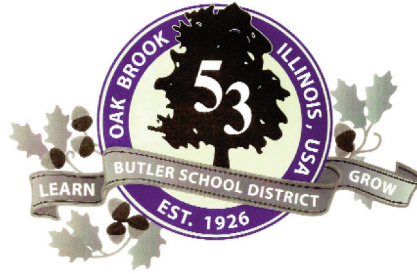


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2801 York Rd., Oak Brook
District Office: 630-573-2887
Fax: 630-573-5374
www.Butler53.com



Butler School District 53

Board Report

A news report of the Oct. 16, 2017 Board of Education meeting

New funding formula for schools

The Board heard an update from Business Manager Dr. Sandra Martin on the new formula for state funding, called the Evidence-Based Funding formula. The shift has critical ramifications for Butler District 53. The new formula replaces five grants and recalculates state funding based on factors such as student achievement and a district's capacity to fund education.

Using this formula, called a Local Capacity Target, school districts will be grouped into four buckets or tiers from the most needy to the wealthiest. Butler would be in the fourth bucket, which means it would receive .01 percent in new funding as it is available. Other provisions of the bill require districts to submit a complex new report on its spending, provide relief from the state mandate requiring PE and allow taxpayers to submit to referendum to reduce the education fund levy. Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom said that the District will plan communications for its staff and community on how this major shift will affect its schools.

Board hires facilitator for strategic planning

The Board continued its discussion on the strategic plan and voted 4-3 to hire an outside consultant to facilitate community engagement and develop a framework related to the plan. The consultant, Hazard, Young and Attea (HYA) with the ECRA Group, will conduct surveys, focus groups and interviews; compile and analyze the data to identify themes and trends; create a broad outline to guide direction; and develop an implementation plan.

Some board members advocated that the work be done in-house, citing the cost and expertise of the administration and saying that the Board and administration had already started a framework. Other Board Members said it was best practice to hire outside experts, that a neutral third party would be a benefit and that the expense (\$19,000) was reasonable to gain community and teacher input into the future goals of the school district.

Board honors principals, assistant principals

The Board honored its principals and assistant principals as part of National Principals Month and Illinois Appreciation Week Oct. 15-21. Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom said that principals play a critical role in the education and growth of students. "They create learning environments that spark innovation and enthusiasm for learning." Principals' jobs have changed dramatically over the last couple of years where students have to be consumers of information, creators of knowledge and need to employ complex thinking. Dr. Wennstrom commended the District's principals and assistant principals for being flexible, resilient and for building a culture that values each and every child.

Midwest Club petition goes to circuit court

The Board heard an update on the Midwest Club petition to de-annex from school districts 58 and 99 and annex into Butler District 53 and Hinsdale 86. The Regional Board of School Trustees had voted in July not to approve the annexation petition and most recently, the group of Midwest residents have petitioned the Circuit Court for a reversal of that decision. Business Manager Dr. Sandra Martin said the courts review the hearing documents and no new evidence can be admitted, therefore it is unlikely that the lower court's decision will be overturned. The District 53 Board had agreed in June to remain neutral in the matter.

Committee updates

The Board reported on its committee work:

■ The Finance Committee recommended postponing all capital projects for a year to lessen the District's projected deficit in Fiscal Year 2019. Even by postponing approximately \$1.2 million in work, the deficit is projected to be about \$350,000. The administration is committed to reducing that deficit.

■ The Buildings and Grounds Committee reported, among other items, that the 2017 roof project is 100 percent complete and the project to install a keyless entry system on interior doors that will lock in an emergency is under way. The administration is researching replacing the pea gravel on the north side playground at Brook Forest with an engineered wood surface, called fibar. The committee also reported a need to replace the four lifts in the District as they are more than 25 years old and replacement parts are not available.

■ The District Leadership Team reported on its recent meeting, including updates on Social Emotional Learning and the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).

■ The Policy Committee reported on its recent meetings where it recommended revisions in a number of policies, later adopted by the board, and discussed ramifications of potential changes of its tutoring policy.

■ The Technology Committee reviewed its meeting minutes, which included an update on summer upgrades in technology, and the work toward a strategic IT plan.

Board curriculum committee discussed

In related news, the Board discussed the formation of a board curriculum committee and decided not to change the current process on how curriculum is vetted via the District Leadership Team. However, members said there is a need to tie in how the board committees will work together and recommended looking at a more centralized process that communicates and assesses accountability of the committees.

Parent groups, field trips and teacher collaboration

In the Superintendent and Principals' Reports:

■ Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom reported on plans to initiate a parent group to support student success for families whose children have diverse learning needs. Director of Student Services Andrea Proloa will lead the group. A first meeting will be held 9-10 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 25 at Butler Junior High. At that meeting, the plan is to discuss the structure of the group, identify future topics/speakers, and seek ways to build communications between home and school. The first agenda is purposely loosely defined so as to build on parent needs and input.

■ Brook Forest Principal Chad Prosen thanked parents for attending Parent Visitation Day, noting that 240 parents attended all or part of the day. He also noted the enthusiasm and passion of the staff in working in their new Professional Learning Teams (PLT's). The groups worked on developing writing, listening and speaking competencies, digital learning initiatives and personal goal setting. He also detailed Red Ribbon Week activities scheduled for late October and commended the Brook Forest Student Council for raising \$2,000 to help victims from recent hurricanes.

■ Butler Junior High Principal Amy Read recounted the recent 7th grade trip to Philadelphia, the 40-book challenge and the cross country and volleyball seasons. She also commended four students – two in choir and two in band – who were selected to perform at the Illinois Music Education Association (ILMEA) music festivals.

Personnel action, audit, air quality collaboration

In other news, the Board:

■ Approved the employment of Debra Dugan as a teacher's aide at Brook Forest,

■ Approved the employment of Maxx Marano as a teacher's aide at Brook Forest,

■ Heard a report on the 2017 audit from auditor Baker Tilly and subsequently approved the Fiscal Year 2017 audit and Annual Financial Report. Auditors commended the District for its internal controls and recommended that the District create a system detailing capital assets with current year depreciation and accumulated depreciation.

■ Voted to disapprove a contract to continue air quality tests at Brook Forest related to the summer roof leaks. The move was on the recommendation of the administration and the Building and Grounds Committee. Business Manager Dr. Sandra Martin said that the last few weeks of tests have been clean.

Board Calendar

- Nov. 7** District Leadership Team - 4:00 p.m.
Nov. 2 Buildings and Grounds Committee - 7 a.m.
Nov. 13 Board of Education Meeting - 6:00 p.m.
Administrative Center (*Note special time*)

School Calendar

- Oct. 20** End of first quarter, BJH
Oct. 27 End of first trimester, BF
Nov. 3 School Improvement Day
*Students dismissed at 11:50 a.m. (BF);
11:40 a.m. (BJH)*
Nov. 3 BJH Parent Visitation Day, 8:30-11:40 a.m.
Nov. 9 Parent Teacher Conferences, 4-8 p.m.
Nov. 10 PTO Meeting, 9 a.m.



Want to learn more? Listen to the Board Meeting audio at www.butler53.com Click on the tab "Board of Education"