

Superintendent Report

School Board Meeting
December 18, 2017

Our Mission

Empowering students with knowledge and skills to succeed.

Our Vision

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

The Superintendent Report summarizes the communication with the Board of Education (BOE) throughout the month including the weekly District Status Report. In addition, the Report includes the building administrator reports as well as other information believed to be beneficial to the work of the BOE and school district. Detailed information for the items listed under the District Status Report Summary can be found within each weekly Status Report from the District's website. I appreciate feedback as to how we can improve the report. Thank you.

1. Weekly District Status Report Summary from November 17 & 22, and December 1 & 8.

A. Information, Communication, and Correspondence

- **News from Around the State and Beyond**

Safety: How mass shootings are forcing schools to re-evaluate safety

Early education: New report shows that reaching infants and toddlers reduces special education placement, leads to soaring graduation rates

Report: Cyber criminals targeting schools "all across the nation"

Study: 8 to 10 hours of sleep best for teens

Can financial incentives change test scores?

Curriculum: Kindergarten is the new preschool

Curriculum: Yoga? Robotics? Students get their choice twice a week

Funding: Minnesota companies invest in high schools to boost vocational, engineering and other high-demand work

PISA results rank collaborative problem-solving

How schools are redesigning learning spaces

Report: A punishing decade for school funding

Is there a new "S" in STEM?

Politics: Minnesota's projected budget deficit is already souring expectations for the 2018 legislative session

Research: Early test scores don't predict future academic growth

Testing: U.S. students comprehend information better online than on paper

Schools help students learn outside of class

Education leaders look toward 2018, beyond

- **MSBA Annual Leadership Conference**
- **Credit Card and Online Lunch Payments**
- **South Central Service Cooperative (SCSC) Board Elections**
- **Building and Grounds Committee Meeting Summary**
- **Unpaid Student Meal Charges and Board Policy Revision**
- **New Family Services Coordinator**
- **Band Parent Meeting to be Held on a Sunday**

2. Elementary and Secondary Principal Reports

3. Curriculum and Instruction Report

4. *Board & Administrator for Board Members Monthly Publication – November 2017 Reflection - I* have provided a brief reflection on a few of the articles from the November publication. I hope you have had an opportunity to read and reflect.

- Encourage high-quality board decision-making – The article offers seven (7) techniques to encourage high-quality board decisions:
 1. Be sure board has complete information ahead of time
 2. Discuss pros and cons of issue
 3. Don't rule out compromise
 4. Answer all board questions
 5. Be sensitive to the different board member personalities and experiences
 6. Table issues if board needs more time
 7. Focus on mission and belief statements to clarify board direction
- President selects committee chairs – The article offers strategies for the board chair to consider when appointing committee chairs. Although our current practice does not include appointing committee chairs, the strategies may be beneficial when appointment committee members including:
 - ✓ Be sensitive of individual “agendas”
 - ✓ Included individuals with different opinions that represent stakeholders
 - ✓ Match board members skills, interests, and talents with committee work
- The board's advocacy efforts can make a difference – The article promotes the thought that board members make the best advocates for the school district. It offers tips on how to be most effective in “lobbying.”
- How are your communications to the community? – The article shares characteristic behaviors of boards with effective communication with the community including:
 - ✓ Establish and use a key communicators system.
 - ✓ Involve community in strategic and long-range planning.
 - ✓ Establish policy, and follow it, for well-functioning board meetings.
 - ✓ Establish communications policy, and follow it.
 - ✓ Provide opportunities to get parents into the school.
 - ✓ Watch board meeting room set-up and body language during meetings.
 - ✓ Be leaders. Provide the vision. Be creative and articulate.
- Recommit yourself to board service – The article acknowledges the demanding work of a board member and offers helpful ideas to re-energize including:
 - ✓ Change your seat
 - ✓ Get to know board colleagues better
 - ✓ Don't over-analyze and “rehash” the same issue month after month
 - ✓ Board service should be fun, exiting, and rewarding as you affect the future of students!

