

La Harpe Community School District #347
LA HARPE SCHOOL BOARD News Release – February 2017 Meeting

The school board regular meeting was held February 21, 2017 in the district library. Regional Supt. John Meixner and 5th grade teacher Grant Rogers were visiting. The Board approved the consent agenda, payment of the bills, and \$20,000 in network upgrades to expand and improve accessibility within the buildings. The technology upgrades will be paid for with federal funds. Grant James will serve as track coach and Andi Trout submitted a resignation from her aide position at the end of the school year.

Regional Supt. John Meixner explained the purpose of the Summer School Breakfast/Lunch Hearing is to hear public comments and testimony concerning the summer school meals mandate. The district's letter requesting exemption from the mandate was accepted as testimony and Dr. Olson discussed the validity of looking at average variable cost and shutdown cost to further make the case for exemption. Supt. Meixner called for public comments. There were none. Meixner concluded the hearing and indicated he would send his written decision of approval or denial prior to March 1.

5th grade teacher Grant Rogers gave a presentation on Bridges in Mathematics®, an inquiry-based, Common Core-linked, comprehensive K-5 math curriculum. Rogers showed the grade 5 math scope and sequence, pricing and materials included, and a display of all the US locations that have adopted Bridges. Rogers led the Board through sample lessons. Math testing scores are not yet available to show the viability of the Bridges curriculum and its paper format does not translate to 1-1 computing, but there is a website component with program apps and an RtI piece. Rogers also promoted the District's subscription to Discovery Education™ Social Studies and Science curriculum. Rogers showed an area of the Discovery Ed website where resources are available on any subject. Rogers added that he would like to incorporate a lot more field trips, mentioning that some schools mandate 1-2 trips per week. Rogers would like to get students out in the community, citing an example of one school in which 5th grade students spend 2 hours at the nursing home every Friday with activities designed around their experiences. Rogers thanked the Board for their time.

Supt. Olson and Transp. Dir. Jeanne Clayton presented information regarding eliminating a regular school bus route for the coming school year. Student ride time would increase by approximately 15 minutes and potential savings would range from \$5,000-\$12,000 considering State reimbursements. A morning and an afternoon route driver would be eliminated, and a bus returned early might incur a lease penalty. Remaining regular drivers' time would increase, requiring retirement fund payments. Special Ed transportation spending will likely decrease for the coming year by \$13,000 due to attrition, but that can fluctuate greatly due to student needs. Clayton mentioned that discontinuing athletic practice shuttles (a matter that would require revision of the co-op agreement with Dallas), would result in a \$12,000-\$19,000 drop in transportation costs. No action was taken. The Board discussed the information and may revisit transportation changes again next year. It was also mentioned that the school van will need to be replaced.

Superintendent Olson reported the recent payments totaling \$147,392 that have been vouchered by the State, but not yet paid to La Harpe District. Gov. Rauner's budget address, Wed, Feb 15, will hopefully focus on education spending. Ralph Martiri, of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, has for many years promoted data-driven non-partisan budget solutions to Illinois State legislators, which have, so far, fallen on deaf ears. A State Ed Budget is expected, but there may be no budget for anything else until February 2019 due to the Madigan/Rauner standoff. Olson will attend the Alliance Leadership Summit in Springfield at which Gov. Rauner will address the superintendents and they will have opportunity to speak with their legislators. Olson, McKeown, and local teachers involved in the Mawi grant brainstormed many ways for classrooms to connect with the community. One idea is to use the greenhouse to grow flowers for the Love La Harpe planters at local businesses.

Spangler referenced the District's '05 School Construction Grant application asking if demolition of the Corey house could be added to the District's "share". The State Board website states that all action toward issuing entitlements has been suspended until direction is received from the General Assembly and Governor. Olson mentioned the school construction funding is not even on the radar of current legislators and urged board members to write Senator Jil Tracy and Rep. Randy Frese.

Principal McKeown gave athletic updates for basketball, volleyball and track. Mr. Roger's 5th grade led the Elementary School-Wide Morning Meeting Jan. 26, and Gabe Quail won the Junior High Spelling Bee on Jan. 27. Junior high and elementary positive behavior activities and 3rd quarter mid-terms were held. 8th graders attended Illini West's Freshman Orientation and I.W. will soon visit to register students for high school classes. Elementary class Valentine parties were enjoyed and Jump Rope for Heart was a great success. Elementary teachers met to discuss Spelling, Social Studies, and English (Grammar) curriculum. Several of the grades need curriculum maps coordinated with the new Science and Social Studies Standards. Teachers were given in-service time to update their webpages and to create a Google Classroom with a new tool that helps teachers organize assignments quickly, provide feedback efficiently, and easily communicate with their classes. Mr. Sullivan, Mrs. Faul and Ms. Shumaker presented information from the Math, English/Language Arts, and Science cadres they have been attending. Teachers walked through the new process which determines their final evaluation rating with mock data for "Mrs. Frizzle, and, Unit Plans were reviewed.

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.