

Board Retreat 2021

Mission: "Engaging All Learners to Achieve Success"

The Board Retreat 2021 started at 6:00 PM on Monday, August 9, 2021. The meeting was held at Bistro on the Loup/Ramada
265 33rd Avenue
Columbus, NE 68601

Candace Becher: Present

Mark Brown: Present

Michael Jeffryes: Present

Doug Molczyk: Present

Theresa Seipel: Present

Douglas Willoughby: Present

I. Board Meeting

I.A. Call to Order

I.B. Roll Call of Board

I.C. Pledge of Allegiance

I.D. Notice of Open Meeting Posted

I.D.1. President insures all can hear proceedings

I.E. Opportunity for Public to be Heard

I.F. Board Special Functions

I.F.1. Enrollment Study

Troy Loeffelholz, Superintendent, talked about the enrollment study performed last year. The study gives low, middle and high enrollment scenarios. The study is done by looking at construction that is being done presently and construction that is planned for the future. Information is collected from the area chamber of commerce, the City of Columbus, and the Platte County Assessor. Calls are made to the builders for information regarding where growth areas are located. The study says Columbus is growing to the northeast. Dr. Loeffelholz also said he has received a call from a builder regarding the recent land purchase.

Dr. Loeffelholz said discussions would need to start regarding a bond vote for 2022. Board Vice President, Doug Willoughby, said it would be nice to have Kramer up and running before the next project would start. Discussion on the scope needing to be bigger because with larger enrollment, there may need to be some additions to current buildings along with a new elementary school. Dr. Loeffelholz said conversations with the community will need to be scheduled soon. Also mentioned was the casino causing an explosive amount of growth in Columbus. That large project will spark other businesses and more housing for staff of the casino.

The question was asked regarding when CPS would start looking at more than one middle and high school? Dr. Loeffelholz said Kearney went to two at the 6000 enrollment mark, maybe 5000 would be our number, especially for a middle school.

Dr. Loeffelholz said the bond campaign has to be approached with a positive attitude, it is good to have a growing economy, and a growing student population. Columbus is a place people want to live and raise their families. Board Member, Candy Becher, said some people don't want the growth.

I.F.2. Long Range Buildings and Sites Priorities

Leonard Kwapnioski, Director of Building/Sites and Technology shared information regarding long range buildings and sites priorities. There may be projects to add and discussion on projects that should be removed. Mr. Kwapnioski said the Ice House is still being worked on at this time, this work is volunteer time. The North Park parking lot will come off the list as it is very close to completion. HVAC equipment is listed and hopeful that ESSER III funds may be used for some of this project. On the list is North Park and Centennial additions to add cafeterias as these schools are using one space for a gym and cafeteria and more space is needed. Emerson and West Park also have this issue, Dr. Loeffelholz mentioned looking into a Behlen building to add an eating space. Along with the projects, there was discussion on air quality in buildings, the challenges of getting people to work and the Davis Bacon laws paying people a federal wage, which makes bids extremely high. Mr. Kwapnioski spoke about finding a better site for the CASSETTE House, all on one level. He asked the Board what they would like to see more of in long term projects. The athletic complex is still being discussed, especially after our baseball team recently did so well, it seems to bring new life to this idea.

I.F.3. CRT and Health Standards

Dr. Loeffelholz said the second draft of the health standards was released. They have removed some information, and it leaves the door open for the board to develop health standards for CPS as is needed for the Columbus community.

The board started to work on a statement in regard to Critical Race Theory, they will continue to develop the statement and finalize and share at the next meeting.

I.F.4. Proficiency Reporting

Jason Harris, Director of Student Services and SPED and Amy Romshek, Director of Curriculum shared information and answered questions on Proficiency Reporting. Mr. Harris said they have been working with Nicole Anderson, Director of Communication and Foundation Director and Isaiah May, Communications Specialist, on what the roll-out will look like for this program. They have developed scripts to create the videos for families. There was discussion regarding concerns from the committee. Some of the concerns stem from the academic grades and behavioral/work habit grades being separate, CHS report cards will show the two grades. Dr. Loeffelholz said this is teaching students what is looked at in the workforce, arriving on time, meeting deadlines, finishing projects as instructed. Retakes are also a concern and how that actually works in the classroom. Dr. Loeffelholz said no system is perfect, it is what they are used to, he sees the new grading as motivation for students to keep working at it. Board Members shared concerns about a student not being proficient at the end of the course, does the student then retake the whole course? It was also asked that there is clarity for teachers of the goals. Parents and students will need to know how to read the report cards or transcripts.

Questions on the amount of time and funding that has been used in the last 6 years for Marzano training. Discussion on collecting data and how long it will take for the data to accurately reflect the new grading system.

