



Potomac Elementary School

School Board Minutes

For
December 22nd, 2021

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*“Potomac School equips each student for his/her future
within a culture of excellence that values the small community experience.”*

Call to Order

In room 112, Chair Dr. Hathaway called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm by leading all in the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice Chair Cliff Vann and Trustee Wes Mitchell were in attendance. Trustee Jayme Fairfield was present via WebEX. Principal John Rouse and Clerk, Heather Marcella, were also in attendance.

Public Input (for issues not on the agenda): None

Consent Agenda

Minutes of November 8th were on the Consent Agenda

Warrant Lists – Total Claims = \$55,436.10 Total Payroll = \$95,580.49

Business Cards – Included in Total Claims noted.

Petty Cash – Supplemental to monthly warrants used between Board Meetings – Reimbursed thru Claims.

Extracurricular (Student Accounts) – On November 1, 2021- \$34,593.01 thru November 30, 2021 - \$43,548.54.

Vice Chair Vann moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Trustee Mitchell seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0**

Board Professional Development:

Trustee Fairfield completed the board packet review.

8th Grade Class Trip Report: None

Teacher Reports:

Christi Taillefer

Mrs. Taillefer presented a math problem from the new Reveal Math program. The algebra word problem gave an example of the conceptual higher-order equations 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students are being asked to solve. The math problem closely resembles those questions found in the SBAC testing and is preparing students for success in this state-wide assessment.

Ashley Olsen

Mrs. Olsen discussed how the literacy grant is affecting her 2nd/3rd combined class. She has been able to purchase the 95 Core Phonics program. The program is geared for Kindergarten through second grade and falls under the structural literacy approach. Mrs. Olsen has also had the opportunity to purchase decodable text. Data analysis is allowing the early grades to pin point literacy issues before they become problems as students move on to higher grades. Mrs. Olsen also had the opportunity to gain professional development by taking literacy related college courses, in which she learned strategies used directly in her class.

Principal’s Report – John Rouse

All of the following activities and accomplishments would not have been possible without the full cooperation and engagement of all of the Potomac School staff members.

Teaching and Learning

- We have been focusing over the past few weeks on ways to get students engaged in higher order thinking skills. To help us have a common language regarding thinking skills, as a staff we talk about Depth of Knowledge or DOK. I have shared some about the different levels of depth of knowledge in previous principal reports. In a nut shell, increasing the cognitive level simply means setting up conditions where students have to think beyond simply recalling or regurgitating facts. It generally means taking some factual information that the students have acquired and applying that knowledge to a new and different concept or setting. The statewide assessment that Montana has chosen (SBAC) does a good job of posing questions to the student that require responses at levels higher than simply recalling facts. You might remember the sample SBAC math test question that was included in last month’s principal’s report.
- Our outside consultant, Dr. Leah Esmont, has been in our school working with our instructional staff members for two full weeks (one in November and one in December) since our last board meeting. One might say that we are in our full court press (to borrow a basketball analogy) to get students where we want them to be well in advance of the state testing window later this spring. After receiving our full level of funding for our literacy grant, we have dedicated the resources necessary to have Dr. Esmont in our classrooms for four more full weeks before the end of the school year.
- In addition, the additional \$95,000 of carryover funds allows us the financial flexibility to allow our three staff members to choose to participate in some high-quality professional development through the Plain Talk Literacy conference in February- should they choose to attend. Mr. Rouse will be participating in the Learning and the Brain in April in New York City. This particular international conference is focused on the science of the brain as it relates to learning. Mr. Rouse is planning on making a presentation at this conference during which he will be highlighting what our instructional staff members have been able to accomplish over the past five years with our focus on literacy and with our dedicated Fridays for professional development.

Budget and Finance

- We have received our carryover from OPI for the literacy grant. Ordinarily, the carryover funds would be added to the yearly allocation. In our case, the carryover amount was around \$95,000. Our total literacy grant allocation for 2021-22 is \$345,146.
- We have also received approval of our application for ESSER III Funds (originating from the CARES Act) for \$180,512 for a three-year period ending in the 2023-24 school year. We are planning to use the ESSER III funds to help support our Fridays program- PBL (Place-Based Learning). In addition, we have received approval to use a portion of these funds to replace the carpeting in our main building as a means of reducing the possible spread of viruses in our school.
- Based on our projected student enrollment numbers for the 2022-23 school year, we will likely need to employ an additional teacher because a combined grades 2/3 classroom will be too large.

Here are the projected numbers:

- preK- 10
- K- 9
- 1- 12
- 2-12
- 3-13
- 4- 5
- 5- 8
- 6- 8
- 7- 9
- 8- 7

Currently, we have 10 teachers including our instructional coach. For 2022-23, we will need 11 teachers including the instructional coach.

Student Activities

- Boys’ basketball had their final regular season games last week and will be involved in the end-of-the-season tournament starting on Monday, December 13th, at DeSmet School. Our team will play a second game of the tournament either Tuesday or Wednesday depending on whether or not they win or lose on Monday.
- We have two staff members who volunteered to coach the boys this season. The coaches were Amy Truett and Bryanna Peterson.

Safety

- We recently had a “surprise” inspection by the state fire marshal’s office representative. She indicated that we are fully in compliance in all areas.
- Justin has installed concrete retaining structures in our visitor’s parking area to prevent vehicles from accidently crossing into the sidewalk area.

Facilities

- We are planning to replace the carpet in the main building in order to reduce the potential for the spread of viruses and to reduce the custodial efforts for cleaning the flooring. The fact that there are old asbestos floor tiles under the existing carpet makes the replacement of the carpet a bit more challenging.
- We have had a mechanical engineer examine our current HVAC system and the related ductwork and controls to provide solutions for creating a better temperature and air flow balance between the main floor and the upper floor.
- We have a bid for asphalt for the parking areas and funds to cover the expenses, depending on the areas that the board decides we should pave.

Clerk’s Report

The clerk’s report included information on the upcoming Board Trustee elections as well as the general fund budget and funding options for the paving project.

Old Business

MTSBA Policy Updates – 2nd Reading

Trustee Fairfield moved to approve the MTSBA Policy updates second reading. Trustee Mitchell seconded the motion. The board reviewed the policies. Trustee Fairfield amended her motion to approve the MTSBA Policy updates second reading and to approve changes per the clerks notes. Trustee Mitchell seconded the amended motion. The changes to the MTSBA Policy are as follows: Policy 4125 line 8 remove the word “can”. Form 4330F page 2 line 48 remove the “n” at the end of “Montanan” changing to “Montana”. Policy 1420 page 2 line 5 remove the word “Optional”. Policy 3222 page 1 line 33 change punctuational period into comma after the word “group”. **Passed 4-0**

