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Butler School District 53

Board Report

A news report of the Sept. 17, 2018 Board of Education meeting

Welcome to new staff

The Board of Education held a short reception for newly hired faculty and staff to welcome them to the new school year. The principals introduced each staff member. “We are just thrilled to such quality educators joining our instructional team,” said Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom. “They have been taken under the wings of our veteran colleagues and their colleagues are saying wonderful things about them.”

Board adopts budget

The Board adopted a \$13.49 million budget for the 2018-19 school year following a public hearing. There were no concerns or questions voiced from the public during the hearing. The budget reflects lowered staffing levels due to enrollment changes, 3.5 percent yearly increase in salaries and benefits and some additional technology resources, including dedicated STEM classes K-5 and network upgrades. Other new costs in the budget include playgrounds at both schools, new financial software and security upgrades. Some structural improvements and repairs to the buildings are also planned in the next three years and much of this year’s expenditures will be to develop plans and specifications for the projects. The budget shows some increases in fixed costs, most notably a 3 percent increase in bus transportation over last year and a 10 percent increase in health benefit costs.

The District uses a zero-based budgeting process to build the budget. On the revenue side the District receives 88 percent of its monies from property taxes, some state funding and minimal federal funding. Investment income was slightly up as were revenues from registration.

In the presentation to the Board, Business Manager Dr. Sandra Martin outlined the changes in the budget, legal requirements in adopting the budget and how the District compares financially to other school districts. She noted that there were only two schools that performed higher than D53 on test scores, but the District is below average in spending compared to other high performing elementary schools. “You’re getting a great value for the educational program,” she said.

Board President plans to resign

Board President Dr. Elizabeth Chun announced that she plans to resign from the Board in the next few weeks. “It has been an honor to serve the children and community and to work alongside some fabulous administrators and teachers.” She said she is resigning because her children are grown and do not live nearby and she and her husband plan to do some extensive traveling. Dr. Chun has served on the Board for eight years and is credited with providing exceptional leadership during her lengthy tenure.

Superintendent search update

The Board heard an update on the superintendent search. Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom announced earlier this month that she plans to retire at the end of the school year. The Board reviewed requests for information from 23 firms and discussed whether to hire a search firm or conduct an internal search led by Board Vice President Dr. Sally Beatty. They also discussed how to involve the community in the process and whether or not to install a search committee comprised of representatives of D53 stakeholders. The Board will continue to weigh options at its next meeting.

New law on early admission to kindergarten and accelerated placement

Director of Student Services Andrea Prola gave a presentation on a new law that guides accelerated placement of students, including advancing grade levels and subjects and early entrance to kindergarten and first grade.

The Accelerated Placement Act (APA) requires that schools develop a fair and equitable process using multiple indicators and involving multiple persons in determining whether a child will be advanced. At Brook Forest, when there is a request to advance grades or enter kindergarten early, the school teams will conduct an evaluation process that uses a combination of cognitive, academic, and social/emotional assessments. If students meet the criteria, classroom teachers and ALP teachers will be consulted. In addition, Language Arts enrichment and advanced mathematics programming for grades 1-5 is available to all students throughout the year.

At the junior high, similar assessments are used to determine whether students should advance grades or subjects. Principal Amy Read said that the school developed the criteria based on a study of 3-5 years of data from students both at Butler District 53 and at the high school. She noted that the curriculum and instruction in District 53 are rigorous and teachers use differentiation to meet students' needs.

The placement process includes a referral process, timeline, criteria and appeals. Parent sessions will be held to communicate placement procedures. Parent meeting dates will be communicated soon.

The District is already meeting much of this law and changes were minimal. "We are so very pleased that we have a long-standing history of meeting the instructional needs of all learners," said Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom. She said that while some parents may want to have their children advance grades or subjects, the District is committed to using the criteria and data to ensure placement decisions do not create learning gaps. "We want to ensure students have all of the solid skills they need before they go to high school."

