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Superintendent's Report to the School Board
Submitted by Gwen Carman
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Meeting Agenda Item Notes

Completion of Work in Press Box: Attached to the agenda is a letter to licensed building contract Jeff Mueller to complete the interior finishes of the Press Box. Under this Agreement, he would complete the work as a volunteer, the district would purchase the materials. In exchange, he would be allowed to use one of the spaces in the press box to view four of five home games for the 2021 football season. The fifth game is allocated the Booster Club who use the booth as a fund raiser. We will need to develop a plan for subsequent seasons on how we want to determine use of the press box.

Summer 2021 COVID-19 Preparedness Plan/Public Comment School districts are required to develop a plan for employees and students regarding healthy and safety protocols for COVID-19. The prior Safe Learning Plan guidance expired on the district's last contract day for teachers, and MDE and MDH issued updated guidance for summer school, child care, large group gatherings, sports. The attached is a proposed plan for the summer. With the most recent ESSER III funding, districts are also required to receive public input on their plans at least every 6-months. One of the agenda items will be to take public comment. This plan is developed using the recommendations of MDH and MDE. The plan takes into account that students ages 12 –15 cannot be fully vaccinated until June 24th and students 12 and younger are currently unable to be vaccinated.

Technology Use Agreement and Policies The option to charge parents a 'fee' for insurance for students' technology devices when then take them home has been discussed before. Certainly, the pandemic and the onset of distant learning significantly increased our reliance on students having devices, and we also saw an increase in damage to the devices. While normal wear and occasional accidental damage are expected, obvious intentional damage to a school owned tablet is not acceptable. The proposed is a way to address this.

Additional Updates

End of 20-21 School Year Like all school years, the end of the year was hectic and exciting. Of course, this year was particularly significant because of all of the unique challenges this school year had and many were particularly 'ready' to see the year close. Thank you to the principals and staff for their perseverance and positive attitudes. But there is widespread agreement that it was great to have so many more year end activities than was possible one year ago. Many of the activities were modified to account for masking and social distancing but good times were still had by all!

Ehlers Investment Advisory Process Update This week, Teresa, John-Mark and I met with individuals from Ehlers, Financial to heard information and updates on the process. They have been looking at our cyclical cash flow (revenues and expenditures) which enables them to provide us information on when there are potential opportunities to do short term investments, vs keeping the funds in a bank where we gain very little interest. Any recommendations for investing will be based on an assumption of a conservative need for cash on hand to assure we always have the funds we need to pay our bills and payroll. We anticipate having specific information to share with the Board next month.

MN Legislative Session The extension of the legislature to have a Special Session on June 14th for an unknown duration, leaves school districts in ‘limbo’ in regards to knowing any financial changes that may impact the next biennium. The Governor, House and Senate each have different proposals that would impact schools in multiple areas. If final information is not known prior to our June 28th Special Meeting to approve next year’s budget, we will likely have to assume ‘no increases’ when we set the budget.

Facility Assessment Update As planned Luke from InGensa has visited multiple times with various professionals to fully assess the conditions and needs of our facilities. Rochelle and Luke also met with each buildings staff to discuss needs and staff and students in grades 5-12 were able to complete an online survey. The InGensa team will meet with the Board June 28th so that you can also provide your input. As you know, our ultimate goal is to develop a strategic plan with goals and work plan to guide our future decision making for the district.

2020 Graduation Rates: This week MDE released school districts’ 2020 graduation rates data. This is data is based on the ‘cohort’ of students who were freshmen in our district in 2016-17 and those students who enroll and are placed in that cohort subsequently. There are specific things MDE does in special circumstances for students who are highly mobile or drop out after enrolling less than a half a year, and students who choose to ‘continue’ after their cohort graduates.

Our district’s average percent graduating used for accountability purposes was 91.77%. Additional, noteworthy data is that our ‘white student’ rate was 96.49%; our ‘Hispanic student’ rate was 50%, and our ‘English learner students’ was 0%. This data reflects the needs and challenges of our Hispanic/non-English speaking students. This is an important discussion as we plan strategies to support all students.

Curriculum Coordinator Position The position was advertised internally for all teachers to apply for. We received two applications and the principals and I interviewed both. Both candidates were excellent but ultimately, we offered the position to Sarah Behrendt. Sarah has a strong background in curriculum development and many specific ideas on how we can best achieve our goals and support teachers in this work. We are having an initial planning meeting on June 12th. We will update the Board in detail in August. Again, the administration will be working very closely with Sarah and the teachers on this work.