

BOARD BRIEFS

Avoca School District 37

Dr. Kevin Jauch, Superintendent
2921 Illinois Road, Willmette, IL 60091
847-251-3587 ♦ avoca37.org

Strategic Plan Update

The Board is given an update regarding the status of the district's progress on the Strategic Plan at each regular BOE meeting. All classroom teachers and most of the English Learner Teachers and Learning Behavior Specialists have been trained to teach using guided math groups. Administration has analyzed PARCC data to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. The foreign language team and visual arts team continue curriculum alignment work. All grade level teams, kindergarten through fifth grade, met over the summer to prepare for the implementation of the new math program at Avoca West. Implementation of the new program commenced with the school year. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Committee completed the committee template to guide their progress for 2017-2018. The main focus will be on the development of differentiation systems for math & English language arts. The technology team developed and presented the Board with a timeline to implement the new Technology and Innovation Strategic Plan. The Communication Action plan has been developed. New district website proposals were due on October 11th. The district is currently reviewing the proposals to make a recommendation to the Board. A curriculum specific website framework has been developed with substantive curriculum information and how it aligns to common core and state standards. The September Vision was circulated district wide. An internal calendar is being developed as a resource to organize and communicate the various tasks and events that take place over the course of the year and who is responsible for completing each task. The 5-year facilities plan has been updated and the district has completed approximately 90% of the work listed in the 5-year life safety plan.

Avoca Center

The Board discussed Avoca Center at several meetings during the months of August, September and October. The Board was updated with the current status of the Avoca Center tenants. Arlyn Day School has vacated their portion of the building and will resume classes in their new Highland Park location. One Hope United has also found a new location in Wilmette, which will require renovations. One Hope United asked for a month to month lease, as they will need to remain in Avoca Center for a couple months beyond the current lease's termination date of December 31, 2017.

The Board also reviewed the Agenda for the community update meeting, which took place on November 8, 2017. The community meeting covered a review of the history of Avoca Center, an update on the current Avoca Center tenants, Avoca's current life safety and facility priorities, the collaborative considerations for the future of the property, and potential options currently under consideration by the Board. A portion of the Community Update was also devoted to answering attendee questions and listening to feedback.

Northfield Townhome Development

The Board was informed of a proposal for a 34 unit rental townhome development on the property located at 1725 Winnetka Road, which is under consideration by the Northfield Plan and Zoning Commission (NPZC). District representatives attended a NPZC meeting to learn more about the potential development and to establish a presence with the Village of Northfield in regard to Avoca's standpoint on the development. The district was unable to give public comments at the September meeting, but was able to at its continuation on November 6, 2017. The district plans to advocate for compensation to offset the increased burden on the school community from the increase in student attendance due to the new development. The district's legal counsel is working with the Village of Northfield to identify a way to obtain said compensation in spite of the current limitations of the village code.

Summer Construction, Life Safety and Facilities Plan

Through August, the Board was updated with the progress of the summer construction projects. At Marie Murphy, the final segment of roof replacement was completed and passed inspection.

At both schools, hallway walls were extended to the underside of the roof deck, which was completed as a life safety inspection requirement.

The district continued work to finish projects on the facilities plan. An asbestos abatement followed by the replacement of flooring and cabinetry in the 4th grade wing and the Spanish and KIDS rooms at Avoca West was completed.

Both buildings were ready for teachers and students to return by the start of school on August 28th.

After summer projects were complete, the Board was presented with an updated Life Safety and Facilities Plan, which was prepared by DLA Architects, Ltd. and will be used as a planning tool that can guide the district in future decision making in terms of each buildings' needs and priorities.

Technology Innovation Implementation Schedule 2017-2021

Representatives from the Technology Innovation Committee presented the Board with the Technology Innovation Implementation Schedule 2017-2021 (TIIS). The TIIS is broken into the four strategic priorities of the Technology Innovation Strategic Plan: Explore New Opportunities, Enhance Instructional Practices, Prepare and Support Implementation and Optimize Investments in Technology. Each priority is listed with their associated goals and aligned strategies with a timeline spanning three years. The fourth year of the plan will be used to evaluate the progress of the TISP, update and conduct the next strategic plan for technology innovations.

Technology Damage Waiver Report

The Board was given a report regarding the first year the technology damage waiver program that was made available

to Avoca parents. In 2016-2017, there were 163 participants out of 345 eligible in fifth through eighth grades. The technology department estimated that in order for the district to break even with the waiver program, approximately 30% of eligible students would need to participate. The district surpassed this market by 17%. The initial purchase of damage waivers generated \$7,355 to offset expenditures from the student technology repair budget. The program cost is \$50 per child. Six claims were made during the 2016-2017 school year with a total repair expense of \$1,946. Parent out-of-pocket deductible was \$25 per claim. There were four damage claims that were not covered by the damage waiver for the year. Those damages were paid for by the parents. This was a low number of claims.

