



Brookings School District

Working Together...Educating with Excellence...Inspiring Learners for Life

Dr. Klint Willert, Superintendent

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TO: Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Klint Willert, Superintendent

DATE: September 9, 2021

RE: Administrative Board Report

The cooler days and the number of school events are indicators we are diving into fall. As we enter September, there continues to be an ever-changing landscape with COVID-19. The virus, along with the related challenges of managing through a global pandemic have required an extraordinary amount of time. However, regular school district operations do not stall. Here are a few items of note as we reflect on the last month and look forward to the days to come.

- 1. COVID-19 Plans Survey of Staff** – As we discussed the proposed changes to the Bobcat Tracks Plan, I was asked to conduct a survey of district staff. As of this draft, our district team has solicited survey questions and ideas from teacher representatives, from administrators, and from the school board members. Our team will compile the questions and issue the survey during the week of September 13. Ideally, we would have the results from the survey returned in a timely fashion for the board workshop meeting.
- 2. Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief and Plan Review (ESSER)** – School districts across the state are beginning to receive the review and feedback on the board approved ESSER and Back-to-School plans. At this time, the Brookings School District has not received our feedback from the South Dakota Department of Education. Once we have the feedback, we will inform the board if there are any required plan revisions from the Department of Education.
- 3. Reimagining Education Colloquium** – Previously I shared the Brookings School District was selected to participate in the state Reimagining Education Colloquium. The colloquium opportunity was a result of the federal grant received by South Dakota through the collaboration of the South Dakota Department of Education, South Dakota State University, and the Brookings School District. The focus of the work is centered on customized and competency based learning. The district had 5 teams (one from each district campus except the high school) attend the event on July 28, 29, and 30. The high school has been selected to participate in the colloquium beginning next year. From the July events, the teams arrived at consensus on a need to support personalization and competency-based approaches

throughout the entire district. Watch for more work from this effort to be shared in the months to come as our district teams continue on the journey.

4. **Back-to-School** – I wanted to thank the board members who were able to attend the Back-to-School events on August 23. The event was high energy and engaging. Anecdotally, I have received a great deal of positive feedback from staff as they shared how much they appreciated the messages, the fun atmosphere, and the way we launched the 2021-22 school year. I can share some of the final staff feedback data once it is available.
5. **Brookings Economic Development (BEDC) Authority Partnership** – Dr. von Fischer, Abby Page, and I met with Andrew Sloss, the Director for BEDC. We are in the process of discussing plans for the upcoming manufacturing week and discussing how we can strengthen relationships with manufacturers in the community.
6. **Meeting with City of Aurora** – I had the opportunity to meet with families in Aurora. We had a positive conversation as we discussed the growth of the community, the transportation needs for Aurora students, and the ongoing work in the Brookings School District. Overall, I appreciated the opportunity to visit with the various constituents from Aurora.
7. **Communications Strategies** – From time to time I hear references about school district communications. I wanted to take a moment to share the different ways we communicate from the district. The typical communications from these sources is information only. We do not utilize these efforts to necessarily share district accomplishments such as the receipt of a \$200,000 workforce development grant or to highlight the accomplishments of students or staff in the schools. The primary venues for communicating information from the district includes:
 - ***Monday Memo*** – a video typically presented each Monday with district updates
 - ***School Board Reports*** – published every month on the district school board web page
 - ***District Web Page*** – Updated 6 years ago to enhance communications and links to information related to the district
 - ***Newspaper*** – Share information through the local newspaper on district events and news
 - ***Radio*** – Monthly radio show highlighting key functions in the Brookings School District
 - ***Campus Messenger*** – Share information through email, text, and/or telephone calls

There are some areas for improvement. Currently, the district does not have a centralized social media presence. For example, some schools have a Facebook page while others do not. Additionally, the district does not have a strategy in place to promote the work of students and staff in the district to our community and patrons. I would continue to encourage our teams to consider means and methods to address the community wishes for increased communications – both informational communications as well as communications highlighting the accomplishments and success of students and staff in the Brookings School District.

8. **State Social Studies Standards** – A great deal of discussion continues regarding the proposed social studies standards for South Dakota. The standards are typically created with the input from a team of K-12 as well as post-secondary educators, policy makers, parents, industry leaders, and educational leaders. The standard review is part of the cyclical plan in

the South Dakota Department of Education. The standards discussion has generated some controversy after the SDDOE removed some references on the Oceti Sakowin in the standards document before present the standards draft. Several public meetings are being scheduled for public input. The first meeting is September 20 in Aberdeen. Three other meetings will occur throughout the school year in Sioux Falls, Pierre, and Rapid City. Final action on the standards will occur in the spring of 2022.

- 9. Meeting with Senator John Thune** – Recently, Senator Thune was in Brookings to discuss a number of items at the federal level. I was able to ask him some questions related to initiatives from the United States Department of Education. The dialogue around challenges with navigating the pandemic in schools was a key point from our conversation.

In closing, I want to thank the board for your work and service. It can be a challenging position, but it is also very rewarding. Thank you!