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BELLEVUE COMETS COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comet Highlights From the December 9, 2019 School Board Meeting

December 16 December 17 December 21-January January 2 The	HS Winter Concert - 7:00 MS Winter Concert - 6:30 1Winter Break School Resumes after Winter Break (Reminder:
	Board and others decided to move to this date instead of coming back for only a Friday on January 3rd or waiting to resume on Monday, January 6th); We typically have returned on January 3 in most yearsdepending on the calendar)
January 20 school	End of Semester Workday for Teachers - No
	for students

Consent Agenda

<u>Approved - Open Enrollment</u>

• Sara Anne Christiansen - Maquoketa to Bellevue; Sara is currently attending Marquette, while taking some courses at Bellevue for her academic programming. She would like to enroll full-time at the Bellevue CSD for the second semester of the 2019-2020 school year and continuing on in the 2020-2021 school year.

<u>Approved - Resignations</u>

• Adam Smith - HS Softball Coach; Adam appreciated the opportunity in coaching, but has decided to step away from coaching at this time.

Approved - Recommendations to Hire

• Cord Heim - F/S Boys basketball coach based on numbers in the program at the JV and F/S level. This provides more opportunities for students to play in games and improve their skills.

Recognize any Visitors

Curt Ernst, Matt Jaeger, Grace Dunn, Jackson Wagner, and Senator Carrie Koelker

Comet Curriculum Update - Bellevue BIG

Bellevue BIG shares some aspects of what they have been working on this school year as a "passion-based" program for student learning. Brin Daugherty shared how this is a non-traditional way of learning, about her work with Unified Champions and the importance of working with the youth and our community together. She also discussed the activities they are doing with the Kids that Care program and the pantry located on school grounds that can be accessed by students and parents. Grace followed up with more information on Kids that Care and Unified Champions and expressed her interest in doing this and what it means to the kids overall to participate with high school students in various activities. Jackson shared his work on the Urban Orchard developed by BIG in the past, and a possible expansion to include more fruit. Jackson also discussed the BIG Honey and harvesting in the next year, along with aquaponics and how lettuce is being grown and given to the cafeteria for use, along with a future project of growing tomatoes.

Mr. Ernst and Mr. Jaeger discussed the aspect of "learning" and how things do not always turn out the way it is planned (fish examples in aquaponics from the past and needing to replace them), but how failure is part of learning and leads to future success. They also discussed the upcoming ski trip as Unified Champions and how everyone going is on an "equal playing field" on the slopes if they have not skied in the past. While projects continue annually, they are also modified to meet the needs of students and their learning, along with new projects developed. Both stated they are always looking for new ways to challenge students, which students are also looking for based on their interests.

Legislative Update: State Senator Carrie Koelker

Senator Carrie Koelker attended the meeting and discussed some aspects of the legislative session briefly. Some of her key points included the following:

- She covers 42 rural communities, with a total population of about 62,000 Iowans.
- The need to work collaboratively by both parties, and how this happens in 95% of the situations.
- Last year accomplishments impacting education included the extension of the SAVE, \$90 million to education in some manner, and rural transportation funding.
- Senator Koelker stated that we must "Invest in Iowa".