Whole Child learning creates foundation for thriving students

The Board heard a report on the District's Whole Child commitment to education and the tenets of Whole Child Learning. "We want to build a solid foundation for a whole child and wellness foundation for all learners – students and staff – so each will succeed and thrive in our ever-evolving world," said Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom. She noted the five tenets of the whole child in Butler District 53:

- Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

- Each student learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.

- Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

- Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults

- Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment

"We desire to achieve an affirming culture in which students and the staff are nurtured and supported in ways that create a strong community of thriving learners," she said. Additional information can be found at www.butler53.com

Transportation update

The Board heard an update on student bus transportation. Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom noted that students are on the bus for 50 minutes or less, which is well within Board guidelines. The time is measured on the bus' GPS system from the time the bus door closes to the time all children are dropped off. Most of the bus routes reverse paths so students experience shorter rides on some days but this is not always possible. The Board looked at hiring Kids Cab for some routes but said the current route times is within the guidelines and that Kids Cab's schedule would drop off students 20 minutes later than the start of school.

District outlines impact of village plan on schools

Board President Dr. Elizabeth Chun reported that she and Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom met with representatives from the Village of Oak Brook to discuss a concept proposal to develop land across from the Oak Brook Post Office. The potential development could add 450 condominium units and could increase the number of students in the schools. They noted that while the decision is not under the purview of the D53 Board, the District can advocate and provide information on the impact to its schools. "Right now, we are at capacity in our core spaces," said Dr. Wennstrom. Dr. Chun said the District will continue to monitor the issue.

New hiree and compensation reports

In other news, the Board

- Approved the 2017-18 Salary Compensation Report for Administrators. The report, which is posted on the webpage, lists salary and benefits in accordance with state law. In related news, the Board approved the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) pension limitations and transparency documents for three administrative IMRF employees as required by law.

- Approved the appointment of Catherine McGovern as a new instructional aide at Brook Forest. She has been a substitute teacher, both in District 53 and Elmhurst 205 and has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Trinity Christian College and an ESL endorsement.

Projects and proposals approved

The Board approved a number of quotes and contracts related to upcoming repairs and improvements, including:

- A quote from Four Point O to install screens and a projector for the Brook Forest gym for \$6,795.

- A quote from Malcor Roofing for some roof repair work at Butler Junior High for \$7,263.

- A proposal with CS2 Design Group for some engineering work at Brook Forest for \$4,675.

- Approved a two-year contract with Vanguard Energy Services for natural gas for November 2018 to October 2020.

- Approved a three-year contract with Direct Energy Business for electricity services from March 2019 to March 2022.

Principals' reports

In the principals' reports:

- Brook Forest Principal Dr. Chad Prosen gave an update on community partnerships with the school. He said Brook Forest partnered with the Oak Brook Park District to celebrate its universal playground. The PTO also partnered with the school to provide a new playground at Brook Forest. Finally, he noted that some classes visited the Oak Brook Fire Department to commemorate Patriot Day and honor first responders. He also noted two new initiatives this year: the Brook Forest Broadcast Club and a dedicated STEM class for students.

- Butler Junior High Principal Ms. Amy Read gave a recap of Curriculum Night where staff showcased the school and curriculum. She also highlighted a recent safety drill for students and said that the Oak Brook Deputy Chief returned to provide feedback to students and staff about the drill. She gave an update on a new social emotional program, called STAR, where students anonymously award "stars" to peers who display empathy and make positive choices.

Board Calendar

- Sept. 20** Technology Committee Meeting – 7 a.m.
Administrative Center
- Oct. 2** District Leadership Team – 4 p.m.
Administrative Center
- Oct. 4** Buildings and Grounds Committee – 7 a.m.
Administrative Center
- Oct. 8** Regular Board of Education Meeting - 6:30 p.m.
Administrative Center

School Calendar

- Oct. 5** Parent Visitation, 8:30-11:50 a.m.
- Oct. 5** Early Dismissal
- Oct. 8** Columbus Day - No School
- Oct. 9** No School: Institute Day



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

