



PIPESTONE AREA SCHOOLS

District No. 2689

Dr. Klint W. Willert, Superintendent
Sonja Ortman, MS/HS Principal
Jennifer Moravetz, Elementary Principal
Len Burzynski, Maintenance Director
Lisa Pease, Coordinator of Curriculum, Teaching & Learning, and Continuous Improvement

Jacque Kennedy, Business Manager
Rick Zollner, Activities Director
Josh Stukel, Technology Director
Kim Tuin, Food Service Director

School Board Report – February 2025

We can reflect on the winter thus far and sum it up in one word – cold! However, we will see what March will bring.

Here are few items of note for the board this month. As always, if you have questions, please let me know.

1. Quiver Quips – I continue to do a monthly internal staff communication titled “Quiver Quips”. I have used this as an additional communications tool to provide staff with information updates on a variety of items including our grant, the work of the board, some general reflections, as well as information on educational innovations and change. I have received positive feedback on the tool as we continue to work on improved communications throughout the district.
2. Special Board Workshop – On February 27, 2025 we will hold a workshop meeting on special education information and programming. The special board meeting will include a presentation by representatives from the Service Cooperative and allow time for some questions and answers. I have asked the building principals to be present to help respond to questions. We cannot discuss any specific cases and/or situations to ensure we protect student privacy. However, we can discuss things such as what an individualized education plan is, the process in special education identification, and programming supports for special needs learners. I will also briefly touch on 504 and 504 programming.
3. Budget Preparation – The district continues to hear rather dismal news regarding the state of the budget at the state level. The district administrative team is starting some work to consider certain positions in the district and determine the possibility of budget reduction recommendations at a future board meeting.
4. Educational Support Professionals (ESP) Negotiations – We are still in the process of negotiating with the Educational Support Professionals in the district. The board received a request for a meeting with the group. Unfortunately, the ESP group was unable to meet in February, thus extending the process even further. The next negotiations meeting is set for Monday, March 17, 2025. The last best offer provided by the board includes the following:
 - Request by Association to update language on membership and Dues Deduction
 - Changes to distribution of longevity pay for district commitment
 - Additional compensation for custodians who obtain boilers license
 - Additional compensation for custodians checking the boiler - \$25 per day, \$50 over weekend and \$75 per holiday weekend
 - Increase 403B retirement account match by \$100 per year for each earning level
 - Acknowledgement employees may take a few unpaid days of leave
 - Add Juneteenth as a paid holiday (from 12 paid holidays to 13 paid holidays)
 - Free activity tickets for ESP employees
 - Earned Safe and Sick Time implemented in excess of state requirements by transferring previous sick leave to ESST time.
 - Bonus compensation for custodial staff who may obtain boiler license.

“Inspire life-long learners. Build Character. Prepare them for their future.”

Current compensation offer:

\$1.00 per hour increase year 1 compared to ESP wanting \$0.75 per hour

\$0.75 per hour increase in year 2 compared to ESP wanting \$0.75 per hour

Maintain longevity compensation as determined from previous contractual negotiations.

Additional final offer includes the new language as outlined (however, the ESP negotiators would accept a lower hourly rate increase of \$0.75 per hour rather than \$1.00 per hour increase to remove the proposed language):

NEW LANGUAGE PROPOSED BY THE BOARD ~ This language is similar to language in the teacher master agreement and would allow the district to hire and compensate new employees for previous experience in a similar roles and duties.

Initial Placement on Schedule: ESP staff with previous experience in the Pipestone Area School District shall, upon returning to the District within twenty-four months, receive full credit their rate of compensation for their previous experience. Accumulated sick leave will not be granted to the staff member. ESP staff who retire but are subsequently rehired shall have their rate of compensation determined by the District and no accumulated sick leave shall be given. The Exclusive Representative recognizes that credit may be given for new hires for work experience relevant to the assignment, as negotiated between the School District and the applicant (not to exceed an amount 10% less the rate of compensation of existing employees with similar years of experience).

5. Calendar – The calendar committee has met one time and will meet again to finalize the calendars. We are reviewing and revising the previously presented 2025-26 calendar and creating the 2026-27 calendar. I am hoping to present these for board action at the March board meeting.
6. Training – Tyler and I attended the MSBA negotiations workshop in Marshall at the Service Cooperative. I found the training to be very good and insightful. The MSBA representatives provided valuable information about the process, considerations, and future considerations districts will need to address in light of recent legislation.
7. Building HVAC Challenges at MS/HS – Len and his team have been working through a few building challenges. We have placed some temporary heaters in vestibules due to concerns about the very cold temperatures. We have also continued to work with Trane on ensuring the fan units and the other parts of our system. It is my hope that we can have a thorough review of the HVAC system this summer and put together an action plan on how we can ensure the system is functioning as it should.
8. Repeater – We are in conversation with several other agencies about adding a radio repeater to the district facilities. This would give us the opportunity to enhance communications within the building, particularly during times of emergency. This may require a shared financial commitment from the district. At this time, we are still in discussion and discovery on this communication solution.
9. Workplace Culture Survey – We are in the process of completing a culture survey with staff. The survey is a quick, 10 question survey, to gather some input on areas that influence our workplace culture. I will provide a summary of the survey for the staff and publish it in the Quiver Quips and will share a summary of the survey with the board at the March meeting.
10. Profile of a Graduate Meeting – We are locked in on March 19 and March 20 to initiate our Profile of a Graduate work. It is my hope that the profile will become our new district strategic plan. I have asked our facilitators from KnowledgeWorks to incorporate the requirements of the Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness of Minnesota into the work. As a frame of reference for the board, here is a link to the requirements of Minnesota's Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness - [World's Best Workforce/Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness](#).

That is all I have at this time. Remember, we are one day closer to spring!