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BOE Recap from April 14, 2014 meeting

1 message

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TO: Parents/Guardians, Staff and Community Members

The Elizabeth School District Board of Education held their Board Meeting on Monday, April 14, 2014. Here are the highlights.

Education Showcase

Principal, Rob McMullen gave an update on Frontier High School. This year FHS focused on curriculum with technology, student portfolios, the road to graduation and post-secondary work force readiness. There was also an emphasis with their students on Pride at Frontier where they look to students to make a positive contribution to the Frontier Family. Experiential learning is also a focus at Frontier. Teacher John Collings presented a proposal to the board for an experiential trip next year, Kayaking with the Orcas. This will be a 10-day trip with several stops including Mt. Saint Helens and camping in Twin Falls Idaho. The staff incorporates science, history, and language arts in the experiential trips. May 30 is the FHS graduation.

Costa Rica

Heather Witten shared an overview of the student Spanish trip to Costa Rica. The students visited waterfalls, did lots of swimming with various sea life, saw some very exotic animals including monkeys, iguanas, and raccoons on the beaches. They planted a tree, visited a one room school house, visited national parks and had the great opportunity to practice their Spanish. Mrs. Witten proposed the next Spanish trip to take place in two years to Peru.

Heads up Colorado

Amie Hare from Heads Up Colorado shared their Youth Mentoring Program. The purpose of Head Up Colorado is to mentor youths through their 1 to 1 mentor services and their team mentor program. Heads Up Colorado focuses on kids in grade 7-12. Last week Head Up Colorado hosted a Teen Job Fair where over 100 teens attended and received assistance with resume writing and job applications.

Financial Report

Chief Financial Officer, Ron Patera, and Superintendent Douglas Bissonette, have been meeting with staff members at each of the schools to discuss the ongoing budget challenges. They shared with the staff the continuing difficulty with the district's budget due to the decline in state funding and the increase of our utilities, health insurance costs,

including the consequences of affordable care act, and our increasing obligations of the PERA match.

Some of the budget balancing ideas that were discussed with the staff included the possibility of increasing fees for athletic participation. The fees for athletic participation have remained static since 2005, but the cost of league fees, coach's benefits, and referees have gradually gone up while fees have remained the same and the general fund subsidy has gone up. The general fund can no longer absorb these increases so the district is more than likely going to raise the athletic fees at both EMS and EHS.

Another fee increase being discussed is the technology fee. To meet the ever increasing technology demands on today's schools, we must attempt to stay current with the changes in hardware and software. Additionally, with additional testing requirements imposed by the state, the district is obligated to be compliant with the rigid technological demands of these tests.

A reduction in staff positions was also discussed due to the decline in enrollment. Mr. Patera mentioned that most staff reductions can be achieved through normal attrition, such as resignations and retirement.

The Elizabeth Schools Board of Education, Superintendent, and Chief Financial Officer will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting to discuss the Financial State of the District with our community. The Town Hall Meeting will take place on May 12 at 6:30pm at the Elizabeth High School.

Data Pipeline Presentation

Shellie Scobee, District Data Specialist, presented to the Board CDE's Data Pipeline which is an ongoing continuous flow of data from school districts to CDE. The Elizabeth Board of Education has growing concerns about the increasing volume of data CDE is collecting, and even greater concerns about the nature of the data being required, especially specific student information.

The Department of Education's "Education Data Advisory Committee", EDAC, is the committee that reviews state data requests prior to collection from districts. EDAC consists of representatives from school districts, BOCES, and CDE appointed by the State Board of Education, to review data demands placed on Colorado public education. EDAC will notify districts if the data submission is optional or mandatory based on state or federal statute.

Superintendent Report

Superintendent Douglas Bissonette discussed a polling/survey project that is underway to our community members. The district is planning to use a professional polling firm to connect with local citizens with the objective to better understand our community and their values as it relates to education at Elizabeth Schools.

Mr. Bissonette explained that we anticipate a decline in enrollment next year due to the large outgoing graduating class and the small size of the incoming kindergarten class. This week the district mailed a post card to the local and surrounding areas, offering open

enrollment and welcoming new students to our district. On May 1 each school will have an Open House with the Principal for those out of district families or other families in the district to learn more about Elizabeth Schools.

Mr. Bissonette signed a letter this week along with over 100 other Superintendents across Colorado. The letter was sent to the Governor's Office and to the General Assembly stating, "As the school finance debate moves from the House to the Senate and inevitably into Conference Committee, we urge you to do everything you can to begin restoring K-12 funding to pre-recession levels, to save the BEST program to support the rebuilding and rehabilitation of Colorado's school infrastructure, and to give local boards of education as much flexibility as possible so that they may allocate funding in a way that will serve all students' needs." You may read the full letter the [Superintendent page](#) of the district website.

Board of Education Update

The Board of Education continues to be active in legislative issues related to public education. This week the board sent a letter to parents outlining the funding issues and asking parents to voice their concerns by calling state representatives to put more money into education. The letter and contact information for our state representatives is available on our website at [Board Announcements](#). Many directors visited the Capital this week and represented the concerns of Elizabeth Schools. A special thank you to Andi Hei, one of our parents, who went to the Capital and testified on how the lack of funding is affecting teachers, parents, and our schools.

The next board meeting is scheduled for April 28.

The Town Hall meeting is scheduled for May 12 in lieu of the May BOE Meet and Greet.

Regards,

Michele McCarron
Executive Administrative Assistant/Communication Specialist
Elizabeth Schools

Students are at the heart of everything we do!

