

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORT
By
Scott Johnson, District Administrator
March 2021

Greetings to All District Residents!

This school district report is a summary of current events happening in school and a summary of actions taken at the monthly school board meetings. We understand that some residents are not able to attend school board meetings but would still like to stay informed of the great things that are occurring. This report is our attempt to keep you informed and be as transparent as possible with our community and staff.

This report will appear on a regular basis on our school web page and our school Facebook site so that everyone has equal access to finding out what is happening in the New Auburn Schools.

The March school board meeting was held on Monday, March 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Here is a summary of what happened:

- The school board agreed that all of the COVID-19 safety restrictions will remain in place, with the exception of relaxing the building use restrictions a little bit. We have now started to approve a few requests to use the building outside parties who have an acceptable safety plan in place. Special thanks to all of our staff, students, and community for the continued efforts in enforcing our safety restrictions. It has not been easy by any means, but because of everyone's dedicated efforts, our COVID numbers within our students and staff have fallen to virtually zero at this time. Keep up the great work!

- The New Auburn high school graduation will remain scheduled for Friday, May 28, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.. We will hold it in our gymnasium while respecting the CDC's guidelines for social distancing and masking. Provided we can continue to keep our COVID numbers low, it is our hope that we will be able to allow more people to attend this year's graduation ceremony.

- The Federal Government has authorized a second round of relief money in the form of a grant that is known as the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief grant. (ESSER II) These dollars are awarded to public school districts for the purpose of offsetting costs that were specifically incurred as a result of COVID-19. For example, schools that develop strategies to help students catch up who have fallen behind academically can use these funds. These funds can also be used to address mental health needs to help students who are struggling. New Auburn has decided to put a plan in play that will identify students who are struggling academically and emotionally and offer another level of services to help those students improve. We are hopeful that these added efforts will allow us to help these students close the

learning gaps that have widened for them and increase their opportunity to succeed in school.

- Our planning has officially begun for the 2021 summer school. We have been approved to plan a nine-day summer school from June 8-18th that will be open to all students, and a five-day summer school from August 16-20 for those students who have not returned to school yet from their virtual learning model. We plan to put an emphasis on having a summer school that will emphasize remedial learning and credit recovery for students that have fallen behind. Mrs. Guest will return as our summer school director, so families can expect summer school registration information to be coming out soon. Be sure to mark these dates on your calendars if you are considering sending your children to summer school.
- The section of roof that sits above our band and choir room has been approved as the next section of roofing to be repaired on our rotating schedule. That work will likely begin as the weather allows.
- The school board has opted to compare the cost of contracting out our summer lawn care vs. continuing to buy our own equipment and pay our own staff to mow the lawns. Any party interested to bid on this work will have that opportunity. A public bidding notice will be advertised within the next week or so.
- Our CESA 10 Services Contract was approved for amendment. The amendment comes as a result of Lorna Margenau's recent decision to retire as our Special Education Director at the end of this school year. Dennis Gunnick, current School Psychologist has agreed to add the title of interim Special Education Director for the next school year. Congratulations Lorna and Dennis!
- Our board policies that govern our Academic Excellence Scholarship and our Technical Excellence Scholarship were both revised during a first reading to allow for the transition from semesters to trimesters in our high school schedule for next year.
- Our group dental plan for next year was approved at a 0% increase in cost.
- The school board took action to approve a 3% increase for all salaried personnel and Fifty cents per hour increase for all hourly employees. This decision followed a one-year freeze in wages in 2020-2021. The school board expressed their recognition and appreciation for the dedicated work our staff has committed during this very difficult pandemic year.

- In an attempt to secure more substitute teachers, the board has raised our sub pay rate from \$100 to \$110 per day. This school year has been especially challenging to find enough substitute teachers due to the pandemic.
- The resignations of Jessica McCurdy, Spanish, and Kristi Ellwanger, Business Education, were accepted. Special thanks to both of these ladies for their service here in New Auburn. We wish both teachers the best of luck in their futures.
- Taran Wols, from Webster, Wisconsin, has been hired as our new Business Education instructor. Taran will begin his duties at the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Welcome aboard Mr. Wols!
- The 2021-2022 staff have all been approved for hire for next year, with the exception of four positions that have been posted as vacancies. We hope to recruit and hire for those vacancies by the end of April.
- The school board took action to increase the starting wage by \$1.00 per hour for our custodial positions. We are experiencing a shortage of candidates in doing custodial work, so it is our hope that the increased wage rate will motivate some interest.

In other news, families are reminded the New Auburn School District will be closed the week of March 22nd due to spring break.

Also, the school board election is scheduled April 6th. All district electors are encouraged to cast your votes.

All new school board members elected will be sworn in at the April 26th regular monthly school board meeting. Good luck to all candidates!