

Superintendent Report: March Board Meeting
Submitted on March 18, 2021

Administrative work:

Several of our staff (administrators/Heather Lloyd/Becky Ames) have been investing time to prepare for the upcoming standardized testing that we anticipate will take place on schedule, starting right after Spring Break. The spring testing cycle is just one of the reasons that our county calendar changes the dates for spring break to generally take place the last week of March starting next year. An earlier spring break not only aligns with the research about having scheduled breaks at around the six-week mark, but also will allow students to get back into the swing of school after break before having to begin standardized testing.

The guidelines for testing due to the pandemic are much different and have presented many new challenges related many areas including, but not limited to space, scheduling and staffing. One ramification of these issues is that it has necessitated students in some grades to have to stay home on days upon which other grade levels are testing. This has already been communicated to parents who are impacted by this to help with their planning.

I am participating in a county focus group regarding virtual learning for the 2021-22 school year. We are exploring current options as well as speaking with other counties who provided online learning in a different way throughout this school to determine what the possibilities will be for local schools for the fall.

Dansville has offered several different online options for students for several years. We are currently planning to return to those options for next year if any of our students are interested in staying online, but we wanted to explore all of the possibilities prior to finalizing our plans. We also had our staff make phone calls to families who are currently remaining online to learn more about their plans and thoughts for fall to better understand their needs as well.

This is the time of year when the Board considers the extension of the administrative contracts and I want to share that I have never had the privilege of working on such a highly functioning team. The fact that we have all been together for so many years is VERY UNIQUE and has provided stability that I would assert is unparalleled in education currently. I didn't have time to examine the data, but we have been alerted that there have been a significant number of superintendent and administrator retirements throughout this year and these all come at a cost for the continuity of learning for a district. I believe I have shared that administrative turnover impact research previously.

While it is uncertain how long this will continue, I hope the district and community realizes how special these principals are to the healthy functioning of our school. They have worked sacrificially throughout the past several years as we have been strained and stressed by many external and internal factors. Their love for this district and for our student is unparalleled. They are willing to do what so many others won't... to make hard decisions that are best for kids

time after time even when it isn't always popular, to stay consistent and fair no matter how they are pressured or treated, to do WHATEVER is needed depending on the day, to continue to learn and grow and push themselves and others to continually improve- all of this is both special and amazing. Their impact may not be realized by everyone, but I hope I've been able to showcase their work enough throughout the past several years that their value is not lost on this Board. I think what has been accomplished by our school district in this pandemic has only shined a brighter light on their OUTSTANDING, servant leadership. For these reasons and so many more, it is without hesitation that I recommend that the Board extend the contracts of all three administrators.

Athletics:

High school bowling, boys' and girls' basketball, wrestling and MS boys' and girls' basketball are all nearing the end of their regular seasons and beginning state tournament time. We continue to be blessed to have the tireless efforts of Christy, as she continues to spend a great deal of time and put forth a lot of effort to respond to the ever-changing landscape of trying to safely offer high school sports in a pandemic.

Christy and I met with the spring coaches earlier this week in preparation for the spring sports season. This was particularly important because of the new regulations and the number of new coaches on the spring staff. Work has been done to prepare all of our outdoor fields for practice and competition. The spring sport guidelines have not yet been released by MHSAA.

We also hired several coaches recently: a Varsity Track Coach- Tim Reynolds, an Assistant Varsity Track Coach- Alicia Coatsworth and MS Track Coach- Ashley Shoup. We are very thankful for the willingness of all of these quality individuals to commit to coaching our kids during this difficult time of pandemic sporting.

As I shared via email earlier this week, Webberville has chosen not to move forward with the baseball co-op. Thank you again for your willingness to put students first in allowing for this possibility.

Budget Info:

Raelynn and I are continuing to follow the different school budget actions that are happening at both the state and federal levels. We have not yet received any of the funds that we are anticipating will be available to help offset expenses related to pandemic learning. We are also carefully watching for the details around possible funding for summer school. Regardless, we have a robust plan for summer school for students in Grades K-5, continue working on best options for students in Grades 6-8 and will offer credit recovery options for students in Grades 9-12.

We currently have approximately 46 new kindergarten students and 17 new beginning kindergarten students who have signed up to attend Dansville Schools next fall. We continue to field phone calls from neighboring families who are interested in attending next year as Schools of Choice students as well. We are currently conservatively budgeting for approximately the same overall

number of students next year as we have this year. Please note that we are one of the only schools in the county that didn't experience a significant decline in enrollment this year due to homeschooling or families leaving to attend other schools via choice.

We have been working since bringing the secondary students back in person to develop the schedule and staffing plan for the 2021-22 school year. We are about two months behind in this process. We are currently thinking we will need to post for a few new teachers, but this has not been finalized yet. We hope to get these positions finalized ASAP because of the shortage. Please note that some area schools have increased their starting pay, offered hiring bonuses and have ensured student loan forgiveness for new teachers. This is the most competitive teaching market I've seen in my 29 years as an educator. We haven't figured out a final plan for this aspect of our recruitment.