5. Facility Planning Update – Karla Christopherson and I met with Rod Schumacher on December 6 to discuss next steps in the facility planning process including services ISG may be able to provide the School District in helping move forward with the development of a long-term facility plan. I plan to meet with Mr. Schumacher again on December 19. Also, staff have been meeting with building

principals discussing programming visions and facility impact. Principals will be putting together reports from those discussions to share with the Board later in January. I have made an initial contact with School Perceptions to discuss potential services in developing a communication plan. I will recommend the Board schedule a work session for the purpose of planning next steps that may include the development of a “task force” to assist the Board in the development of the plan.

6. **MSBA Annual Leadership Conference** – The 97th Annual Leadership Conference of the Minnesota School Boards Association will be held January 11-12, 2018, at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The Conference concludes at noon on Friday, January 12. Please contact Sue Kulseth or me if you have any questions regarding your registration or lodging arrangements. There is interest for the Board to meet for dinner Thursday evening. Reservations are being arranged.
7. **Concession Renovation** -- As the result of a recent inspection by Waseca County, there are a number of findings that need to be addressed pertaining to the offering of concessions at school activities. The Building and Grounds Committee was presented with a report at its November 28, 2017, Committee meeting. A priority is to address findings in the concession areas in the main lobby area of the high school gymnasium. To address the deficiencies, there needs to be some renovation work. The Committee approved having administration move forward with the necessary construction work. Funding will come from the Long Term Maintenance Fund. Administration is in the process of securing quotes for the project.
8. **Softball Field Parking Project Update** -- The Building and Grounds Committee approved moving forward with completing the project at a cost of approximately \$4,000. The project is completed.
9. **State Budget Forecast** – Below is a December 5 communication from MREA regarding the recent announcement of a projected state budget deficit.

Minnesota announced today a projected deficit of \$188 million for the current biennium, which ends on June 30, 2019. The forecast also shows a projected negative balance of \$586 million for the 2020-21 biennium.

The 2018-19 shortfall of \$188 million grows to \$302 million assuming the legislature will re-pass the operating budget that Gov. Mark Dayton line-item vetoed last summer. Governor Dayton has since said he will sign the operating budget into law if and when they present it to him next session.

The annual budget and economic forecast comes from the Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB). “Today’s forecast is a reality check,” MMB Commissioner Myron Frans said.

MMB officials noted that the projected deficits are due to a reduced U.S. economic growth forecast and impacts of enacted legislation during the 2017 session. They cite unknowns in federal policy as creating significant risk for this forecast. MMB officials and Governor Dayton said they will have more sound information in the February forecast to make decisions on.

Impact on E-12 Spending

The forecast does show a \$121 million increase in E-12 spending for the current biennium. This is a 0.6 percent increase on \$19 billion budget base. It is due to increases in special

education funding, based on larger special education enrollments and spending. The special education trend continues into the next biennium.

The forecast also shows room in the state's debt service that would allow for an \$800 million bonding bill in 2018. The state budget reserve is still at a healthy level of \$1.6 billion. These reserve funds could be used by the Governor to close any deficit that remains if he and the legislature are unable to come to terms next session.

Legislative Response

GOP legislative leaders responded to the forecast news with skepticism and said it was obsolete on arrival. They noted that even Governor Dayton said we need to wait until the February forecast to see what actually emerges at the federal level by way of tax cuts and children's health insurance (CHIPs) funding that have been promised.

They also noted that the forecast assumption of GDP growth in the mid to low 2 percent range does not reconcile with the last two fiscal quarters showing GDP growth above 3 percent.

Despite the different spin and perspectives from each camp, they all seemed to agree that we need to wait and see what Congress does at the end of this year and what exactly the February budget forecast shows.

Thank you for all you do!

Dale N. Carlson, Ph.D.