

# Superintendent Report

School Board Meeting  
February 21, 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 January 20, 27, and February 3 & 10.**

#### **A. Information, Communication, and Correspondence**

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

Politics: School choice, tax breaks for private school tuition debated

Politics: MSBA reacts to Gov. Dayton's education budget proposals

Politics: Sales tax exemption sought on tickets for Minnesota State High School League activities

Politics: Scholarship approach seen as option to promoting school choice

Does class rank matter?

Funding: GOP cool to Dayton's \$75 million plan to expand preschool

Research: Young girls are less apt to think that women are really smart

Politics: Proposed education tax adjustments create concerns

Calendar: Snow days have district considering how to make up for lost time

Caledonia Area: District to pilot digital learning days on February 20

Rushford-Peterson: School board addresses feedback concerning blended learning days

Stress: Taking on a toxic challenge — stress affects students' ability to learn

19 tips to improve school recess

When does optimal learning occur?

Report: More Minnesota teachers leaving jobs

Column: Don't misread report on Minnesota teachers leaving jobs

What do teens think about free speech?

Politics: Gov. Dayton touts new education spending goals, \$609 million increase over two years

Caledonia Area: School board votes to pilot a flexible learning day

- MSBA Officer Workshop
- MSBA Negotiation Seminars
- Board Member Quarterly Check-ins with Dale
- Meet and Confer Session
- Building and Grounds Committee
- School Board Work Session

- Board Member Quarterly Check-ins with Dale
- Meet and Confer Session
- Finance Committee Meeting
- Policy Committee
- Rural Kids Count Report -- From MREA
- Buddy Bench Project
- MREA Steps to Address Teacher Crisis -- From MREA
- Community Night Out

## 2. Building Administrator Reports

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

- Show your appreciation for staff, students – The article encourages board members to acknowledge staff and students who not only may attend and present to the board, but also for their work and accomplishments.
- Welcome patron feedback, but handle it properly – The article offers board members suggestion on how to respond to a stakeholder who has concerns. The article references the Oklahoma State School Boards Association’s advice to: “Listen carefully, then refer them to the appropriate person according to board policy.” The article reminds a board member that “the board as a whole may not support” the view of an individual board member, and cautions any individual board member to make commitments to stakeholders regarding a specific course of action.
- Keep governance-focused job descriptions handy -- The article recommends having easy access to job descriptions for the superintendent , board members, and board officers and standing board committees.
- Stay clear on the board’s role and the board member’s responsibilities – The article provides descriptions as to the board’s responsibilities compared to an individual board member. The article includes key points suggested by the Board Doctor to include in a board member’s job description.
- Board’s relationship to school staff: Are they happy?” isn’t a board issue – The article offers tips for setting guidelines for board members when it comes to management of the school district, including personnel issues, which should be reserved for the superintendent.

4. **Building and Grounds Committee Update** -- The Committee met on February 13, 2017, to review a draft of a lease agreement with the City of New Richland for continued use of the Legion ball fields. The Committee also reviewed an administrative recommendation to advance to the Board for the District to contact with a lawn service to maintain the Legion ball fields in the spring during the High School baseball and softball seasons.

