

**Superintendent Report: November Board Meeting**  
**Submitted on November 20, 2020**

**Administrative work:**

We have been meeting twice per week as an administrative team to continue to work on: 1) contingency plans in the event we are forced to move our BK- Grade 6 students online and 2) to try to find ways to increase safe in-person opportunities for students in Grades 7-12 second semester. Our preparation steps included having every elementary teacher assign their classes practice at home last week to log in to their Seesaw (Grades BK-2) or Google Classroom (Grades 3-6) to make sure families/students proactively get any help that may be needed.

Teachers of in-person students also surveyed families this week to determine whether or not they would need an iPad at home if learning had to be remote. Teachers also prepared a letter for families that includes the online schedule and all passwords, etc. to ensure we would be as prepared as possible to quickly transition if needed. We also finalized an online schedule for Grade 6 if that grade was moved online and they prepared a letter for their families as well. Letters were not distributed to families, but are ready if they are ever needed.

All of these preparations were done only out of a desire to be ready, as sometimes these decisions are out of our control. This work ended up being very timely, as we found out the day after the initial prep work was complete that one of our elementary classes would need to quarantine because one of the students in the class tested positive. The class was able to smoothly transition to online learning with plans to return to the physical classroom after Thanksgiving break.

We have also continued to reach out to the parents who expressed concerns in our last survey as well as those who have continued to share questions and concerns. We do this via phone calls, emails and meetings. Multiple communications have been sent to our staff and families sharing our commitment to prioritize consistency and reliability in our school schedule/offerings (as much as it depends on us) and to assure them that the work we've been doing is only meant to ensure we are prepared for whatever may come next. We do not have any hidden timelines for a switch to online learning for all grades, but rather want to continue as we are unless we are unable to due to the inability to provide staff (due to illness or quarantining) or because of an increase in cases within the school.

Additional work has included working with the Board to follow state statute related to our recent hiring of the JV Basketball coach. Also worked with the ISD and attended a Department of Treasury webinar to learn more about the recent process for identifying and establishing all protocols for the Teacher and Support Staff COVID-19 Grants that were opened up earlier this month. These were rolled out to staff and all requirements and timelines were met. Worked with the administrators and Becky to create a spreadsheet listing all of our employees and then addressing the feasibility criteria established by MIOSHA related to the most recent remote work requirements. We have moved staff meetings to be remote through the end of the calendar year.

Several of our staff participated in a day-long Board Orientation event for Mrs. Cremer on Friday, November 13. She was able to meet with each principal, the athletic director, our business manager, food service director, executive assistant and me. She learned more about each person's role here and their department's role in our organization. She was able to tour each building as well and was given a number of resources related to our district.

We provided a re-visioned "Beverage Cart" at the October PD for our staff where we offered coffee, hot chocolate, water and hot apple cider to kick off the PD work that day and to show our appreciation.

On Monday, November 2 our administrative team participated in an investigations training provided by Clark Hill. This was part of the work we are doing to implement the new Title IX law and associated policies.

### **Athletics:**

Terrance Cooper was hired as the JV Boys Basketball Coach. This position was posted for nearly a month. Five candidates were recruited to apply and two expressed interest/availability to do so. When the deadline for the application was shared due to the approaching season start, only one applicant turned in paperwork for the position, although both were encouraged to apply. After completing the hiring process as required by state statute, Coach Cooper was welcomed into our Aggie Family.

The newest order by MDHHS has delayed all HS athletics until at least December 9<sup>th</sup>. MHSSA has indicated that winter sports competitions will not occur until January, 2021.

Christy and I hosted a Winter Coaches' meeting earlier this month, including explicit expectations regarding safety protocols including proper mask wearing and social distancing as much as possible.

The CMAC athletic director/HS principal/superintendent annual league meeting took place at the beginning of the month and winter season protocols were discussed and finalized.

Redoing schedules and protocols to prioritize safety and comply with the latest guidelines has been very challenging and we are thankful for the hard work of Ms. Minnis as she has successfully navigated through the fall season and the start of the middle school boys' basketball season so far. Unfortunately, the biggest challenge has been to get adult compliance for the MHSAA guidelines.

### **Budget Info:**

Raelynn and I have continued to work on Revision 1 of the 20-21 budget, which will come before the Board at this meeting and then be considered for approval in December. Several positive outcomes have impacted the budget and the subsequent negotiations. One of those is our unaudited student count, which was 739.8. This is a slight increase from last year (737 last year) and

is more significant than it would normally be because this makes us one of only three schools in the county that didn't lose students this year. This is also two years in a row where we have increased enrollment after at least 10 years of declining enrollment.