Performance Indicator Report

The Performance Indicator Report (PIR) includes four individual reports: Distinctive Impact Log; Awards and Recognition Log; the Student Connectedness Log; and the MAP Assessment data report. The Distinctive Impact Log highlighted staff recognition for their contributions to conference presentations and publications, inter-district observations of Avoca's high-achieving academic programs and community service. The Awards and Recognition Log gives credit to the many achievements of Avoca students and staff particularly in the areas of educational excellence and fine arts. The Student Connectedness Report tracks student participation in Avoca extra-curricular activities. Avoca West offers 19 extra-curricular activities. 79% of Avoca West students are participating beyond the required academic offerings. Marie Murphy offers 26 different extra-curricular activities, and 87% of Marie Murphy students participate in at least one activity. 50% of Marie Murphy students participate in three or more activities. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data was presented that reflected the percentage of students meeting or exceeding their growth projections for tests administered in math and reading. Avoca continues to exhibit high academic achievement where the average student is scoring at the 86th percentile in reading and 90th percentile in math by the time they graduate. As a subgroup, the top quartile students are achieving their growth projections at very high levels, indicating that Avoca is appropriately challenging their highest achievers.

Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator Plan 2017-2018

Superintendent, Kevin Jauch, presented the Board with the proposed scope of work and plan for the new 210-day contract approved for Avoca's Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator, Jennie Winters. The extension of her contract will be essential in achieving the current Strategic Plan's Goal 1, to provide a rigorous, comprehensive, personalized education to ensure success for all students at Avoca 37 and beyond. A majority of time will be invested in systematically implementing the new kindergarten through fifth grade math curriculum at Avoca West. Another area of focus will be on systematically implementing current science units with a

focus on NGSS science and engineering practices (SEP) and crosscutting concepts (CC) in kindergarten through fifth grades. A third area of attention will be the alignment of all of the components for ELA (reading, writing, listening/speaking and language). Another key objective will be applying the knowledge of formative assessment gained during the previous school year in kindergarten through eighth grade. While this plan is aggressive, Dr. Jauch is confident, as evidenced by the work accomplished last year with less time than Ms. Winters with the support of the rest of the administrative team will be able to achieve the goals presented.

Board of Education Agreements and Legacy

The 2017-2019 Board Agreements are the ethical standards and processes the Board agrees to uphold during its term. The agreements fall under the following categories: Unity of purpose; speaking with one voice; concerns from the community and staff; no surprises; Board member requests for information; Board member use of email; asking general questions or questions about items on upcoming meeting agendas; Board meeting presentation; behavioral expectations; and Board member use of social media. The 2017-2019 Legacy was developed during a Board of Education Retreat and highlights the key values and priorities that the Board would like to accomplish during their tenure. Both the 2017-2019 Board Agreements and Legacy have been approved by the Board and made available for viewing on the district website.

Debt Structure and Bond Capacity

Senior Vice President and Managing Director of PMA Securities, Inc., Tammie Beckwith Schallmo, presented the Board with an overview of the district's current debt structure, debt capacity, borrowing methods and various scenarios for possible bond sales in the future. Avoca's one outstanding debt is from a life safety bond issuance in 2015 and is subtracted from the District's debt capacity. Avoca's debt capacity, the maximum statutory amount principal Avoca could issue under the law, will be \$32.2 million on December 1, 2017. On a relative basis, Avoca has a very low debt burden. The payments will continue through fiscal year 2022, and the bonds are not callable. The Board was given general information regarding the very specific methods Illinois School Code prescribes to issue municipal bonds. Schools can issue General Obligation (GO) School Bonds either authorized through referendum by election or non-referendum. School districts also have the option to borrow using alternate revenue bonds, debt or lease certificates or capital leases. The district's current working cash bond capacity is \$14,805,001.

5-Year Financial Projections Update

Chief School Business Official, Beth Dever, presented the Board with an update of the 5-year financial projections for fiscal years 2018-2023. The summary included long-range

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projections of all funds, a summary by fund excluding the Debt Service and Fire Prevention and Safety Funds, and a report with line item detail of both revenues and expenditures. Ms. Dever included her assumptions regarding revenues and expenditures over the next 5 years. The district is expecting to have a 59% fund balance on a cash basis at the end of FY18. The 5-year projection shows a slow decline of the reserves over the next five years. The main concern at this time is the Education Fund. Avoca's revenues have not kept up with salary and benefit increases, changing student needs and other strategic expenditures. Ms. Dever indicated that while our reserve level is still relatively healthy, the focus should be on making plans to close the gap between revenues and expenditures. Ms. Dever indicated that she has shifted a portion of the tax levy from the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Fund to the Education Fund in an effort to slow the decline in the Education Fund. Ms. Dever indicated that if the district seeks revenues through a bond issuance, some of the capital expenditures in the Education Fund and O&M Fund could be included. As the Board prepares to make a decision regarding a bond issuance, careful consideration must be made regarding the financial future of the district as well as the overall impact on the tax payers.

