

December 2020 Superintendent Report

Highlight of the Month: Yes, I continue to look for positive highlights during this prolonged pandemic. On my second anniversary of serving the EES community, I must once again acknowledge and thank the students, staff and families for working together to continue to keep our learning community safe and productive. Thanks to their efforts we have been able to keep the doors of EES open through the November holiday period. I am hopeful that with continued dedication and diligence on the part of all, we will remain open until we begin our break on December 24.

News and Notes

Educational Leadership

The administration, together with our school nurse, continue to remain current with the updated information regarding the pandemic, making informed decisions that are relevant to the situational needs of the EES community.

Facilities

The minutes of the Building Committee are included in your packet. As noted in the minutes, the heating project is close to completion but there have been some maintenance issues with the boiler. As with any older piece of equipment, parts wear out. We have been fortunate that due to the relatively warm weather we have been able to keep our school doors open while avoiding expensive late night emergency service calls.

Collaboration and Communication

The administration continues to communicate all updated and relevant information regarding the pandemic to staff and families in a timely fashion. We continue to meet regularly with our colleagues at the regional center and from other districts to share ideas and support.

Finance

We applied for and received additional \$32,010 of Coronavirus funds bringing the total amount of funds received to \$103,233. Similar to other districts we are encountering some complications regarding the funds for last year's expenditures since these funds were not made available until the 2019-20 budget year closed. Kymberli and I are conferring with the State Finance personnel and, more importantly, our auditor, to discuss how we can keep the funds that we received for last year's expenditures.

Comments on the BOE Agenda Items

XI. Unfinished Business

A. School Calendar 2021-2022

The administration is recommending a slightly revised calendar for your review and approval.

XII. New Business

A.-F. There are several policies that have been reviewed by the Policy Committee for a first reading by the BOE. There is one out-of-date regulation that is being recommended for repeal.

G. The application process for the Ethel Cushing Gardner Music Scholarship will begin in a few weeks. The applications will be ready for review by the BOE subcommittee around mid-March. My suggestions is that the Scholarship Steering Committee of the BOE review these applications, in addition to those that are part of the Community Foundation program.

H. I recommend that the BOE review the citizen's comments from the 6:30 Finance Committee meeting. It is also recommended that the BOE provide guidance to the administration as to their thoughts on the 2021-22 budget process.

XIV. Financial Reports

C. Budget Transfers

As with last year, you will note that we have a significant negative balance related to special education due to unanticipated outplacements and increased services. There are currently small amounts that we can transfer from other accounts to cover a portion of this deficit. As our budget becomes tighter overall, it becomes very difficult to cover these unanticipated expenditures. This was one area where the BOE made a very careful decision not to budget for any unanticipated expenses in order to maintain a budget increase of 2.09% for 2020-21. Some districts include extra dollars for this purpose and others set up an unexpended fund account for this purpose, similar to the account we have for capital projects. We began a discussion with the Town concerning the establishment of such an account last year. The BOE may want to consider continuing this discussion with the Town. In addition, there are also areas where there are negative balances due to expenditures related to purchases that will be reimbursed with the funds from the Coronavirus grant. Kymberli is in the process of drawing down those reimbursements. Once we have completed the draw down process and have applied the reimbursements, we will be better prepared to make transfers requests to the extent they are possible.