasing new computers for the first floor lab in the high school, replacing some teacher workstation computers and also purchasing Promethean Boards, as was shared previously. The Promethean Board purchase requires Board approval according to our policy and state law because it exceeds the current state purchasing threshold. These are purchased through REMC, a regional educational purchasing consortium, so this purchase meets all bid requirements. One-time state and/or federal funds will be used to pay for these boards, which will be placed in elementary and MS classrooms as well as in the band room. All of our classrooms will be outfitted with this technology after this purchase. These boards have proven to be as beneficial as we had hoped when we purchased them initially for the high school classrooms and we are excited for the chance to bolster instruction through their broader use.

## **Upcoming Dates of Note:**

\*Last Day of School: May 28 with staff celebration immediately following school at 11:30 am

\*Budget Hearing/June Board Meeting: June 28

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