

La Harpe Community School District #347  
**LA HARPE SCHOOL BOARD News Release – Fall 2017**

The La Harpe school board consists of President Bobi James, Vice President Cindy Wear, and members Brian Brown, Lacey Covert, Dustin Detherage, Ryan Johnson, and Darren Spangler. At the September meeting, the board approved the FY 2018 budget, which is posted on the district website at [laharpeeagles.com](http://laharpeeagles.com), the consent agenda and payment of the bills, the Administrator & Teacher Salary Report, Education Support Personnel Salaries, and reviewed an HVAC repair. The Board also approved Kendrah Ruebush as a part-time paraprofessional during her counseling internship at the school, Aden Trout as head coach for 5<sup>th</sup>6<sup>th</sup> grade girls' basketball, and Jason Finch as Athletic Director, and Zack Myers as Sub and Activity School Bus Driver. Superintendent Olson and the Board discussed the new evidence-based formula, a new State budget form (coming), what the 26 new rating items may mean to school districts, tax payments, loan repayment, and unsure revenues from the State.

*We were extremely excited to have the Dollar General Regional Manager, Ryan Miller and the local Dollar General Manager, Sheryl Klein, at our elementary faculty meeting Sept. 12 to present the school with a \$2500 check for a literacy grant. On behalf of Dollar General, Miller expressed appreciation to all of the teachers and staff by rewarding each of them with a \$50 gift card.*

At the October meeting, the board reviewed the FY 2017 Annual Audit, approved an HVAC repair, the consent agenda and payment of bills. The Board also discussed vehicle repair costs, the number of buses needed, and leasing vs. buying, and approved a 3-year bus lease for 5 buses. The Board approved an overnight band trip to St. Louis in May and the purchase of a turkey and ham as a Christmas gift for each district employee. No closed meeting was held. The Central Office roof is scheduled to be replaced. La Harpe District hosted the Illinois Association of School Boards Western Division Dinner Meeting Oct. 24 in the gym.

Principal McKeown reported that many area schools, including La Harpe, have a low percentage of girls which will create a challenge fielding girls' athletics for many years to come. Cross Country has completed their season and 7/8 boys' basketball season is underway. McKeown detailed the events of Fire Safety Day and emergency relocation practice. Miles of Smiles offered dental exams early in October. School-wide positive behavior activities were held, the kindergarten visited Rogers Pumpkin Farm, picture retakes were completed, and several reading nights were held. The first quarter ended Fri., Oct. 20. Our counselor intern, Kendrah Ruebush has spent much time talking to students, planning activities, and dealing with various issues, including the required "Erin's Law" discussion. *McKeown expressed gratitude for a wheelchair that was delivered to the school by Pam Campbell.* McKeown gave information on all of the staff development meetings, conferences, training days, and her progress completing non-tenured teacher evaluations.

At the November meeting, the board approved Brock Finch as 5<sup>th</sup>6<sup>th</sup> grade boys' assistant basketball coach and Randy May as 5<sup>th</sup>6<sup>th</sup> grade girls' assistant basketball coach. The board approved the preliminary tax levy for which no hearing will be necessary in December at the final approval. The board reviewed and approved the consent agenda and payment of the bills, the Deficit Reduction Plan, and the Risk Management Plan which utilizes Tort funds from the levy. Dr. Olson, Ryan Johnson, Cindy Wear, and Bobi James shared information they received from attending sessions at the annual school board conference in Chicago. The Board and administrators discussed at length the need for certified support personnel including a counselor, an additional social worker day, psychologist services, area intervention programs for students in crisis, and training for teachers and aides in the area of dealing with trauma-affected students.

Dr. Olson included the most recent report of reimbursements totaling \$68,490.64 for FY18 which have been vouchered by the State, but are still awaiting payment. All of the State payments for the FY 17 have been received! Dr. Olson wrote letters to our local legislators, Rep. Frese and Sen. Tracy, outlining how the property tax "freeze", SB 851, would affect the school district should it pass. The bill would raise each of our current 699 Homestead Exemptions to \$10,000 and our 255 Senior Exemptions to \$8,000. The school district would lose over \$92,550, while an average Homestead exemption property owner would save approx. \$8.70/month and each Senior exemption property owner would save approx. \$6.53/month. We have been told the bill passed in the House as a political maneuver so that legislators could say they voted for it when running for re-election, but that it will not likely be called to a vote in the Senate. In the next few months, school administrators will attend several workshops on the new Evidence-Based Funding, its accompanying requirements, and the new ESSA reporting requirements.

Principal McKeown gave an update on junior high athletics, an anti-bullying "Unity Day" arranged by our counselor intern, and the recent Parent Teacher Conferences which were well-attended. The student council organized a successful Red Ribbon Week saying "No to Drugs", and students dressed up for a Halloween

parade through the nursing home. Several Reading Club nights have been held, and the elementary positive behavior committee organized a fantastic fall party! Junior high also held a positive behavior activity. Mrs. Johnson's first grade class led the monthly morning meeting. La Harpe schools raised \$2446.58 through the Juvenile Diabetes Walk. Teachers were challenged to do a Serving Others on a School Project in November to develop community connections and serve others. The Pre-K gave away paper turkeys with kind words to people in the community, kindergarten is collecting items for a local church's Mexico trip, and second graders wrote letters to veterans. The third grade is engaging weekly in reading and other activities with the nursing home residents, and fourth grade is collecting tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Art classes made ornaments for the Festival of Trees. Mr. Finch's students worked toward hanging lights in the park. The annual Health/Life Safety inspection was passed. Several teachers have begun observing their peers' classrooms as they had expressed interest in doing last year. Mrs. Bray held Title I Family Night for grades 3-4 at which students received pizza, a free book, and valuable information about homework and PARCC testing. McKeown attended the technology conference and ideas from it will be shared with teachers at the December in-service.

La Harpe School Board meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month in the school library. Agendas and approved minutes are posted on the website at [laharpeeagles.org](http://laharpeeagles.org).