

January 18, 2021

The North Mahaska Board of Education met in regular session on January 18, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the elementary library New Sharon, Iowa. Those members present: Dirk Wilkin, Arvin DeBoef, and Margaret Ratcliff. Also present: Angela Livezey, Amber Goemaat, Renee Ferguson, Dave Daughton, and Sarah McGriff.

Dirk Wilkin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A motion was made by DeBoef and seconded by Ratliff to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Ratliff and seconded by DeBoef to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

There was no written communication or public forum.

#### DESIGN CONSTRUCTION INTEGRATION GROUP – UPDATE

Ben Gannon of DCI gave the following update regarding construction work:

Area A - The roof is almost complete, they are currently working on tying it into the existing structure. The temporary heat is on in the wrestling room and fitness center. Electricians are running conduit and glazing is ongoing. Storefront aluminum has been ordered and should be here next week. Demolition of the current high school locker rooms should take place in March following the completion of the basketball and wrestling seasons.

Area B - The roof is being worked on in Area B as well. Drywall should begin soon.

Area C - Metal roofing is slowly being completed in this area. Two more sides remain and then they will move onto Area A. Permanent heat is on in this area. Cabinets and plumbing fixtures are installed. The lights are delayed, but should be shipping on the 20th. Once the lights are installed, the carpet will be laid.

Two boilers in the elementary were installed over Christmas break as well as MEP work piping through the hallways in preparation for summer work.

Brad from Neumann Monson gave an update over the phone. He performs a bi-weekly site visit noting progress and any construction issues in relation to the architect plans. The biggest section of construction is complete. Neumann Monson will also perform a post construction inspection one year after project completion. He stressed that their main goal is to support the district in the construction project and make sure the project is completed as expected.

Dirk Wilkin asked how the pricing of materials is holding up. Mr. Gannon reassured the board that prices are locked into what they were bid at and it is the contractor's responsibility to make sure that price is met.

## OLD BUSINESS

No old business at this time.

## NEW BUSINESS

**CONSIDER MEMBERSHIP TO RURAL SCHOOLS ADVOCATES OF IOWA - DAVE DAUGHTON**  
Dave Daughton, an advocate for RSAI, explained that the organization is a membership group to advocate for rural and small schools. They are a National Rural Education Association affiliate. Mr. Daughton stressed that part of the role of superintendents and school boards is to be involved in the legislative process, and RSAI serves as a vehicle for that. A main component of RSAI is involving the districts in the grassroots legislative process - giving input on what things need to be priorities for rural schools. Mr. Daughton explained legislative priorities of RSAI, including adequate resources, mental health resources for students, transportation equity, operational sharing, internet connectivity and access, local school board authority, and combating the educator shortage. Mr. Daughton noted that rural schools have unique needs, specifically highlighting the lack of mental health resources for rural districts and the transportation needs that differ from urban districts. There are 125 member districts/AEAs in RSAI, all representing the rural school population.

Mrs. Livezey added that she brought in RSAI this year to present because of the need to advocate on behalf of the district for SSA, TSS, and SAVE amounts, as well as the unpredictability of enrollment numbers in our district.

Mr. Wilkin noted that if the school does not pay the \$750 membership fee and join, the school district is still benefiting from the work of RSAI. Mr. Daughton agreed, but noted that the district will be able to be more directly involved in giving input on what issues the school has.

Mrs. Ratliff asked what the definition of a rural school is. Mr. Daughton said that there is no specific definition but is more based on rule of thumb. Mrs. Ratliff asked how many more rural schools have yet to get involved with RSAI. Mr. Daughton answered that there are roughly 100 additional schools that could still join.

A motion was made by Ratliff and seconded by DeBoef to join the Rural School Advocates of Iowa. Motion carried. Mr. DeBoef made a note that in the past, legislatures have visited the school and given their plan but have rarely listened to the needs of the district. This involvement and advocacy will be incredibly important for the district.

## PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF AUDIT REPORT - DAVE SIETSTRA

Mr. Sietstra joined the meeting via Zoom to review an initial draft of the FY20 audit report. A final copy of the audit report should be available within a few weeks.

## CONSIDER EARLY RETIREMENT APPLICATIONS

There were no early retirement applications submitted this year.

## REVIEW OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EMERGENCY SCHOOL RELIEF FUNDS (ESSER II)

Mrs. Livezey gave an overview of the ESSER II allocation. Discussions are in progress regarding how to best utilize the funds and support student learning.

