

January 19, 2021

BEARCAT BOARD STORY

Educating for Excellence....the Bearcat Way!



IT'S ALWAYS EXCITING TO BE A BEARCAT!

The Gasconade County R-1 School Board met Thursday, January 14, 2021 for a regular meeting and an executive session. The meeting took place in the Central Office Board Room.

The meeting began with a thank you to Allyson Hollrah, our 2020 Student Advisor to the Board. Allyson was commended on her commitment and excellence in representing the student body. Mark Brooks, Board President and Todd Witthaus, Vice President, Peoples Savings Bank presented Allyson with a certificate and plaque from the School District and a check from People Savings Bank.

The Department and Building Reports were submitted with a formal introduction of Blaine Klott, the new Student Advisor for 2021. The Board listened to MSBA's monthly video update where they discussed assessments and the upcoming school board election. Dr. Smith shared an update on GCR1 board candidates to date and reminded the board of the filing end date of Tuesday, January 19th at 5:00 p.m.

Dr. Smith updated the board on the budget, noting that we were trending well and should be on target with the additional tax checks we anticipate receiving by the end of January.

Ms. Anderson and Dr. Smith presented a visual presentation to the Board on how our virtual learning students performed to date. Virtual learning is provided by a 3rd party vendor, with updates provided to the district on a regular basis. In addition, our faculty follows up with the virtual learning students as part of their normal process. We had 50 virtual learners this

semester; many of which have returned to in-person for the second semester. Overall success rates were low for virtual learning: High School at 19%, Middle School at 32% and Elementary School at 67%. To accommodate COVID concerns as well as individual preferences, we will continue to offer the virtual learning option for the second semester; 17 students are continuing with virtual learning. However, the majority of students are finding the most benefit from in-person learning and have transitioned to the in-person model for the second semester.

Dr. Smith shared an update on COVID-19, highlighting that we are at our lowest number of quarantines to date. Although that is always subject to change, we are happy with where we are trending. In addition, the Board was updated on the Emergency Medical Leave Act and that the federal funding expired on December 31, 2020. Our district would like to continue to offer this benefit to staff, but the cost would be absorbed by the district vs. federal funding. The Board wanted to continue to support our staff that are quarantined due to COVID and approved extending the 120 hours for this leave; the extension was approved through the February board meeting.

The Board was updated on the District Dashboard and Strategic Plan, which are new to our website (under Departments/About our District). The Dashboard showcases areas of enrollment, expenditures, movement and how we compare to the state averages. We are proud to say our graduation rate is 5.86% above the state average. The Strategic Plan and SMART Goals were developed by a large committee made up of community members, faculty/staff and student groups. The plan focuses on moving the district forward strategically and with student interest in the forefront.

The Board was updated on facility projects, which included the status of the turf project and drawings for the Middle School secure entrance project. The Board was presented with cost estimates for the secure entrance at the Middle School and it was approved to proceed. The next step will be the RFQ process for vendor bids.

Dr. Smith reminded the Board of the March 1st deadline for Bearcat Memorial Nominations. The nomination forms can be found on the front page of our district website. The Bearcat Memorial Committee will meet in early March to select the final candidate that will be presented to the Board at the March board meeting.

Summer School dates of May 26 – June 18 were approved by the Board. The program will be in session a total of 17 days and classes for Elementary and Middle School students will be held at the Elementary. High School student classes will be held at Hermann High.

Given the current political environment and news coverage around this topic, Dr. Smith encouraged everyone to review and be aware of our obligations as faculty/staff of Policy GBCB, which relates to staff sharing their personal political viewpoints with students.

In Executive Session, the Board accepted the resignations of Jeremy Hosick, Becky Watts and Brett Wolfe from full-time positions and two extra-duty coaching positions, currently held by teachers. We appreciate all their support to the district. In addition, the Board approved the hiring of a new Assistant Track Coach, Keely Uthlaut as well as two new substitutes (one nurse and one teacher). We welcome all new hires to the district!

The next regularly scheduled Board Meeting is Thursday, February 11th at 6:00 p.m. in the Central Office.

Upcoming events:

- Basketball Season – check out the Athletics tab for details. The Basketball Invitational at Hermann begins on January 25th
- FFA Blood Drive at Hermann High – February 9th (sign up via American Red Cross website)
- No School Friday, February 12th (Professional Development Day and Monday, February 15th (Presidents Day)

Live Streaming is available for games and concerts - details can be found at www.hermann.k12.mo.us