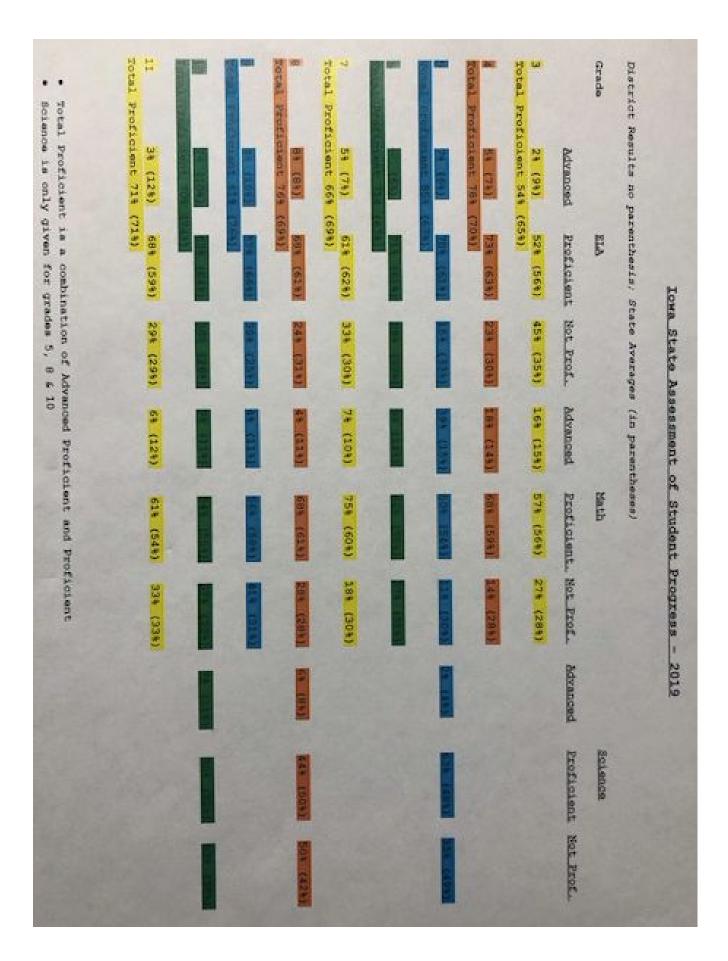
• Some upcoming potential priorities mentioned mental health assistance (students and adults), classroom behaviors, and how they would like to have the education budget determined in the first 30-45 days of the session (which begins on January 13, 2020).

Review of the Iowa Testing Results (Iowa State Assessment of Student Progress - ISASP)

Meyer shared results from the Iowa State Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP), along with a quick overview on the next page and as a handout at the meeting (will post this as well). These tests were taken in March last school year, and results became available in the last few weeks for school districts.

Meyer shared the results in percentages for "Advanced" (beyond the normal proficiency), "Proficient", and "Not Proficient". You will also notice that three grades have Science scores (that is what the state measured and required for school districts).

This was the first year of the assessment, as prior to this we gave the "Iowa Tests of Basic Skills - ITBS" and "Iowa Tests of Educational Development - ITEDS". Therefore, the state averages and cutoffs were actually designed after the testing, with some controversy of where they are established at in some ways (I have been one questioning this). Regardless, our results are one measure of where our students are at...we must look at things far beyond these isolated results.





A New State Assessment for Iowa

A HIGHER BAR FOR IOWA STUDENTS

lowa adopted statewide standards in English language arts, math and science to ensure all students move from grade to grade with the skills and content necessary for success beyond high school.

Because lowa raised the bar for what students are expected to know and be able to do, the state also changed the way progress is measured through state tests.

A new state test, the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress, replaced the Iowa Assessments. Students in grades 3 through 11 took the new test for the first time in spring 2019.

School-level results will be available to schools, parents and other stakeholders in October.

HOW TO INTERPRET RESULTS

Results re-set the baseline for future progress on the new state test.

Because this is a new, different test for students, results should not be compared to previous years.

Results will be used to report to parents and communities and to assist schools with improvement planning.

HOW PROFICIENCY WAS DETERMINED

lowa Testing Programs and its vendor, Pearson, convened 185 lowa educators and experts in July to determine through a collaborative, scientific process what "proficient" and "advanced" mean on the new state test.

The performance levels that resulted from that process were recommended for State Board of Education adoption in September.



ABOUT THE IOWA STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS (ISASP)

- Developed by Iowa Testing Programs at the University of Iowa in collaboration with Iowa educators
- First administered in spring 2019 to students in these subjects and grade levels: Math: Grades 3-11 English Language Arts: Grades 3-11

Science: Grades 5, 8 and 10

- Includes an online format and assessment of student writing
- Better reflects what is being taught in classrooms because it is more aligned with lowa's academic standards
- Find more information about the test at: <u>http://iowa.</u> pearsonaccessnext.com/



KEY MESSAGES/TALKING POINTS

lowa is committed to preparing all students for future success, and that means preparing them for the demands of postsecondary education and the workforce.

