

Superintendent's Update

For the period: June 15, 2016 through July 12, 2016

Maintaining an Instructional Focus (Summer Programs)

- Summer has been a busy time for the school district in terms of curriculum and summer activities. SBE (Standards Based Education) committee met in June to focus on instructional alignment concerns for the K-12 curriculum. They started on June 6th with a focus on creating a writing framework for the school district. This committee worked for two weeks in June this summer.
- Our summer school programs started up on June 7th, we will have a brief presentation on all of our summer programs at the board meeting on the 12th.

Construction Progress

- Construction on the vocational technical building at the high school continues and should be “dried in” soon. The construction site supervisor for Swank continued to assure us that we are on track to have the facility operational before the new school year starts.
- The BES boiler system is underway, so the replacement of this boiler can be completed this summer.
- Demolition for K-3 playground project as well as the preparations for the William Buffalo Hide remodel project are underway.
- There is an important Facilities Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, July 14th at 5:00 pm.

MQEC Update

- Mr. Rouse will be attending another MQEC Board meeting in Helena on August 15th (The July meeting was cancelled) as this group continues to move forward with a lawsuit in response to the passage of SB 410 and the subsequent rules developed by the Montana Department of Revenue. Senate Bill 410 passed by the 2015 Legislature, established a tax credit for individuals wishing to contribute to K-12 public schools and K-12 private, non-parochial schools. The bill called for the program to be established in accordance with Article V., Section 11(5) and Article X, Section 6(1) of the Montana Constitution, which prohibit the direct or indirect appropriations or payment from any public fund to any sectarian or religious purpose. Accordingly, the Department of Revenue rules that manage the program exclude church-affiliated schools from participation.

Negotiations

- Negotiations with the classified staff member's union are continuing. The Union offered a package proposal calling for salary increases in the amounts of 3%, 3%, and 4% with step increases along with a number of lane change requests and no change to the health insurance which would mean that the district would have to continue absorb an additional \$144 per month per employee to cover our costs for insurance. Their proposal would cost the school district an additional \$1.8 million over the term of the agreement. This reflects a 19.84% change with an average salary increase for the classified workers of over \$14,000. Some individuals would receive as much as a \$31,000 increase in salary by 2017-18.
- The administration rejected this proposal because the school district could simply not afford to fund it. We offered a compromise package proposal on behalf of the district that included salary

increases and addressed the insurance funding issue. The administration's proposal included a \$0.42 per hour "across the board" increase for all classified workers as retro pay for 2015-16. That is a 2.7% increase in their current salaries. For 2016-17, we offered an additional 5.53% increase in salary. Our intent was to provide enough of a salary increase so that no employee would lose income as the district sets a cap on its insurance contribution at \$950 per month for all employees. Capping the insurance contribution at \$950 would mean that the employees would have to contribute \$144 per month for health insurance coverage (currently for the entire family or single employee).

- We have additional negotiation dates set for July 18th and 25th in order to try to reach an agreement with the classified employee union.

Upcoming Activities

- Mr. Rouse will be remaining in Helena to attend the IISM conference on July 19-20th.
- Mr. Rouse and Jercy Matt are scheduled to attend an OPI E-Grants training on the ESSA application preparation process for 2016-17 in Helena on July 28th.
- Both Jercy Matt and John Rouse are also scheduled to attend a one-day leadership training session in Helena on July 26th.
- We have our first budget workshop scheduled for the Board on August 1st at 5:00 pm.