

Dale's School Board Meeting Recap

November 16, 2020 School Board Meeting

Our Mission Together

**Empowering students with
knowledge and skills to succeed.**

Our Vision

**To be the school district of choice, inspiring
excellence in academics, arts, and activities.**

NOTE: This review is authored by the Superintendent, intended as information for the District employees, to keep them informed of the important decisions made by the School Board. This review includes selected items as determined by the Superintendent, and does not include all items of business conducted by the Board. This review is not intended to replace the official minutes of the School Board. Additional information can always be obtained from the official Board minutes or by contacting Dale.

Student Achievement and Support

2020-2021 School Year Learning Model Update: The Board extended the distance learning period for the Secondary School through Friday, December 4, with a tentative date of Monday, December 7, to return to hybrid learning. The Elementary School will remain in hybrid learning at this time.

Status of Co-Curricular, Athletic, and Community Education Activities While in Distance Learning: The Board took action for all the fall season activities to compete their season. The Board delayed the start of the winter season sports activities and all other school activities through Saturday, December 5, with a tentative start date of Monday, December 7. Clarification was given regarding the Community Education Competitive Cheer Program and to allow Cheer to continue their season through the December 5 scheduled competition. Guidance on continuing beyond December 5 will align with the planned start date for winter activities on December 7. If the delayed start to winter activities is extended beyond December 7, then Cheer would be suspended at that time as well.

****NOTE – The status of activities may change Wednesday, November 18, after learning of anticipated guidance from the Governor’s Office.**

2019-2020 World’s Best Workforce (WBWF) Summary Report: Jessica Williams (Teaching & Learning Support Specialist) and Principals Doug Anderson and Dave Bunn reported out on progress made on the District’s 2019-2020 WBWF plan. Annually, the School Board is to hold an annual public meeting to communicate plans for the upcoming school year based on a review of goals, outcomes and strategies from the previous year. The meeting is to occur separately from a regularly scheduled school board meeting. However, given that the Minnesota Department of Education recently released its update guidance on completing and submitting our progress report for the 2019-2020 school year, there was not time to schedule and hold a special school board meeting prior to the time district’s must submit the report electronically. Thank you Jessica for your leadership with our WBWF reporting and planning.

The 2020-2021 WBWF plan will be presented to the Board for approval at the December 21 School Board meeting. A draft of the plan is being finalized and will be shared with staff in the coming weeks.

Facilities

Use of School Facilities by Non-School District Sponsored Organizations During Distance Learning and/or Pandemic: The Board took action to not allow any facility use by non-school district sponsored organizations through December 5, and as long as winter activities are delayed if beyond December 7.

Workforce

Teacher 2020 Seniority List and License Expiration Dates: The Board approved the 2020 Seniority List. Under Article XI of the Teacher Master Agreement, “The School Board shall annually cause a seniority list (by name, date of employment, qualifications and licensure tier, subject matter or field and current assignments) to be prepared from its records. It shall thereupon post such list in an official place in each school building of the District not later than October 31 of each school year. Each teacher will review the list and, if in agreement with the order of seniority and the license expiration date, indicate so by initialing near his or her name.”

The seniority list was available in the staff break rooms in each building and also available online to review.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Teacher’s Association to Address Executive Order 20-94 and 20-95: The Board approved a MOU with the Teacher’s Association that responds to the Governor’s Emergency Executive Orders (EO) 20-94 and 20-95 specific to Paragraph 9 that states:

Upon approval by the Executive Council, as soon as is practicable but no later than November, 30, 2020, a school district or charter school must count 30 minutes per day for teacher preparation to provide instruction to students in distance learning or a distance learning or hybrid learning model, as instructional time toward meeting the minimum hours required by Minnesota Statutes 2019, section 120A.41. This teacher preparation time is for students receiving instruction in distance learning or a distance learning or hybrid model. This time is in addition to the school district's or charter school's teacher preparation time established under Minnesota Statutes 2019, section 122A.50.

Highlights of the approved MOU include:

- An additional 30 minutes per day (average) provided for teacher preparation to provide instruction to students in distance learning or a distance learning or hybrid learning model.
- 150 minutes of preparation time scheduled for each Wednesday from 12:35 – 3:05. Students will be dismissed at 12:35 pm. (The student dismissal time is still being finalized. While a building is in distance learning on Wednesdays, the dismissal time might be closer to 12 noon to allow a 30-minute lunch for teachers.)
- The revised Wednesday schedule will begin on November 25

Principals are in the process of communicating the schedule change to students and families.

Finance

Donations -- We are fortunate to have community members, organizations, and businesses who make donations to the school district. Often the donations are designated toward specific programs or activities. The Board approved the following donations.

Jim & Sandra Finseth	Skeleton for use in Health Sciences	
NRHEG PTO	Bridges Intervention	\$3,161.85
NRHEG PTO	Leveled Readers	\$3,161.00
Finly's Wings at Work	2 Portable AED Machines	
	Treadmill for HS Fitness Room	
	Benches for Elementary	\$8,500.00
United Way	Angel Fund (Lunch)	<u>\$2,000.00</u>
	Total	\$16,822.85
	Total to Date	\$20,009.00

2019-2020 Audit Report: The Board approved the audit report as presented by Erin Enstad from Abdo, Eick, & Meyers. One notable area of the audit report to bring to your attention is the change in the District's General Fund when compared to the revised budget the Board approved last May. In May, the Board approved a revised budget to end the year that reflected a planned surplus of approximately \$124,413. The audit ending June 30, 2020, showed an actual surplus of about \$181,329 for a difference of about \$56,916. You may recall that we reported out in May that the planned 2019-2020 deficit budget last revised in February had improved to reflect the \$124,000+ surplus in large part due to a reduction in expenses related to COVID-19. The confirmed surplus from the audit was not a surprise and I credit Karla Christopherson for projecting in May how the year would end and be so close. To be off by only \$56,000+ in a \$10 million budget is pretty good. Nice work Karla!