New Trier Freshman Survey

The Board was presented with the results of the New Trier Freshman Survey, which is administered by New Trier High School and is intended for students to reflect on their elementary district experience. These survey results are from the Avoca Class of 2016. The results indicated that Avoca students were slightly above the township average and reported feeling prepared for success at New Trier High School, having trusted adults they could talk to and having homework appropriate in preparation for high school. Of interest, Avoca students reported a dramatic increase in preparedness in foreign language and art. While science preparedness is particularly high in comparison to the other students who participated in the survey, an opportunity for improvement exists in the area of mathematics. Placement has remained fairly consistent except for placement in the English/History 9 course, which reflects the collaborative nature of the Marie Murphy English and Social Studies curricula. The seven township school districts are currently reevaluating this survey and investigating ways to make it more reflective of 21st century skills and the educational practices that lead to college and career readiness.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of FY 2018 Budget

On September 28, 2017, the Board held a public hearing on the Fiscal year 2018 Budget. The Board approved the budget, with a projected deficit for fiscal year 2018 of (\$2,276,503). Expenditures of \$1,224,663 in the Fire Prevention and Safety Fund are funded by the 2015 Bond issue. There will be a .71% increase in revenues from FY 2017 and a 2.0% increase in expenditures.

Substitute Compensation

The Board approved a new recommendation for substitute compensation for the 2017-2018 school year. The new pay schedule starts all substitutes at a rate of \$115.00 per day and \$57.50 per half day. The estimated cost of this change will be \$770 per year. The Board also shortened the annual timeline to receive the higher tier of payment to 20 days. That rate is \$125 per day and \$62.50 per half day.

Release of Closed Session Minutes & Destruction of Closed Session Recordings

The Board released the following closed session minutes at the September Board of Education meeting: November 17, 2016; December 15, 2016; January 5, 2017; April 27, 2017; May 8, 2017; June 5, 2017; June 19, 2017; and August 7, 2017. The Board approved the destruction of the following closed session recordings: July 23, 2015; August 3, 2015; August 20, 2015; August 22, 2015; September 17, 2015; October 5, 2015; November 2, 2015; December 7, 2015; December 17, 2015; January 7, 2016; January 21, 2016; and February 1, 2016.

Administrator and Teacher Salary and Benefits Report

The Board approved the Administrator and Teacher Salary and Benefits Report (ATSBR) for School Year 2017. This report is filed with the Illinois State Board of Education and requires Board approval. The ATSBR lists certified teachers and administrator salaries, full-time equivalencies and benefits. This information is available to the public on the district website. The data collected is used in the Illinois State Report Card for schools.

Public Hearing Date on 2017 Tax Levy

The Board established that the Public Hearing for the 2017 Tax Levy will be set for December 21, 2017 at 6:15 p.m. in the Joseph M. Porto Community Room at Marie Murphy School. Notice will be posted in the Public Notice section of the 22nd Century Media Publications on December 7, 2017.

2017 PARCC Results

The Board reviewed the PARCC data from the assessment given in the spring of 2017. Over the past three years since the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test was first introduced, the Avoca School District has performed consistently at a very high level. The media and the Illinois State Board of Education compare PARCC data by grade level each year, and they report the percentage of students meeting and exceeding state standards weighing both categories equally. Superintendent Jauch introduced the data to the BOE in that manner to begin his presentation. As a district, 70% of Avoca students met or exceeded standards in mathematics, and 78% did in reading. By comparison, 32% and 37% of Illinois students met or exceeded standards in mathematics and reading respectively.

Avoca does not weigh meets and exceeds equally when we analyze data. It is our job to move all of our students to greater heights, and as much emphasis is placed on moving students who meet standards into the exceeds category as is placed on helping struggling children meet them. We are very proud that 25% of our students exceeded standards in reading, while 26% exceeded in mathematics, compared to the state's scores of 5% in each.

Dr. Jauch shared with the BOE that a better way to look at PARCC data is to compare a cohort of students' scores to themselves from previous years. Avoca not only looks to improve the meets or exceeds percentages each year, we also work to minimize the percentage of students who do not meet or only partially meet state standards. By looking at that student-centered data and analyzing which standards need the most attention, we are able to provide each child with instruction focused to their needs. For the most information regarding student academic data, as well as demographic and financial information, visit www.illinoisreportcard.com.



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Wilmette, IL