The other major factors were learning that state funding would be flat instead of the predicted significant cut we were asked to expect and the fact that our community supported the passage of the non-homestead operational millage at the November election. We are so grateful to the community for this support. This was passed for a 7-year period, per previous Board discussion.

Negotiations have occurred with the DEA, DESPA and I also met individually with the non-bargaining unit members re: the opener in all contracts to discuss wages and insurance, where applicable. We have tentative agreements with both bargaining units and I had productive conversations with all non-bargaining unit members. This will be discussed more in closed session.

### **Communication:**

We have now completed fall Parent-Teacher Conferences for BK-12. All of these conferences were held via Zoom unless there were extenuating circumstances that required them to be held in person. We are so proud of our teachers for all of the quick learning they have done to be able to make significant changes like this. We had outstanding participation at the elementary and less than typical participation at the secondary. Extra efforts were made by the staff to reach out to the families whose students are struggling to schedule follow up meetings.

We received some very nice, unsolicited feedback from the community about the Fall District Newsletter. We are so fortunate to have Becky here, as her wizardry makes the communications we develop very user-friendly and visually appealing. Adding marketing and communications to the desired qualifications for this position has been a game changer.

Our teachers and admin team continue to send School Messenger emails, post videos, call and meet with families to talk about how school is going and to problem solve what we can do better. We are posting information on FaceBook and on our website as well. The secondary teachers and principals have also collaborated on a weekly agenda that is sent out on Monday mornings that is filled with live links and information for students and parents.

I have continued sending a weekly email called Aggie Family Updates that I try to get out by 7 AM on Saturday mornings. This is meant to provide district-wide updates and reminders for our families in an attempt to provide increased connection and communication during this tough year. I have also tried to send additional messages lately to respond to the MDHSS order and to alleviate parent concerns that arose as a result of our preparation activities.

Spend a LOT of time crafting and sending messages to the staff and our school families. Spend a LOT of administrative time coordinating and communicating with families as part of contact tracing. We also communicate with partners such as Ingham ISD if a Wilson Talent Center student is involved as well as communicating consistently with the health department.

### **Community Outreach/Partnerships:**

The Dansville Schools Education Foundation is working on several different projects in lieu of the traditional dinner/auction event that had to be canceled this year. The next one is a Day of Giving event after Thanksgiving.

We are very thankful for a recent donation from the LadyBugs to the Many Hands account. We are in need of donations of this type to help support our supplementary weekend survival bags. The LadyBugs got very creative and held their annual auction via FaceBook recently! We so appreciate their ongoing commitment to supporting our school and community.

We have really appreciated the partnership we have with our local fire department. They served as our first responders at our football games this year and have also been coordinating with us as we experience the difference of having an activated, monitored alarm system. Chief Speck has responded graciously to middle of the night non-events that we are all learning through. The fire department also reached out because they have received donations of several turkeys and they are sponsoring six of our families for Thanksgiving this year.

Becky and I have been working on sending a holiday postcard to all retirees since we cannot bring them in for the Staff Holiday Breakfast this year. We hope to revive this tradition again when it becomes safe.

A new partnership academically has been the establishment of a some CMAC superintendent meetings where we talk about our schools and all things COVID. This has been nice because we are all so similar in demographics and also have been getting information and guidance from different sources regionally. This has been a welcomed new collaboration.

### **Curriculum/Training:**

We had a half day of professional development at the end of October during which our Aggie Improvement Teams met and we held three different EdCamp sessions related to best practice for teaching during this pandemic. Again, all of this PD is planned with the District School Improvement Team (DSIT) that includes teacher leaders from each building.

The administrative team participated in a webinar earlier this month called: Equity, Social Justice and School Leadership in the Time of COVID-19. It was very useful and introduced several resources that will be helpful as we dive more deeply into the work we have planned as part of our District Improvement Plan.

We are participating in an ELA Curricular Exploration at the county level with IISD, as our current elementary curriculum is expiring after next year and will no longer be supported.

### **Data**

Updated data regarding student engagement will be shared with the Board tomorrow night, in accordance with the legislative requirement.

One data point that we are very excited to share is that there has been a significant increase in the number of students in grades 7-12 who have been coming for in-person appointments and Aggie Aid (Tues/Thurs 6-8 pm and Saturdays 10 am-2 pm).

It isn't always possible to capture every visit, as some kids connect in other ways outside of using Sign Up Genius, but here is what we have:

**Between October 21 – November 17 for grades 7-12:**

- 408 sessions booked for F2F help (some may be repeat visitors/students)
- In addition, we have 8-14 secondary kids with an IEP or 504 Plan come in for F2F help each day. (The teacher just keeps a list because they struggle with the links and signing up. This is not included in the above number.)
- 195 students signed up for Zoom office hours (some may be repeat visitors/students)
- 190 visits to Aggie Aid
- Attendance rate for advisory meetings is approximately 94%

\*Note: We have learned that the F2F numbers from the last board meeting (reported 400 visits) was not totally accurate because it included kids who stayed for more than one-hour session at Aggie Aid.