What does this mean for 2020-2021? I speak more about this below as the Board also approved its first revised 2020-2021 budget.

2020-2021 Budget Revisions: The Board approved recommended revisions to the planned 2020-2021 budget as called for in the Budget Development Calendar. Last May, the Board approved a planned deficit 2020-2021 budget that projected an unassigned general fund deficit in the amount of \$194,887. At the Board meeting, the Board approved a revised budget projecting a General Fund deficit in the amount of \$182,185. Remember that this projected deficit is in addition to about \$160,000 in budget reductions of planned expenditures for this school year. Do not confuse the 2019-2020 budget result with the 2020-2021 projected budget as we continue to believe the last quarter of 2019-2020 was an outlier in our budget work due to the sudden and unexpected pandemic impact.

As our auditor reported to the Board last night, it is too early to tell the full extent COVID-19 might have on our 2020-2021 budget. We do know our enrollment is down which has a negative impact on revenue as student enrollment is the primary driver for revenue. At the same time, we have benefited from about \$300,000 in federal CARES Act funding which provides a buffer right now with the decrease in enrollment. However, it is too early to tell what is going to happen the remainder of 2020-2021. If there is a positive to all this, we continue to be well positioned with a favorable fund balance for the immediate future due in large part to the fourth quarter of 2019-2020. However, we still project deficit spending for this school year and the deficit spending will only get more significant in the years to come unless we make changes to increase revenue through increased enrollment or operational levy and/or reduce our expenditures. With the recent failed operational referendum, the Board will be convening in the coming weeks and months to develop a financial plan for moving forward.

While we have somewhat of a buffer in our district “savings account” to withstand the uncertainty of this school year, there will have to be intentional actions taken to address our financial situation for the long-term looking out at least five years. More to come . . .

2020-2021 Staff Development Funding Waiver: The Board approved the waiver amount of \$45,000 approved by the Teacher Association. Per Minnesota Statute 122A.61: *Reserved Revenue for Staff Development*, public schools in Minnesota must reserve 2% of a district’s basic revenue for:

- Teacher development and evaluation
- Principal development and evaluation
- Professional development
- In-service education for programs

Staff development revenue may be used for “staff development plans, . . . curriculum development and programs, other in-service education, teachers’ mentoring and evaluation, teachers’ workshops, teacher conferences, the cost of substitute teachers for staff development purposes, preservice and in-service education for special education professionals and paraprofessionals, and other related costs for staff development efforts.”

However, the statute allows a school district to annually waive the requirement to reserve their basic revenue if a majority vote of the licensed teachers in the district and a majority vote of the school board agree to a resolution to waive the requirement. The Board approved the decision by the majority of our licensed teachers to waive the requirement by not reserving a portion of the required 2% in the amount of \$45,000 for the 2020-2021 school year which represents about 0.75 % of the basic revenue, or about 37.5% of the reserved 2%.

The \$45,000 approved by the Association and Board compares to the previous years of \$49,000 in 2019-2020, \$50,000 in 2018-2019, \$72,000 in 2017-2018, and \$72,615 in 2016-2017.

Board Governance

Ceremonial Oath of Office for JoAnn Maloney: JoAnn Maloney took the oath of office at Monday's meeting. MN Statute 23B.09 states: "*If the vacancy is filled by a special election, the person elected at that election for the ensuing term shall take office immediately after receiving the certificate of election, filing the bond, and taking the oath of office.*" For candidates elected to serve a four-year term, they take office "*commencing on the first Monday in January and until a successor qualifies.*" Mrs. Engel, Mr. Schoenrock and Mr. Schmidt will take their ceremonial oath of office at the January 4, 2021, Organizational Meeting.

Policy 533 (Wellness) 2nd Reading: The Board approved the 2nd reading of the Wellness policy.

Resolution to Combine Polling Places: The Board approved the following resolution.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 205A.11, the precincts and polling places for school district elections are those precincts or parts of precincts located within the boundaries of the school district which have been established by the cities or towns located in whole or in part within the school district. The board must confirm those precincts and polling places so established by those municipalities.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 205A.11, the board may establish a combined polling place for several precincts for school district elections not held on the day of a statewide election. If the Board decides to combine polling places, it must do so annually prior to December 31. Each combined polling place must be a polling place that has been designated by a county or municipality. The following combined polling places are established to serve the precincts specified for all school district special and general elections not held on the same day as a statewide election:

Combined Polling Place: New Richland Secondary School, New Richland, Minnesota

This combined polling place serves all territory in Independent School District No. 2168 located in Waseca County; and the City of Hartland and Hartland Township in Freeborn County, Minnesota.

Combined Polling Place: Ellendale Elementary School, Ellendale, Minnesota

This combined polling place serves all territory in Independent School District No. 2168 located in Steele County; and the City of Geneva and Bath, Geneva and Freeborn Townships in Freeborn county, Minnesota.

Miscellaneous

Statewide Enrollment Options: The Board approved the following enrollment options:

- One student from another district, choosing to attend our District. Six students recently moved to our District but choosing to remain in their current district.