5. **ISG Update** – ISG is currently examining facility records and maps. ISG plans to be in the district on March 30 & 31 assessing our facilities throughout the district.
6. **Committee Meetings Planned** – The Finance Committee plans to meet at 5:15 pm on Tuesday, February 21 prior to the start of the School Board meeting. The Policy Committee plans to meet at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, February 28, 2017.
7. **MSBA Negotiations Seminar Follow-up** – I have a copy of materials from the Negotiations Seminar that I would be happy to loan out to board members who are unable to attend a seminar.
8. **Paraprofessional Association Negotiations** – The first negotiations meeting with the Paraprofessional Association is planned for Monday, March 6, beginning at 5:30 pm in the Secondary School Media Center.
9. **Teacher Association Negotiations** - The first negotiations meeting with the Teacher Association is planned for Monday, March 27, beginning at 5:30 pm in the Secondary School Media Center.
10. **Community Night Out** – The annual Community Night Out Live and Silent Auction sponsored by the NRHEG Parent Teacher Organization is scheduled for Saturday, April 1, 2017, to be held at Wedgewood Cove in Albert Lea. The Community Night Out event fundraises for the purpose of contributing to the life of the School District in various ways with a primary focus on students. Participation at the event as well as donations are appreciated.
11. **Governor’s State Budget Proposal** – Last month, the Governor released his proposed budget for the next two years. The proposed budget invests more than \$600 million over the next biennium, which includes about \$370 million in general fund increase (2% increase on the formula each year amounting to about \$400,000 increase over the two years for our district), \$40 million increase in special education funding, \$75 million in voluntary pre-kindergarten funding, almost \$70 million in additional funding for pension relief, and another \$50 million for additional supports. Please let me know if you have specific questions as we follow the budget work at the state level in the coming weeks and months.
12. **MREA Testifies on Impact of Ag2School** – Below provides an update by MREA on the Ag2School tax credit.

MREA last week testified in support of the Ag2School tax credit that would help schools address the needs of their facilities while providing farmers much needed tax relief.

Ag2School would bring a fairer share of school facility taxes to farmers and private timber owners in 284 school districts across Minnesota without any impact on homeowners or businesses. [Learn more about Ag2School and view a map of impact.](#)

Gov. Mark Dayton announced the first week of session the proposal for the 40 percent credit on the taxes paid on farmland for school bonds. It was officially introduced at the Senate Tax Committee last week. [Learn more about Ag2School.](#)

One of the key elements in achieving Minnesota’s goal of developing the World’s Best Workforce is developing school facilities that equip 21st Century learners. Today, most of our school facilities fall short of what today’s learners need. Many of them are old and needing repair and upgrades so they assist teachers in providing learning environments where students

can thrive.

Ag2School would offset an inequitable amount of school facility funding provided by farmers by creating a 40 percent credit on the taxes paid on farmland for school bonds. [View map of impact.](#) [View issue brief on Ag2School.](#)

### **Impact of Ag2School**

- Create Fairer State Share in 284 school districts.
- Provide a credit for all existing and future local school district debt levies.
- Deliver \$40 million tax relief in 2018. That includes greater than \$225,000 aggregate relief each in 68 school districts and over \$100,000 aggregated relief in another 79 school districts.
- Account for rising ag land values that still had a historic high median sale price of \$4,611 in 2015. The average price per acre for ag land in Minnesota increased 719 percent since 1990, from \$705 per acre to \$5,071 in 2013.
- Assist school districts with older facilities. In school districts with over 75 percent ag land value, the school facilities are 51 years old on average. That's 11 years older than the state average and close to the 60-year life expectancy for school buildings.
- Enable rural communities to hold civic conversations about educational effectiveness and energy efficiency of their aging school facilities.

### **Why It's Needed**

About half of the state's schools were built before 1976, prior to the digital revolution and 25 percent are between 54 and 125 years old.

- Local taxpayers contribute 97-100 percent to build and remodel educational facilities.
- The state contributes at most 3 percent, which supports only 44 school districts and leaves our remaining 288 districts 100 percent dependent on local tax support for their facilities.
- Bond elections are increasingly difficult to pass in rural Minnesota. In 2015-16, school districts asked voters 97 bond ballot questions. 41 percent rural questions passed, and 81 percent metro questions passed.
- Agriculture land values still greatly impact who pays for facilities in rural Minnesota: 20 percent of districts have at least 75 percent of their net tax property wealth in agriculture land and one-third have 50 percent in ag land.

Ag2School is among the strategies outlined in the [Rural Kids Count Report](#) to address the school funding inequity in Minnesota.

Thank you for all you do!

Dale N. Carlson, Ph.D.  
Superintendent