

July 1, 2013

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The last BOE Meeting was held on 6/24/2013. Here are the highlights:

### **Parent Survey Executive Summary**

District Accountability Committee (DAC) Chair, Rebekah Anderson, shared with the board an Executive Summary of the parent survey conducted this Spring. The survey asks questions about communication, student learning, school decision making, parent involvement and school leadership. The results of the survey are utilized as a tool to identify areas where individual schools and the district can focus on opportunities for improvement over the next school year.

Key DAC recommendations include 1) Identify ways to bridge the gap in communication in secondary schools between school and home, 2) Identify ways to streamline communication per individual school needs and 3) generate discussion and ideas to help individualized instruction concerns.

General themes from the comment section of the parent surveys included:

- Technology Use
- Communication
- Teacher Retention
- Facility Improvement
- Security
- Special Education

Parents are looking for better use of technology in and out of the classroom. Several comments on communication included improved school-based websites with updated and current information and streamlined communication for individual school needs. A common theme for special education was to improve individualized instruction for high achieving students. DAC, the Board of Education, and district leaders will follow up with ideas about how to act on the DAC findings at the August 12 BOE meeting. The key themes from parents will also be incorporated into the major district initiatives next year.

### **SPED Administrative Unit**

Jeannie Boice-Wiley, Director of Special Education with ECBOCES and Kim Morrison, Assistant Director of Special Education for Elizabeth Schools, provided an update on Special Education. The Elizabeth School District is in the process of applying to become its own Administrative Unit (AU) for Special Education. This provides the district with a more streamlined system for accountability, more choices for agencies and their services, and more direct line of communication and responsiveness to students, staff and parents. Mrs. Morrison and Mrs. Boice-Wiley will be visiting the newly formed special education administrative unit at

Eagle County School District to gain knowledge of the entire process. If approved by the state, the Elizabeth School District would assume AU responsibilities in July of 2014. Kim Morrison thanked Jeanne Boice-Wiley and Moira Hawks, also from ECBOCES, for the mentoring, commitment and dedication to our district. She commented that "they've been a tremendous asset."

### **Strategic Planning Community Meeting**

Superintendent Douglas Bissonette gave an overview of the draft strategic plan. The three key strategic goal areas are focused on: 1) Successful Students, 2) Quality Educators and Skilled Professionals, and 3) Operational Efficiency. Major initiatives for next year include: Reduce Teacher Turnover, Safe Schools, 21st Century Technology, Effective Communication, and SB191/Educator Effectiveness. Mr. Bissonette stated, "The success of the strategic plan will depend on strong leadership throughout the organization and an informed, engaged and supportive community." The Board of Education and district administrators will be hosting a Strategic Planning Community Meeting where they will solicit input and feedback from parents and key community leaders. The Community Meeting is targeted for August 29th.

### **School Year 2013-2014 Budget Approved**

In previous board meetings, Chief Financial Officer, Ron Patera shared with the board the preliminary budget for next school year. The final budget was approved at the June 24th meeting. Mr. Patera indicated that the budget is aligned with the goals created by the BOE earlier in the year. Some examples of this alignment include:

- With nearly static revenues, all extracurricular activities were preserved.
- The salary freeze was lifted for all employees.
- Staffing levels were adjusted based on changes in enrollment.
- Funds were allocated within the capital budget to improve safety at the schools.
- Reserves were utilized to help retain and attract outstanding educators and support staff.

### **Infrastructure Assessment Committee and BEST Grant**

Chris Richardson, Chairman of the IAC, presented to the board the final report on the ancillary buildings in the district including the Early Childcare Center, the modular administration and technology buildings, the maintenance facility, and the athletic fields. Key findings include:

- The primary childcare facility is in poor condition and requires health and safety improvements in the short term. Replacement in the long term is recommended.
- The modular buildings range in condition from very good to poor. Consolidation and replacement in the long term is recommended.
- The facilities maintenance building and grounds are in poor condition and present an unsightly appearance. Relocation to a new facility is recommended.
- The high school athletic fields are well kept. The track requires resurfacing. The middle school athletic grounds are in poor condition and hazards exist.

The detailed IAC reports, the executive summaries, and presentations to the board are available on the [IAC web page](#). Action sheets were developed by the principals to address the IAC quick fix recommendations.

In the IAC's previous report on school buildings, the roofs at both Singing Hills Elementary and Elizabeth High School were identified as damaged due to moisture penetration. It was recommended by the IAC that these roofs be replaced. As mentioned in the previous BOE recap, Elizabeth School District received a final approval for a BEST grant for these roof projects. The district will effectively be receiving a 40% discount on the cost of new 30-year roofs. The district must fund 60% of the project for a total of approximately \$1,373,106.

### **Blue Ribbon Panel**

Following up on discussions at the board meeting, Director Lindsey and Director Spenceley met with the chair of the Infrastructure Assessment Committee Chris Richardson, district staff members, and the district investment banker. During this meeting Chris expressed the committee's intention to provide a factual report, by July 12, which would identify the critical and urgent needs from the two IAC reports. Director Lindsey and Director Spenceley expressed the need for the board to understand our community's point of view on the needs identified by the IAC. To accomplish this, Deb Spenceley recommended appointing a Blue Ribbon Panel consisting of community members to assess the IAC's list of high priority needs, and to advise the board on how to move forward with the IAC's findings, as well as the BEST Grant roofing projects. On July 8th a special board meeting is being scheduled to appoint members to the Blue Ribbon Panel.

### **Board Elections this November**

Three board seats are open for election this November. They include seats currently held by Chuck Williams, Deb Spenceley, and Carol Stautner Hinds. Michele McCarron was appointed by the board to serve as the district Designated Election Official to coordinate with the county for the 2013 regular biennial school election.

### **Other Announcements**

Elizabeth High School presents Lady Cards Softball Camp on Tuesday July 9 and Thursday July 11 from 9:30 am - 12:00 pm for all softball players age 6-18. See attached flyer for more information.

The district office is privileged to have a summer intern Matthew Dillon working on a variety of communication projects. Matthew is currently a senior at Northland International University majoring in Communication. You can check out his work by visiting our district website. Several web pages have been updated including the board of education, learning services, special education, and safety. Stay tuned for the online version of the district newspaper Small Town Big News.

A Special Board meeting is scheduled for July 8 to discuss and appoint a Blue Ribbon Panel. After that, the next board meeting will be August 12. Agenda topics include: District

Safety Update, Exit Interview Results, and November Elections. The next BOE Meet and Greet is scheduled for August 13 from 4-6 at Grumpy's Coffee. All are welcome!

Kind Regards,

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