### LOCAL ELIGIBILITY POLICY UPDATE

A proclamation from Governor Reynolds on January 12 stated that all students who failed a course during the last grading period and are serving a 30-day suspension under the Scholarship Rule are immediately eligible. Mrs. Goemaat asked the board to consider our current local guidelines for academic eligibility. Our current guidelines state that a student with two or more F's at a midterm or quarter would be ineligible until the next marking period as defined by the school calendar. In Mrs. Goemaat's research and discussions with other SICL principals, she has found that our guidelines are much more stringent than others in our conference. She presented a list of Conference schools' current eligibility rules. She stressed that junior high students have such a short season that they don't see any reason to try to raise their grade in order to play. She suggested that reviewing this policy, the grading scale, and the requirements for junior high compared to high school could offer students an opportunity to dig out of difficult situations.

Mrs. Goemaat stated that she is in favor of maintaining the current policy for high school, but suggested a change for junior high given their transition from elementary to secondary school grading and adjusting to eligibility requirements.

Mrs. Ratliff and Mr. DeBoef expressed concern with lowering standards, believing that it sets a bad precedent for the work that students need to put in to be eligible for activities. Mr. DeBoef did agree that a shorter period of ineligibility for junior high students would be appropriate in order to give those students a reason to work on their grades and not miss their entire season.

Mr. Wilkin suggested a meeting with sixth graders before entering junior high so that they understand the grading scale they will be entering and how they would be standing with their grades at the end of sixth grade. He said that he would feel more comfortable if all board members were present before a vote is taken on this issue. He also asked for a formal proposal next meeting from Mrs. Goemaat.

### PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

#### CHANGES TO SENIOR YEAR PLUS REQUIREMENTS

Mrs. Goemaat presented new state regulation stating that there is no longer a cap on how many post secondary credits a student can be enrolled in at one time. Mrs. Livezey noted that the cost of enrollment is still the responsibility of the district.

#### SCIENCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mrs. Livezey and Mrs. Goemaat have been working with the science committee and the Great Prairie AEA science consultant. Mrs. Livezey explained that the district has a current need to update the science curriculum. Two options being considered are Amplify and STEMscopes.. Mrs. Livezey said that elementary staff are being solicited for feedback regarding whether science or math should be updated first. Currently they are leaning towards science, but this is not yet finalized.

#### SCHOLARSHIP RULE UPDATE - GOVERNOR'S PROCLAMATION

This conversation was combined with the local eligibility policy update discussion.

#### PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE UPDATE

Parent-teacher conferences are currently scheduled to be held face-to-face with the use of masks and social distancing. If a parent requests a virtual conference, that will be made available to them by the teacher.

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

##### TRAFFIC FLOW UPDATE

The district is still waiting on signage, but communication is ready to go out regarding the new traffic flow as well as the new system that the district purchased to assist with the student pick-up process.

##### COVID UPDATE

There are currently zero students that are COVID positive and between 1-5 staff members. Vaccines for staff members are expected to be ready in early February. Vaccines are not required and are provided at no cost to staff or the district.

##### LEGISLATIVE INSERVICE - JANUARY 28

Mrs. Livezey asked that board members send her any legislative points they would like brought up during the inservice.

##### DRAFT SCHOOL CALENDAR

Mrs. Livezey worked with the Labor Management Committee to solicit their input and put together the draft calendar. The calendar is modeled after this year's calendar based on positive feedback from staff. One change is to move parent-teacher conferences up to mid-term of first quarter, but keep the comp day for conferences at the end of October.

##### UPDATE ON SUPERINTENDENT'S GOALS

Reviewed superintendent goals and updates.

##### COMMENTS

Mr. DeBoef mentioned that NMEF was approached by the reading coaches for resources for 4-8th grades. Most of the proposal was approved contingent upon having personnel to implement the program.

Mr. Wilkin noted the growth of tech trades in the current career climate and the great living that can be made by someone who has a two year degree. He expressed his appreciation for the welding academy and would like an update on the program at some point.

Mrs. Ratliff asked about the program for construction trades. Mrs. Livezey answered that students would be able to go to Oskaloosa to participate in that academy.

Mr. DeBoef asked if adding the Athletic Director position to Ryan Groom's position took away from his ability to focus on the Welding Academy. Mrs. Goemaat answered that two courses were lost, but this would have happened anyway due to the AD not being a history teacher like previously, so that did not have an unexpected effect.

THANK YOU

No thank yous at this time.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Raliff and seconded by DeBoef to adjourn the meeting at 8:49p.m. Motion carried.

Sarah McGriff  
Board Secretary

Dirk Wilkin  
Board President