WASHINGTON
Community High School District 308

BOARD BRIEF

The Washington Community High School District #308 Board of Education consists of seven members who are elected by the community to serve a four-year term.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Regular Board Meeting
February 8, 2021 (7:00 PM)

January 2021 Board Meeting Summary

Highlights of Reports and Discussion Items

The following items were presented to the board:

Author – Mr. Dan Zehr presented to the board of education about his experience as co-author of The Star Wars Book. He shared that he had a great experience writing and learned a tremendous amount about the publishing process. He expressed that he will pull from his experiences related to writing the book as he teaches. He also said he is proud to be an example to his students to pursue their dreams. We are very proud of Dan's accomplishments!

National Merit Scholarship – Four students received a letter of commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Program. This is a distinguished recognition and we are proud of their achievements. Congratulations to Shelby Borlin, William Knight, Ivy Lersch, and Joseph McCoy!

Enrollment Report – Current enrollment is 1,411 students.

Financial Reports – Dr. Sander presented the investment and insurance report, which shows investments of approximately $7.4M. Insurance costs as of December 2020 remain below the break-even amount. Section 5.3

Board Committee Reports – The facilities committee met since the last Board of Education meeting.

Facilities Committee: The facilities committee discussed several projects. The HVAC replacement project will have a phased approach starting with the Ashbrook building. The committee continues to evaluate the stadium footprint and will be receiving a quote for potential expansion in some areas. Outdoor lights will be added to the parking lot across from the school and includes six poles and nine lights. The Torry Gym doors will be replaced. Lastly, the historic Washington School bell will be installed in the foyer in the next one to two months.

Resignations – Maggie Bagley, School Social Worker and Dan Zehr, Jr. Class Executive Board Sponsor (continuing as a teacher at WCHS).

In-Person and Remote Learning Update – The first semester was successful with no unscheduled pauses in instruction. We believe our hybrid schedule is working well and affords flexibility to have students present every day while maintaining physical distancing. This distance between students results in fewer healthy quarantines in the event there is exposure to a COVID-19 positive student in the classroom. We plan to continue the hybrid schedule, but will be monitoring the environment to determine if a full 7-period day is feasible before the end of the school year.

Our region is experiencing some changes to COVID-19 mitigations, and we are starting to see changes to IHSA directives about athletics. Some winter sports are beginning and practices have begun. Our athletic director continues to monitor any changes related to athletics and is working closely with coaches and student athletes.

Summer Remediation Program – After evaluating student progress from first semester, we found that some students struggled or experienced gaps in learning. Our next area of focus is remediation that may begin during second semester and extend into summer school and beyond. For courses such as math and English we are discussing plans to offer additional remediation courses over summer at no cost to students who need help recovering course credit. We will continue to plan with teachers and administration to develop detailed remediation plans.

Staffing Update – The district has been following a phased approach to staffing that will accommodate growing enrollment. The recommendation for FY22 is to hire an English teacher to help alleviate some of the overloads in the department, work with students for remediation, and cover additional sections resulting from increased student enrollment. Other recommendations for FY22 include hiring replacement positions for a welding and auto teacher, P.E. teacher, and part-time business teacher.

January 2021 Board Meeting Summary (continued)

Highlights of Reports and Discussion Items (cont.)

The following items were presented to the board:

Goals Planning – The board discussed creating goals for the next school year prior to the upcoming board of education election. They decided that developing goals now will allow for continuity as any new members acclimate to their new position. The members will be scheduling a date to establish goals in the coming weeks.

HVAC System – The first of a four-phase approach to updating the HVAC system would begin with the Ashbrook building that was built in 1975 and has the original HVAC system. The phased approach is in line with the long-term capital planning and allows the district to cover the cost in all phases. The upgrade will include converting the system from steam to water, and the new system will be under one set of controls resulting in increased energy efficiency. Work would begin this summer and will cost approximately $785,000. The bid process will occur in March and presented to the board in April.

SRO Contract – The district wishes to continue the SRO program and finalize the contract, but will wait for further clarification about recent state legislation affecting resource officer placement in schools. The district will review the contract again prior to the next board meeting.

Highlights of Action Items

The following items were approved:

WTSEC – The board approved the request from District 51 and District 52 to withdraw their membership from the Washington Township Special Education Cooperative.

HVAC – The board approved moving forward with Midwest Engineering Professionals to design Phase 1 of the HVAC project.

Bonds Resolution – The district pursued refunding of the 2018 series bonds due to a significant drop in interest rates. The lowest interest rate presented was from Peoples National Bank of Kewanee at 2.38%, which will result in a savings to tax payers of approximately $537K over the life of the bonds.

The board approved the bond resolution as stated. Resolution providing for the issue of Taxable General Obligation Limited Refunding School Bonds, Series 2021, of the District, for the purpose of refunding certain outstanding bonds of the District, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax to pay the principal and interest on said bonds, and authorizing the sale of said bonds to the purchaser thereof.

Executive Session – Two additional topics were addressed during executive session. Action on the 6-month review of executive session minutes. Open minutes for June 8, 2020 only.

Action on destruction on executive session recordings prior to July 2019.

Links of interest

Finance Report

December Approved Minutes

January Board Agenda

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The information in this document is intended to be a general summary of the board meeting results and does not include all topics discussed. If there is a discrepancy between this summary and the official board meeting materials, the official documents prevail.