Part of this work includes setting high expectations for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level and then measuring how students are progressing.

These high expectations are outlined in Iowa's academic standards, which ensure all students move from grade to grade with the academic knowledge and skills necessary for success.

Whether they want to go to college or straight into the workplace, students need to be able to think critically and solve complex problems. This gives them the ability to make choices about their future and to make the most of their opportunities.

*

The Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) replaced the former Iowa Assessments, with students taking the new tests for the first time in spring 2019. Iowa Testing Programs at the University of Iowa oversaw the test's development and administration.

English language arts and math tests were given to students in grades 3 through 11, while science tests were given in grades 5, 8 and 10.

ISASP better reflects what's being taught in Iowa classrooms and how students are progressing toward grade-level expectations outlined in Iowa's academic standards.

This makes ISASP one measure that helps teachers understand where students are succeeding and where they may need more help.

*

Student performance on the ISASP is scored in three ways: Advanced, Proficient, and Not Yet Proficient.

A committee of 185 lowa educators met for five days in July to determine recommended performance levels, or cut scores, which define the range of scores for each of the three categories. These recommendations will be taken to the lowa State Board of Education on September 12.

Because the new state test is more aligned to Iowa's academic standards, it is more challenging.

These results will re-set the baseline for future progress on the new state test. They should not be compared to results from previous years because the state test is new and different.

Budget Discussion Overview

Meyer discussed and shared some of the key points in the material on budgets overall, along with where the Bellevue CSD is at financially at this time. The "Bellevue" information is on a separate attachment, but the overall explanations are below.

KEY MEASURES OF FINANCIAL HEALTH

Below are a number of key terms, definitions and measures of a school district's financial health. Or, view this printable version of the Key Measures of Financial Health below.

Unspent Budget Authority

Unspent Budget Authority, also known as "Unspent Balance" is the amount of unused district general fund capacity to spend on behalf of students, or *spending authority*, left over at the end of the fiscal year. This funding capacity carries forward into the next fiscal year. It is one-time capacity and may be funded with cash reserve fund balances or a cash reserve levy. The Unspent Budget Authority trend line is the most telling financial indicator school district leaders count on to inform expenditure decisions. The concept of Unspent Budget Authority only applies to the General Fund.

Since spending authority is generated on a per pupil basis as set by the legislature, the only way for school districts to gain additional Unspent Budget Authority is to reduce general fund expenditures relative to general fund authority. School districts have little authority to increase general fund revenues since the legislature determines the state cost per pupil increase in spending authority (previously known as allowable growth). Beyond that, a school district may impose an Instructional Support Levy (most have already done that), pursued every avenue of claiming additional modified supplemental amount (spending authority) for on-time funding for enrollment growth, budget guarantee for enrollment decline, drop-out prevention, English-language learner authority, or an additional modified supplemental amount for unique and unusual circumstance. Grants or federal funding, considered as miscellaneous income, also create dollar-for-dollar spending authority when the funds are actually received. School boards can set goals or parameters around Unspent Budget Authority targets to clarify their level of comfort with a specific range of Unspent Budget Authority.

Word of caution: Special education expenditures above the amount of weighting generated revenues create spending authority as dollars are spent due to the granting of spending authority by the SBRC. Similarly, reducing special education expenditures below the amount of weighting generated revenues does not increase spending authority of a district. Cuts to special education staff and expenditures do not "free up" spending authority or save general fund spending authority for other purposes. A school district's unspent budget authority is not impacted by special education expenditures.

