



## Board of Education Recap

January 22, 2019

In the spirit of civic duty encouraged and inspired by Reverend and Dr. Martin Luther King, members of our Board of Education met last night to review a number of substantive issues. Here is a recap of their good work. In “Discussion Items”...

The second meeting of each month has been designated for the Board to hear progress updates related to their [Strategic Planning](#) goals. We call these “**Information and Advocacy Reports**”. The goals discussed at this meeting included:

“Opportunities for Progress-Based Grouping and Advanced Learning” - This was presented by Director of Instruction, Mrs. **Sarah Straka**, and our Advanced Learning Coordinator, Mrs. **Christine Parmley**. You may find their [presentation here](#). In a nutshell, Director Straka spoke of multiple pathways for students, at each grade level, to demonstrate and explore their areas of giftedness. Anyone who was in the audience last night could tell how much Mrs. Parmley loves her role and the students she supports. Her smile warmed the room as she spoke of the many “value-added” offerings our students enjoy!

“Professional Development of Staff”- Volumes of research have concluded the degree to which people are professionally engaged is correlated to the investment leaders make in their growth. Director Straka discussed the multiple opportunities staff members have benefited from throughout the past year. A balance between self-directed and administrative-directed offerings has been provided. You can find this report on pages 8-14 of [this document](#).

“Regionally Competitive Compensation and Benefits Package” - With a decreasing number of professionals entering the field of education and one of the lowest unemployment rates in recorded history, the competition for talent is at a fever pitch. Add to the mix the retiring “baby-boom” generation, it is evident the most successful organizations have their finger on the pulse on their standing in the job marketplace. Coordinator of Human Resources, Mrs. **Cynthia Swart**, has done an exemplary job of culling data from her colleagues in regional districts and commensurate in size (i.e. student enrollment). So where does MHASD land? In many instances, we have some work to accomplish on the salary front. While salary is only one factor in total remuneration (albeit a very important one), Coordinator Swart will continue to gather similar information related to fringe benefit packages. (While one district may pay more in salary, better health insurance benefits may be offered through another system (e.g. plan design, HMO vs PPO, percent of premium paid by employees).) This additional information will provide an even clearer understanding of our placement in the marketplace.

**“Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding” Update:** The Board of Education’s *Community and Legislative Engagement* subcommittee has asked if topics of this nature may be a standing

agenda item (preferably, the second meeting of the month). Why? The budget biennium process will soon launch with Governor Evers' "State of the State Address" and could continue through this summer. The bipartisan [BRC](#) has been meeting for the better part of a year, and they have recently issued their recommendations to the Legislature and Governor on a host of topics related to funding of schools. Board members Mrs. **Kimberly Sailor** and Mr. **Rod Hise** shared an overview of the BRC's recommendations, which can be found by [clicking here](#). In addition, they discussed the effort's the Board's subcommittee will undertake in order to educate the community and advocate for topics germane to the funding of public schools. Please find their entire presentation [here](#). This led to...

### **Action Items...**

#### **Consideration of a Board Resolution Regarding Special Education Categorical Aid Funding.**

Currently, school districts reimbursed for special education costs are approximately \$0.25 on every dollar. The Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding has recommended a number of options for the legislators' and the Governor's consideration that would increase such funding (see page 4 of [this document](#)). Currently, our District's general fund provides an additional \$2.5 million (approximately) to our special education account in order to meet our responsibilities in serving our students with Individual Education Plans. Vice-President Mrs. **Diana Rothamer** shared a draft of the resolution with her colleagues for consideration.

#### **Consider Board of Education Resolution Requesting Increased Funding for Mental Health**

**Supports** It comes as no surprise to anyone, even casually, connected to the Board of Education's work that mental health and wellness continues to be a focal point in their visioning. Up to this point, additional resources to fund support personnel (social workers, psychologists, and counselors) have been awarded via a grant process developed by the Department of Public Instruction. Understandably, there has been a high degree of competition for a limited amount of resources. Grants to which the District has applied have been declined. Under one of the Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations (starting on page 7 of [this document](#)), subsequent funding would be provided through categorical funding mechanisms. While this is a step in the right direction, it continues to strip local control of these dollars to be used as each Board sees appropriate. Here, again, Vice President Diana Rothamer was encouraged to draft a resolution for her colleagues' future consideration.

**Consideration of Budgeted Chrome Book Purchases** As part of the legislature's last round of budget negotiations, the State of Wisconsin allocated a per-pupil sum of money to defray the cost of increasing technology needs in grades 9-12. These dollars (and our locally required match) were approved unanimously for the purchase of Chrome Books by the Board of Education. They will be used primarily in each of our English classrooms.

In closing, as a result of efforts taken last night by our Board of Education, the table has been set for increased advocacy by our school community on matters that will have the greatest impact on learning and teaching. The future of the Mount Horeb Area School District remains very bright. It's one more reason why...

I am proud to be a Viking, and I hope you are too!

Steve