Communication:

The winter newsletter has been sent to the printer and posted electronically for our families and community.

While I have officially stopped the weekly district communications that went out on Saturday mornings, I will be sending out an update both this week and next week with some important info (COVID update/antigen clinic/calendar, etc.).

Community Outreach/Partnerships:

We are thankful to Farm Bureau for notifying us just before the last Board meeting that we will be getting a grant from them to support our summer weekend survival backpack program.

We have continued to have community members reach out to us about how they can support families who are in need and have made contributions to our Many Hands account. The generosity of our community has been very heartwarming and has directly impacted many of our families.

Becky and I met with Aggie alum and former parent of Aggies, Brad Douglas, to restart a project that was delayed due to the shutdown and then COVID-19. We are hoping to get a district promotional video completed this spring to accompany the other promotional materials we have created and/or updated to share with prospective families and students.

Curriculum/Training:

Our February professional development included Aggie Improvement Team work and work in buildings working on a range of topics from training regarding best practices in assessment to identifying strategies to implement in order to best reach and meet the needs of our at-risk students.

Led a meeting with our DSIT folks to plan the March Professional Development day. We will spend more time than is typical in Aggie Improvement Teams again to allow teams work time to

help them accomplish their goals. Teachers will also meet again as elementary and secondary groups to focus on improvement targeted at the building level.

In preparation for the upcoming PD, Andy and I met with our DSIT teacher leader as the new Social Studies AIT leadership team to help plan our next meeting. We will read several articles with a jigsaw protocol with time to share out to help establish a shared understanding of this work.

I also met with a teacher leader from the Rigor Aggie Improvement Team to talk through the work habits development strategy to establish an implementation plan for the remainder of this school year to ensure a fall rollout of new protocols.

Data

Updated data regarding student engagement was shared in the Board packet, in accordance with the legislative requirement.

I am attaching an article that was recently published by Spring Math that features our district and includes highlights of recent district math data.

Facilities:

Most recently, a major repair in the HVAC system in the MS gym was completed and there is ongoing work to coordinate the proper scheduling of the installation of the new elementary fire panel. We are also exploring additional lighting for the elementary parking lot and have obtained pricing to address needs with the bus garage roof.

Personnel Update:

After receiving applications and conducting interviews last week, we have hired current HS office manager Shannon Johnson to take the position of Executive Assistant that will be vacated by Becky Ames later in the school year. We are very pleased that Shannon was interested in making this move and are thankful that she will be able to start learning and transitioning into this new role.

We currently have posted the HS Office Manager position that will be vacated by Ms. Johnson and also have an opening for the Elementary Office Paraprofessional position that will be vacated at the end of the school year due to the retirement of Jan Baker.

Policy Work:

I will be meeting with our new NEOLA representative at the end of March to receive the Spring Policy update. I will work to establish a policy committee meeting sometime after Spring Break.

Safety:

We conducted another ALICE drill since the last Board meeting. We also continue to evaluate all of our daily cleaning and mitigation strategies and make changes if necessary.

Our admin team met with our school liaison officer from the Ingham County Sheriff's Department to help improve communication and to establish more specific plans moving forward.

Teaching and Learning:

Please see the Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan in the Board Packet, as per legislative requirement. There are no changes for this month and no anticipated changes for the remainder of the school year.

Teachers are continuing to work hard to meet the needs of every student as we enter this last quarter of the school year. Parent-Teacher conferences took place last week throughout the district via Zoom and there is a lot of anecdotal data that this mode of meeting for student conferences is preferable over the traditional format. We hope to conduct surveys in the days ahead to get more concrete data, but we have been exploring new ways to handle parent-teacher conferences over the past few years, so we are encouraged by our experience this year.

At conferences, teachers share data related to the progress of their students, answer questions/hear feedback and also provide suggestions, encouragement and feedback to parents. This is a valuable time to verify that everyone is on the same page and to ensure we are doing everything possible to fulfill our mission for every Aggie.

Our admin team all participated in a county-wide session related to the rollout of the new MICIP system, which is the new platform in which we will put our state reports related to our plans for continuous improvement. I also had a troubleshooting meeting with an Ingham ISD point person and MDE to figure out why we are currently unable to get logged into the new system.

I also participated in the entirety of the monthly county instructional leaders' meeting where state and federal updates are shared and district networking occurs. Similarly, I attended the Region IV meeting for March where we all had the chance to get a legal update from Lisa Swem from Thrun Law. Lisa is the attorney the district has a relationship with when we need legal counsel in most areas.

Technology:

We have continued to explore the technology options that were shared last month while also exploring purchasing additional individual devices to have enough for our middle school students to each have a device for school use as well as looking into camera options for our parking lots and FFA building.

Upcoming Dates of Note:

*Spring Break: April 2- April 9

*Graduation: May 23 (Please plan to attend)

*Last Day of School: May 28