Solvency Ratio

Solvency ratio is a calculation used to assess financial health. The calculation measures the relationship of ending uncommitted fund balance to revenues as a percentage for the fiscal year. Here's the calculation with references to the row on the Balance Sheet by Fund (or Revenues by Fund) where the information is found:

Unassigned Fund Balance PLUS Assigned Fund Balance

DIVIDED BY

Total General Fund Revenues LESS AEA Flow-Through

Beginning FY 2012, GASB rules reclassified balances as Restricted, Committed, Assigned or Unassigned. Implementing the GASB rules may create a skewed comparison to the historical trend line that should not be misinterpreted.

The Solvency Ratio is a snapshot, point-in-time measure of the percentage of revenue remaining, assuming the district closed its doors on June 30 of the fiscal year, after gathering all the year's revenues and paying all the year's obligations. A district can only impact its solvency ratio by either increasing revenues or by reducing expenditures (or a combination of both). A district may choose to generate additional revenues through the use of the Cash Reserve Levy if they have not reached the statutory limit of 20% cash reserve relative to two prior years' general fund expenditures.

Although a recommended range of solvency ratios has typically been somewhere between 5 and 15 percent, the lower range considered "good" and the higher range considered "excellent", school boards should consider local reasons and comfort levels based on acceptable levels of risk that could justify a deviation from the recommended range.

Districts with a history of comparatively high solvency ratios should consider whether local experiences compet a continued higher solvency ratio trend and if so, at what expense? Districts must consider competing issues. Do we need to spend more on learning opportunities for students? Do we need to lower the level of taxation for district residents? In other words, is our high solvency ratio indicative of inadequate educational opportunities, taxation that is too high, or are we satisfied with the current positions in all of these areas?

An important caution: solvency ratio only relates to the relative fund balance of a district, so is not indicative of the spending authority position of the district. Many districts have experienced a negative solvency ratio for a number of years without any sanction from the Iowa Department of Education or State Board of Education.

Enrollment Trends

The lowa school foundation formula is driven by student enrollment. Both increasing and decreasing enrollment will impact a school district's spending authority and need for expenditures. District leaders should consider short-term and long-term enrollment trends and contemplate scenarios for adjusting staffing and expenditures along the way. Trends in open enroliment (both in and out of the district) also directly impact the district's revenues and expenditures, and should be carefully analyzed and trended forward to anticipate financial impact. In many cases of districts encountering financial hardship, local leaders have looked back to discover that staff reductions were not made along the way as enrollment declines continued over a number of years.

Number Of Staff/Staffing Ratios

The largest expenditure of a school district's general fund is salary and benefits costs for staff. District leaders should anticipate a staffing ratio that results in personnel costs somewhere around 80 to 85 percent of the average district's budget. Even small increases in salary or benefits costs combined with declining enrollment will compound very quickly if staffing ratios are not maintained and the costs of staff creep up to over 85%. Districts should evaluate the trend in salary and benefit costs for the general fund annually.