**Facilities:**

We had a day-long construction meeting at the end of October in an effort to bring some resolution to several outstanding issues. We are hopeful.

Rick and Mike met and created a plan to put our external lights are on timers to provide security and energy savings.

Met with Mike and Rick and discussed revisiting and updating our asset management plan now that we have a better idea of where we will be post-construction and can begin to identify and prioritize our greatest needs moving forward.

**Personnel Update:**

We hired Aggie Alumna Marina Schmidt as a special education paraprofessional to assist one of our elementary students and are very thankful to add someone with her skillset to such a critical position. We also re-hired Missy Ayers as a paraprofessional, which helped fill a similar role for a different student.

The district gave tokens of appreciation with personal notes to the Food Service and Bus Driver folks during the last few weeks of October.

**Policy Work:**

The Policy Committee met on November 10 to review all of the policies that have been included in the Board agenda for discussion.

One policy that we received late this week that is being included as an action item is MIOSHA policy number 8450.05 related to remote working. We received a call from NEOLA regarding the need for the Board to act on this policy, so we have included it in this agenda for action.

### **Safety:**

We continue to monitor every aspect of what we have rolled out with a lens of safety first. We are also still attending to safety in terms of intruders and fire, tornado, etc. Mr. Cox will be sharing a video highlighting the elementary COVID-19 safety protocols as part of Monday night's meeting.

We had another ALICE drill with a scenario for our in-person classes to discuss earlier this month.

### **Teaching and Learning:**

As our elementary reading curriculum, Reading Street, is expiring, I was part of a meeting with the company to try to gather the materials we think we will need to get through the next school year since the physical materials are no longer in print.

Math intervention is in full swing using Spring Math in Grades K-8. We have also been asked by Spring Math if we can be part of a promotional piece for them, as we are one of the districts they feel has implemented the program with fidelity. It was an honor to be asked.

### **Reconfirmation of Learning Plan/Other Legislative Requirements:**

- **Create a dashboard related to positive COVID cases for the website that is located on the transparency page:** Our dashboard has been created and is posted accordingly.
- **Create a document to publicly share our weekly interaction rates:** Our document with this data will be shared at the Board meeting for each building.
- **Reconfirm how instruction is delivered:** Our district will be continuing with the current offerings for instruction through the end of 2020. We are currently examining survey data, requirements, staff health as well as several factors related to COVID-19 to see if we are able to offer in-person instruction for grades 7-12 for second semester.

We have used the survey data from families to ensure we have a plan to make the requested adjustments for families with students in Grades BK-6 for second semester and we are now confident we can accomplish this. We do realize some families may change their minds as January approaches, but we needed to examine the feasibility and staffing as well as busing to be sure we can make this happen.

As part of that process, however, we did realize that we need to ask the Board to close the Schools of Choice option for the remainder of the school year. This window typically opens back up in January, but we are getting so many calls that it is clear we are not able to accommodate the current demand safely. This is on the agenda for discussion this month and action in December.

We also have a new idea for an improved schedule for the second semester for students in Grades 7-12. There would be fewer conflicts and also allow for the chance for some weekly time in person. We are still vetting this idea and hope to share a plan with the Board in December.

- **Develop guidelines concerning appropriate methods of delivering instruction, in coordination with the health department:** I communicate regularly with the Ingham County Health Department and will continue to take guidance from them regarding our ability to offer in-person instruction. We discuss county data, but also local community data and building data, if applicable. Linda Vail recently met with county superintendents and expressed full support for in-person K-6 instruction.

**Key metrics that are considered in collaboration with the health department:**

- COVID cases or positive COVID tests
- Hospitalizations
- # of COVID-related deaths over a 14-day period
- COVID cases for each day for each million people
- The percentage of positive COVID tests over a 4-week period
- Health capacity strength
- Testing, tracing and containment infrastructure with regard to COVID

Our admin team also continues to meet regularly to ensure coordination of the district's special education services. We continue to hold in-person instruction for our secondary basic classroom, as is allowed in the MDHHS order.

**Technology:**

We are working to make our own library system cloud-based to better provide reading options for all students.

Thanks to last week's Board approval, we have ordered 100 additional iPads and 50 keyboards to fill the gap we have that would allow for nearly a 1-to-1 device deployment if necessary.

**Upcoming Dates of Note:**

- \*November 25- November 27: Thanksgiving Break
- \*December 14: Board Meeting
- \*December 17: Proposed Re-visioned Staff Holiday Breakfast Event
- \*December 18: End of first semester/Winter Break begins
- \*January 4: Second semester begins