

The School District Report
By
Scott Johnson, District Administrator
March 2019

Greetings to all parents and community members of the School District of New Auburn! In an effort to offer as much communication and transparency as possible, I have decided to start providing our school community with a monthly school district news report. This report will appear on our school district web page, our school Facebook page, and in our school newsletter. It is my intention to share with our community a summary of actions taken at our monthly school board meetings and any other current and relevant news that we can share. We invite you to all stayed tuned into our school news.

The March monthly school board meeting was held on Monday, March 18th. Below is a summary of actions taken by our school board:

- **Therapy Dog** - The school board was approached at the last meeting about the concept of investing in a professionally trained therapy dog who would come to school each day and be available to students in need of social, emotional, or other mental health comforting. This is a practice that is beginning to spread across several school districts and it is getting very positive reviews and as a wonderful tool for helping troubled children cope with problems. Our school board has requested Mr. Kowalski to return with a proposal/contract for them to review and consider approving. Nothing is final yet, but we are a step closer, especially if fundraising efforts prove to be successful to help offset costs.
- **Group Health Insurance** - Last year our school board agreed to join a consortium of school districts in the region who wanted to test the theory that we stand a better chance to save money on the cost of health insurance for our employees if we band together and look for companies that want to bid to a much larger, collective group of school employees. The idea behind that theory is that when a school district stands alone and has a bad year of health insurance claims, the insurance companies may raise the rates excessively and create an undue burden on the taxpayers. When we unite, a school district that has a year with lots of medical claims, gets protected because those claims get spread across the school districts who have low claim years. We recently learned that indeed our health insurance rates appear to be on schedule for a lower rate as a consortium than many districts in the consortium could have afforded had they been alone.
- **Purchase of a Floor Scrubber** - The time has come for a new floor scrubber in the school district, so the board has invested in one that will do a fantastic job for years to come. Our district has a reputation of being one of the cleanest facilities in the region. This will help us to maintain that great reputation.
- **Board Policies-Volume 27, #2** - Throughout the year our school board reviews and updates various school board policies as needed and as advised. The school board approved a first reading on amendments to some of the policies contained in volume 27, #2. Those policies can be found on the district web page.
- **Snow Days vs. Contract Days** - Each year teachers contract to work a set number of days in the school year. That contract allows for a few days to be forgiven in the event of snow days. This year happened to be an exceptional year where the school had to be closed a total of nine days. The Leadership Team asked that if the school board required the the extra days to be

made up, they would like the board to consider allowing staff to make up the hours through professional development and other extracurricular participation that would be above and beyond the contract. The board voted to require teachers to make up 30 hours of additional time. This time must be pre-approved and recorded by the principal. Any hours that are not made up prior to June 20th shall result in a deduction of pay. Leave time may be applied if the employee has accrued personal leave.

- **Review of Bids on Use School Bus** - One of our older substitute school buses broke down last summer with a broken head gasket. We have learned that the cost to repair the bus exceeds the value of the school bus so the bus was advertised for sale with a notice for bids. We received a total of four bids. The school board approved the \$1000 sale of the bus to the highest bidder.
- **Resignations** - The resignation of Emily Campbell, Fifth Grade, was officially accepted for the end of the school year. Best wishes to Miss Campbell in her future. She will be missed! Thanks to Miss Campbell for serving the students of New Auburn.
- **New Custodial Hires** - Due to the fact we have two key members of our maintenance staff retiring soon, we have completed the search and screen process to replace them. We are pleased to announce the names of Dalton Hinke and Brian McFaul as our new night custodians. Please help welcome to both of these individuals to the school district team..
- **2019-2020 Staffing** - Our school board took a look at what next school year will look like in terms of programs and staffing. Each year we look at who might be retiring or resigning, where changes need to be made in the instructional programs being offered, the numbers of students in each grade or subject, the number of staff members we need to get the job done properly, and how all of those things fit into the budget. It can be a very perplexing job balancing the best education we can offer with being fiscally responsible and prudent with the taxpayers' money. Sometimes these changes can call for positions to be added and sometimes it can call for positions to be eliminated or reduced. The school board approved next year's staffing pattern and those changes will be discussed first with any individuals who may be affected by those changes personally, before making any news more public.

I would like to remind our community that the school board election will be held next month on April 2nd, Election Day. Please be sure to vote at the polls. We have two spots open and only one incumbent running. Wayne Dachel will not be seeking re-election for a new term. Tim Trowbridge is seeking re-election. McKenzie Berg is the only other district resident who filed for school board candidacy.

Our April school board meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 22. The elected school board members will be sworn in at that time.

As always, community members are welcome to contact or visit the school with any questions.

Happy Spring to All!!