Building Level Staff/Staffing Ratios

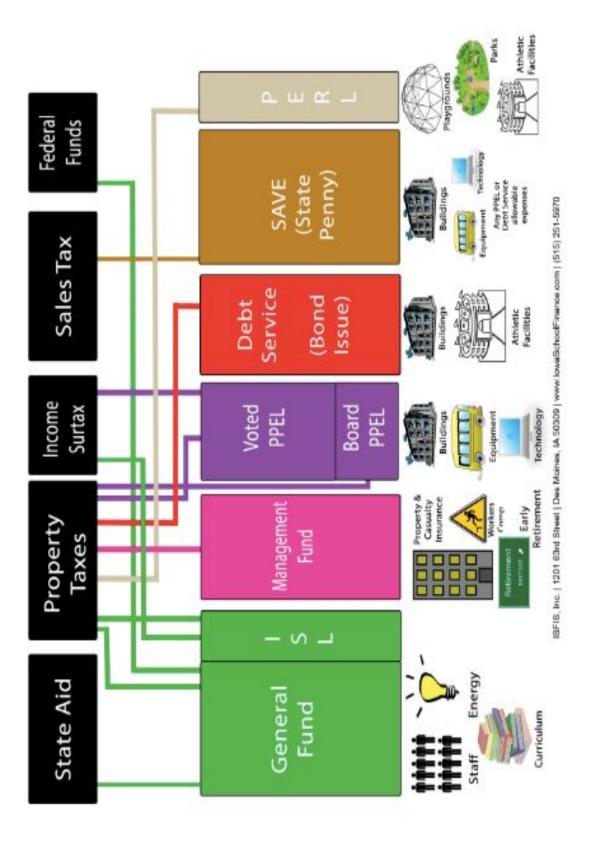
One way to detect expected staffing cost increases in advance is to carefully consider trends in building level staff costs. Typically, elementary school staff costs are slightly less per pupil than the average cost per pupil, and the high school staffing costs are typically slightly higher per pupil. Deviations to this pattern can help to point out differences, perhaps in the seniority or degree status of staff in a particular building. Understanding building level staffing costs and anticipating sensible staffing ratios can inform district leaders, and help in long-term planning, to maintain a healthy overall staffing ratio with less disruption than staff reductions made after the district is experiencing economic hardship. It may also help inform districts when an early retirement plan may be utilized to reduce such expenditures.

New Money/New Spending Authority

Late every winter, school districts learn how much new spending authority they will receive for the next fiscal year based on the Oct. 1 enrollment headcount (assuming the legislature set the state cost per pupil percent of growth in the previous session for the next school year). This report has been historically referred to as the "New Money" report, although it isn't money (cash or revenue) but instead, is a measure of change in spending authority. ISFIS has titled this report the "New Authority Report". With the 101% budget adjustment in place, districts with declining enrollment must look one year beyond this notice of new spending authority in order to realize the impact of an enrollment decline. Historical looks at new spending authority and carrying forward trend lines for long-term planning can go a long way towards helping school leaders plan for revenue and expenditure changes down the road.

Four Key School Finance Ideas For Iowa School Leaders To Keep In Mind

- Iowa school finance is based on the number of students we have in our district. The total
 amount of money our district has is determined primarily by the number of children enrolled.
 Except for a few specific tax levies dedicated to specific purposes, the state prohibits us from
 levying as much local money as we might otherwise want to fund our school district.
- Our district's tax rate is primarily set by the school foundation formula. There are only limited steps a school district can take to increase or decrease the property tax rate.
- 3. Certain funds have to be spent on certain things. Each tax levy has a limited purpose and the general fund is for everything else. Although it may not make sense that we have enough money to pave a parking lot or buy a computer, but not enough money to hire teachers (or vice versa), that's the way the state law works.
- Schools are a labor-intensive business: about 80 percent of a district's General Fund is made up of staff salary and benefit costs.



Facilities Discussion

Three Items for discussion:

- 1. Building Cost Analysis update
- 2. Space for classrooms in the elementary
- 3. Potential Summer Projects (handout at the meeting)

1.Steve Baumann from Russell Construction is working with a local contractor on costs, and explaining needs, costs, etc. as they work collaboratively. Eventually, in the next month or two, I anticipate having a meeting with various local contractors to review the price, building design, etc.

2.Meyer reviewed some thoughts from the work session on Monday, December 2. This included the discussion about moving around potentially 11 classrooms in the elementary or purchasing/building a modular building for two classrooms or departments at the elementary campus. Meyer shared that we must also look beyond next year, but also into the needs and amount of sections for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond. No decision was made at this meeting, and a decision is anticipated in January or February after more information gathering takes place by administration, board members, teachers, and others.

3. Meyer shared a handout of the last year's main projects and purchases completed, along with a handout of potential ideas for the upcoming year/summer. This will be discussed at future meetings as we look to make decision in February or March. Input and discussion took place about ideas, etc.

