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Gwen Carman, Superintendent
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Superintendent's Report to the School Board
Respectfully Submitted by Gwen Carman
August 9, 2021

Meeting Agenda Item Notes

Principal Reports at Beginning (Duplication of Good Things Happening): The principals' reports will be near the beginning of the agenda, and I am removing 'Good Things Happening.' The reason for this is that there is often duplication in their reports and the 'happening' items. The principals and I will be diligent about including 'Good Things' in our reports.

Return to School Safe Learning Plan I will have a presentation, followed by Public Comment. The Plan will also be on the agenda for you to discuss and then vote to support or modify it. I want to assure you developing the recommendations has been difficult and I have wavered back and forth because no matter what is decided, some staff and parents will not support it. In the end, I hope any decisions can be based on the goals/priorities I outlined. I also want to assure you I will fully support and implement whatever is decided.

Student Activity Accounts Now Part of Treasury Report: The Student Activity Accounts are now part of the General Fund bank account and so are now documented in report differently. Let me know if you have questions about this.

2021-22 Handbooks: This agenda includes recommendations to approve two handbooks. The Employee Handbook is a 'new' handbook that consolidates many provisions that apply to all staff, regardless of their employee group. It is my hope that will provide current and new employees a single location to learn about common practices, procedures and policies.

Activities Director Menk is also submitting a 2021-22 Coaches Handbook. The major change in this handbook is that the criteria/process for determining eligibility is modified. This change was recommended by Mr. Menk, Principal Hanson and I to the Activities Steering Committee who supported these changes. The 'balance' in this is adhering to MSHSL requirements, holding students accountable and assuring they are on track to graduate, while also assuring we are promoting activities involvement and not 'penalizing' excessively the students who choose to be in these activities.

I am asking the Board to have a Special Meeting on August 23rd at 6:00pm do the Support Staff Wages and Benefits Handbook, At-Will Contracts, the Elementary/Intermediate Staff Handbook and the High School Student and Staff Handbook can be reviewed and approved. The delay is necessary because of the significant changes to the support staff handbook and needing time to talk individually with the staff impacted by those changes, and the principals need to incorporate the Safe Learning Plan information into their handbooks.

Fixed Asset Capitalization Threshold Board policy requires the District Office to maintain a capital items inventory. Past practice has been to use a \$1000.00 value minimum threshold for this. Our Auditors support increasing this to \$5000 with Board approval.

Admission Prices to Home Varsity Games The changes on the agenda were again recommended by administration and are supported by the Activities Steering Committee. The ultimate goal is to enable more students to attend games, and to make sure the ‘season passes’ are truly ‘saving admission fees’ for those who purchase them, while also not being an excessively undercharged. We are committing to having athletic trainers at more (not all) events this year, and this will be a way to help fund those increased costs.

Community Education Transfer The recommended transfer will establish our School Readiness program with a ‘\$0.00’ fund balance at the end of FY21. School Readiness has operated at a significant deficit budget the past two years. This transfer will still leave the General Community Education Fund Balance at \$94,344.48. This year we will do in-depth analysis to determine what changes we may need to implement to avoid the ongoing School Readiness deficits.

High School Faculty Overloads: To better accommodate student schedules and class sizes, Dr. Hanson is recommending that three high school teachers be assigned an ‘overload’ pending Board approval. This means these teachers would not be assigned a ‘prep period’ but would instead teach during their prep period. Our intent is to establish a consistent payrate for overload teaching as part of the ongoing EdMN/L-A Master Agreement negotiations.

Additional Updates

Online Learning Application: Principal Riebel and I have been working with MDE to get approval as a K-6 Online Learning Provider. This would be using Edgenuity coursework with a L-A teacher as the daily contact.

MDE is now also encouraging districts to apply for provisional K-12 approval in the case of an extended situation that would require all students to stay home and receive online instruction from our L-A teachers. This application is due August 27th. I will be working with the principals on this process in the upcoming days.

“News from the Nest” Newsletter – Edition 1, August 2021 I am super excited that we are putting together a Back to School quality printed newsletter with information from all departments and grade levels. Our intent is to improve communication with our families AND to serve as a communication tool with community members. We are not planning to do a districtwide mailing with this newsletter but will assess that option for future newsletters (hopefully December and April). It will be distributed digitally as well as many printed copies for us to handout.

August 30th Board members are invited to attend our all staff breakfast and workshop trainings on Monday, August 30th. Breakfast will begin at 7:30am in the high school cafeteria. The workshop will begin at 8:00am in the gym. This will include a ‘Welcome Back & Updates’ from me, a few annual/required annual trainings and an informational training for all staff by Dan Buck from OutFront Minnesota. Mr. Buck’s training will provide staff basic information/definitions of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer) and how we can be sure we are providing a school environment that assures all students and staff feel welcomed, respected and emotionally safe.

InGensa Workshop Session August 11th The 5:30pm Workshop Session (less formal, no action taken) is going to provide you LOTS of information about the Facilities Assessment process so far. This will include identified needs and priorities with estimated costs, current school property tax information including comparisons to area school districts, property tax impacts of various amounts of dollars. Please plan to listen and learn! 😊

MSBA Workshops: MSBA is offering:

- Phase III: Building a High-Performance School Board Team (focuses on methods of decision-making, stages of board development, navigating board dynamics, small-group interactions with school board video scenarios, and the MSBA School Board Self-Evaluation) .
 - Part A — 9 a.m. to noon Thursday, September 9, 2021 (virtual)
 - Part B — 9 a.m. to noon Thursday, September 16, 2021 (virtual)

- Phase IV: Representing Your Community Through Policy and Engagement (focuses on in-depth discussions and examples of a board member's role as a policymaker and interactive small-group sessions that walk through an actual community engagement activity. This workshop will also have a segment on dealing with the media and public forums.)
 - Part A — 9 a.m. to noon Thursday, September 23, 2021 (virtual)
 - Part B — 9 a.m. to noon Thursday, September 30, 2021 (virtual)

You do not need to attend Phase III before Phase IV. Let me know if you would like to attend and I will get you registered (and maybe attend with you).