I.F.5. Overview of Marketing and Communications from 2020-2021 - Focus for 2021-2022

Mrs. Anderson shared data received from the marketing and communications surveys, this data shared how our parents like to receive information from the district.

Parents prefer to receive information by text.

Email so you can go back to the information.

85% already familiar with REMIND App

65% are Facebook users

9% Twitter users. Not growing by new users.

She said Anchor Lines which is articles written by students with guidance, have been added.

They are hoping to bring some younger students on board. Other projects they have been working on are the return to school roll-out, COVID information, the monthly staff newsletter, The Helm. Isaiah has started the Meet the Team videos. Mrs. Anderson also mentioned that throughout the year there were 100 CPS stories in the Columbus Telegram that were not athletic focused. Parent Portal has been added to the website on the homepage. Over the last year they were busy developing and implementing live-stream for the district. SMORE was added to use for newsletters, Troy uses this platform for his Tuesday Tidbit. Mrs. Anderson said she has taken on the role currently as the secretary for

NebSPRA. The Discoveries publication goes out three times a year digitally and one time through the mail. More data from the surveys showed staff would like to see more and better building specific communications, and know more about the construction projects and the strategic plan. Discussion on the website, Apptegy, the company we use is looking into a new platform. Mrs. Anderson said they are in the process of doing site mapping from elementary up.

I.F.6. Overview of CPS Foundation from 2020-2021 - Focus for 2021-2022

Mrs. Anderson talked about what is happening at the CPS Foundation, she has been heavily involved in the Kramer Capital Campaign, \$885,000.00 of the 1.9 million goal has been contributed. She said they have been working on the Judy Temme Scholarship, the \$116,000.00 Behlen grant partnership, the alumni newsletter, alumni videos, Discoverer Dash, and The Lighting of the Anchor. The Foundation goals this next year, Mrs. Anderson said will be transitioning from iVisions to QuickBooks for their financial platform and changing their fiscal year from January - December. They will continue to work on the alumni database, and grow The Lighting of the Anchor and the Discoverer Dash. Hiring an Early Childhood Education Coordinator for the Kramer Early Education Program will soon be a priority.

I.F.7. Child Development Center

Mrs. Anderson shared \$40,000.00 of equipment has been purchased for the early education program, and they will continue to work on finding funding to meet the 1.9 million goal.

I.F.8. Update on Building Projects

Leonard Kwapnioski, Director of Building, Sites and Technology gave an update on current projects, he said the North Park parking lot is 98% complete. A new sign is being built out front to match the other elementary buildings. Mr. Kwapnioski said they have found something different for the weeds. Round-up has been less effective, chemicals have changed. The new chemical is working well. He also said the HVAC is complete at Kramer. Discussion on putting bottle fillers in each building.

Mr. Kwapnioski asked what types of concerns there were from the board. He said the extra grounds person will start Monday. Work is being done to move the handicap parking stalls at CMS to a better location. There are some areas with dead grass at CHS, irrigation is challenging because of the clay content in the soil, they are putting some new lines in to help.

I.F.9. Kramer Education Center

Mr. Kwapnioski said the gym lights at Kramer were finished today. Steel is the obstacle for this project. He is looking at a new larger vendor that has really improved from Indiana.

I.F.10. Follow-up on Engagement and Exit Surveys from Upbeat

Mr. Kay shared information from the Engagement and Exit Surveys. He gave the four areas that need to be reviewed, lack of input in school wide decisions, dissatisfaction with school leadership, lack of professional autonomy, and poor benefits. Mr. Kay stated that the district will focus on communicating opportunities for input on school-wide decisions. Ask for a specific list of decisions that they feel there was a lack of input from building or faculty level staff. Discussion on how CPS will acquire the specific information, Mr. Kay said there will

be communication regarding the process of decision-making and be more transparent with our staff. Also, with the communication piece ask specifically what the dislike is regarding leadership, and work with leadership on those issues. Mr. Kay wants to clarify what staff believes professional autonomy means. He also mentioned that schools that have PLC's do not typically have a low score in professional autonomy. Board concern is this possibly causing some turn-over of staff. Mr. Kay said he has had this experience in two school districts and instructional strategy is not always comfortable for teachers. Some remarks from staff were about PLC's being a negative experience. There have been steps taken to make this better, Dr. Romshek said we have some very high functioning PLC's and some that do not function well. Mr. Kay said in the survey the word autonomy was related to micromanaging. He also talked about how the questions should be worded, should the questions be the same or different. Some would like more district level questions, to allow for concerns on that level to be part of the surveys. The data about poor benefits was not a surprise and will need to be discussed with the Negotiations Committee.