Early Graduates

Approved - The following students applied for Early Graduation at this time, pending completion of their academic work prior to the end of the 1st semester (A qualification for this is that students may apply for early graduation IF they will have met all graduation requirements by the end of the 1st semester in January):

- Brandon Eggers
- Kylee Haxmeier
- Hannah Irwin
- Makenna Klemme
- Zachary Stroud
- Bailey Van Zuiden
- Kyanne Weimerskirch

There could be an additional name to add to this, but at this time Mr. Recker only has these students. By graduating early students are not allowed to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities, etc. but we do allow them to attend Prom if they choose. They also are able to participate in our Commencement in May. These students can also elect to come back for the second semester if they wish to gain more academic credits, but would have to start on the first day of the semester.

<u>Music License</u>

Approved - Do you ever feel that "everything" is controlled by someone? This is another case in my opinion, but one we must abide by. In order to play music at events we must have a license in the district to play it. Obviously this has been going on for years, but some districts in Iowa and nationwide have been facing litigation and stiff fines for playing music without official rights to the music.

I am recommending we contract with BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.) to play music at events (athletic, fine arts, etc.) in the future. The cost is \$254.53 for a year, which will have to be renewed each year. This also pertains to music our groups perform.

CTE Academy

The Eastern Iowa Community College District has asked each district to submit some "potential" numbers for enrollment by high school students in a variety of programs for the future. Below are the numbers of what I submitted after speaking with Mr. Recker and Mr. Jess, and other neighboring schools. I also received some possible numbers from Mr. Kaiser at Marquette as well. These are completely "guess-timates" in many ways.

	2020/2021	2022	2029
Advanced Manufacturing	4	7	10
Welding	9	12	12
Business	14	16	20
Culinary Arts	2	4	7
Auto	4	5	8
Nursing	8	10	14
IT - Cybersecurity	4	6	8
Construction	9	11	12

Some notes with this:

- These would all be working toward an associate's degree for the students from the Eastern Iowa Community College District (EICC).
- These numbers for 2020 or 2021 are likely high.
- Locations would ideally be in Maquoketa (better yet in Bellevue, but financially for the college Bellevue is at the outer edge of the college district and providing funds to us is highly unlikely at this time).
- There may be a bond referendum for a building/center for high school utilization in the future (September 2020???), but this would be primarily located and fund a building in Clinton county likely.
- We have three students who travel to Maquoketa daily for a welding certification, and they took the prerequisite courses prior years at Bellevue HS from Mr. Marshall
- We have several students in classes with Mrs. Weber in Business already in Bellevue earning college credits.
- Culinary Arts is something that there may be plans for a part of the building at the Jackson County Fairgrounds to include.
- Auto repair is an area we see a need for, but trying to work to make this happen with the college and other districts.
- Nursing would be an extension of a CNA program we allow students to take at NICC and/or at Mill Valley for those interested. It would allow for more courses as they work toward an associate's degree (like all courses)
- Cybersecurity is an area where there may be a need in the future, but not sure where this may be for our students.

• Construction is an area we do some small things in currently, and would like to expand this in many ways for our students with some college courses as an extension of our current programs.

Another issue is finding qualified people to "teach" these programs and work with students (when they can potentially make more in the private sector). The high schools would have to hire these instructors in most cases if the classes are not offered at the Clinton, Scott, or Muscatine campuses of EICC.

While we have three students attending Maquoketa right now for a welding certification, they drive on their own (car pool). Do we want to provide transportation in the future if our numbers grow? This is something to think about for the future as well.

Jackson County Conference Board

Mike Reed, Board President, was appointed to the Jackson County Conference Board to meet with county officials and other school officials to assist with the management of the county as a whole.

Comet Reading and Reflection

The reading below is from the same book as last month, "Disruptive Thinking" by Kylene Beers and Robert E. Probst. It discusses innovation and doing things differently, which I believe are essential for our school district and the success of our students in the future. Thoughts on what you read? Are we innovative or "doing the same thing?" Is that "good or bad?"

Disruptive Next Practices

Building that better mousetrap couldn't happen, however, until someone had built the first one. That first one disrupted the practice of living, probably not happily, with a family of mice.

Disruptive practices are disruptive because they end one approach, probably a time-tested "best practice," and replace it with another. The creation of the transistor radio, light bulb, batteries, the home computer, and the Internet were all disruptive practices. Gutenberg's 1439 printing press, with its movable type, is, some say, the greatest disruption of all. All these disruptions shared a common trait: They changed the way we live. They changed our world.

But if not for a willingness to move from now to next, to wonder what's beyond yesterday's best, we'd be stuck. Henry Ford once said, "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said a faster horse." His quip shows the difficulty we have in envisioning change. We fear too many of us in education have difficulty envisioning change. We have lost that willingness to question what we have and conceive of something new, and to take the risks that "something new" requires. Too often, "I wonder what would happen if ..." is countered with, "Prove it." "Could we try...?" is answered with, "What's the research?" And "Wouldn't it be fun to ..." is pushed aside with, "After the test." Our schools often seem to turn to a blend of best practices and traditional practices, too seldom trying radical and disruptive changes that might or might not—actually transform teaching.

Innovation is the lifeblood of progress. It is nursed and nurtured in the arms of failure: in collaboration; in creativity; in curiosity; in passion;

in tenacity and grit and optimism. It does not let us merely survive; innovation is what lets us thrive. And innovators are what we need.

We're all figuring out what those disruptive next practices will be in schools. We brought in computers, but they all too often just made the workbook electronic. We added the Internet, but it all too often just gave students a faster way to search for information. We realized kids need to work collaboratively, but we still tell them what to work on and how long to spend doing it, too often on their own. In other words, we made a small disruption fit within a model of education we all

know and understand. We talk of reforming schools, but that usually means writing new standards; it rarely means truly re-forming schools. Reforming schools begins with some serious conversations about topics we sometimes complain about, but rarely create the time to discuss seriously.

Innovation is the lifeblood of progress. It does not let us merely survive; innovation is what lets us thrive. And innovators are what we need.

Information Items

National School Boards Association Conference in Chicago

• Are you interested in attending? Some board members have attended this conference over the last 20 years plus...It is a great learning opportunity, and I encourage your involvement. A good part of the conference this year is that it is in Chicago and we can drive to it.

District Survey Feedback

• Any feedback from the survey from last month which I shared at the meeting? Meyer will post online.

Safety and Security

- The student and staff safety is our utmost concern at all times, and when we have a bomb threat, etc. we respond accordingly. Meyer provided some basic information at the meeting about this. Some students left on the day of the recent bomb threat with parents/family from the evacuation location, due to the threat (parents, etc. picked them up at the locations):
 - Middle School 23 students; 20 families
 - High School 14 students; 12 families
 - Elementary 5 students; 2 families (one had a student at the MS also, which is included in the numbers above)
 - The district is also working on having a speaker discuss the implications of a threat to the person who makes the threat, and related consequences to societal impact and learning as a whole.

Bus Inspections

• The district has bus inspections twice each year, and they have expanded this to all vehicles which transport students. Our inspections have went very well in the past due to Tim Roth's work in the bus barn, and our drivers. Adding suburbans, etc. to the inspection list means that the vehicles like this will need fire extinguishers, medical kit, "mess kit" for vomit, and a backup alarm. This will not be an issue for us, but a little bit of increased cost (along with the \$50 cost for each vehicle which has to be inspected...another thing we are required to do that we also have to pay for!).

Extracurricular Update

- Meyer give a brief update of extracurricular activities. Some key topics were the following:
- Band uniforms for the future Cost of about \$25,000-\$30,000 (the last uniforms were purchased 21 years ago)
- Football sharing with Bellevue Marquette
- Scoreboard for the football field and track area; Cost is still somewhat unknown, but some things may have to be done. The

Board indicated a desire to not spend a significant amount for a "video board", etc.

Comments from Principals, Superintendent, and Board Members

<u>Adjourn</u>

Next meeting will be on Monday, January 13