I.F.11. Budget Overview

Chip Kay, Director of Finance and Human Resources said he is waiting to get the official valuations from each county. Balances look different because of CARES funds, he will have a more in-depth review next Monday.

I.F.12. TEEOSA Funding Plan

Dr. Loeffelholz and Mr. Kay talked about the TEEOSA Funding Plan and how it calculates what every district needs. This plan would save taxpayers in property tax. For Columbus, this would mean dropping the levy by about \$.18. They have had a meeting with Senator Walz, she is on board, really important to get the big players interested and to buy into this plan. This will be hard sell for democratic senators and the far west senators. Dr. Loeffelholz said Senator Walz has her staff writing legislation on this plan already.

I.F.13. Other Items by the Board

I.G. Superintendent's Report

I.H. Board Sharing

There was no board sharing at this meeting.

II. Executive Session

The Board did not go into Executive Session.

III. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41pm.

I, the undersigned, being the duly qualified Secretary for the School District No. 1 of Columbus, Nebraska, certify that the preceding is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular School Board meeting of Monday, August 9, 2021.

President

Secretary



COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Retreat 2021

Human Resources

- New process to verify prior employment
- Strong emphasis on quality post-graduate hours for salary schedule movement
- Frontline subfinder/leave
- UpBeat Engagement and Exit Surveys
 - Retention of Quality Staff
 - Identify strengths and weaknesses impacting our staff
 - Develop a strategic approach to hiring, retention, and engagement strategies
- Plan for future hiring due to expansion of programs and facilities
- Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model
 - New walk-through/informal observation document (21-22), Committee
 - Implementation of new District policy on evaluations (TBA)
 - New formal observation document (22-23)
 - Strengthen the link between evaluation data, teacher coaching, growth/development plans, and teacher support/intervention.



UpBeat Exit Survey

Areas of Focus

- Lack of input in school-wide decisions
- Dissatisfaction with school leadership
- Lack of professional autonomy
- Poor benefits

Defined Focus Strategies

- The District will focus on communicating opportunities for input on school-wide decisions respective to input, collaboration, solution-based outcomes. The District will better define when input is appropriate and when it is dictated by law, policy, or situations where input is not plausible. Staff will be asked to specific list decisions that they feel lack input from the building and/or faculty level.
- School leadership personnel will participate in leadership growth opportunities, set personal goals to engage their staff, and develop practices in effective leadership and communication. In circumstances where accountability is necessary and may lead to perceived dissatisfaction, this years engagement and exit surveys will involve more specific feedback.
- (Continued on the Next Page)



UpBeat Exit Survey

Areas of Focus

- Lack of input in school-wide decisions
- Dissatisfaction with school leadership
- Lack of professional autonomy
- Poor benefits

Defined Focus Strategies (Continued)

- Data from the low score on professional autonomy is directly related to the teachers desire to follow their own curriculum, development and use their own assessments, personal grading practices, and not be tied to Marzano Instruction. The District has developed sound strategies in coaching, professional development, and allowed for teacher input on these topics. PLCs are an excellent avenue to better develop a collaborative approach to improving this perception by staff. As a District we need to continue to “provide input” and “promote the why”.
- Primarily related to health/dental benefits. The District gives cash equivalent to single insurance. Funding additional plans would require changes to salary, elimination of cash-in-lieu, or other possible negotiated items with the CEA. Comparability suggests that CPS is similar in their approach to this benefit with like-size districts.



Food Service & Finance

- RFP year for Food Service
 - Completed in January
 - Looking at fiscal advantages to retaining food service staff as CPS employees
 - District finished in the black with LSI for 20-21, excluding Cares Funding and the payment correction by LSI. Using just annual operations.
 - Opening of the “Galley” at the Middle School this fall.
- Finance Department
 - Transferring funds to Depreciation from General Fund
 - Food Service
 - Transportation
 - Building Budgets (80/20)
 - Nantkes
 - Property Acquisition
 - 21-22 Budget Presentation on August 16th Board Meeting
 - [ESSER III](#) Committee, plan presented at September Board Meeting





COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Chip's 21-22 Goals/Opportunities

- Presenting on a national webinar with UpBeat on our use of their services
- Will be on a panel sponsored by UpBeat at the National AASPA Conference in Washington, DC in October
- Continue to work with Dr. Loeffelholz on the School Funding Proposal to reduce reliance on Property Tax through a ½ cent sales tax used as educational stabilization funding
- Develop a long-range fiscal plan for District expansion (w/Building & Sites)
- Work with Jason Harris on a para-educator staffing plan for the District
- Implement the capital improvement funding plan for Nantkes, including updates on our facility rental policy and rate scale



Q & A