



NEWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Board Highlights

The School Board would like to highlight a few items of importance following each board meeting to share what is happening around the board table.

Regular Board Meeting – February 10, 2020 (6:30 PM)

2019 – 2020 School Calendar

- The school board voted 4 – 3 to amend the 2019 – 2020 school calendar to remove March 13 as a weather make up day. This means there will be no classes for students or staff on Friday, March 13, 2020. Within this motion, it was also determined students would not make the hours up, but teaching staff will need to add another day (June 2, 2020) to the end of the school year to fulfill their contract obligations.

2020 – 2021 School Calendar

- The school board voted 6 – 1 to approve the 2020 – 2021 school calendar that has a potential weather make up day built in (President's Day – February 15, 2021) with all other potential weather make up days to be completed at the end of the school year. The 2020 – 2021 school calendar will begin Monday, August 24, 2020 with a current end date of Friday, May 28, 2021.

Berg Middle School – Bleachers

- A bid for new bleachers for the football field/track at Berg Middle School was approved 7 – 0, at a cost of \$87,825 to be financed with Berg Middle School construction fund dollars.

Denison Culture Survey

- The school board voted 5 – 1 and 1 abstain to move forward with administering the Denison Culture Survey to all licensed and classified staff. The survey was first administered to licensed staff only in October 2016. The District Culture Council meets on February 19, 2020 and will move forward with recommendations to the board on specific timing and messaging surrounding this second survey administration. *It is anticipated the Denison Culture Survey will be conducted in the Spring of 2020.*

Superintendent Search Process Update

- A press release was shared regarding the board's selection of three superintendent candidates to interview on February 20, 2020. See press release for more details.



NEWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS Superintendent Finalists Announced

The school board met on February 6th in closed session to screen eight semi-finalists for the district superintendent position. Each candidate was asked nine questions and presented their case on how they fit specific qualifications for the position. After the conclusion of the screening interviews, the board deliberated and identified three finalists. These finalists have been invited to the district on Thursday, Feb. 20th for formal interviews.

Stakeholders invited to be on the formal interview teams have been asked to provide feedback on the formal interview questions. Candidate application materials will soon be shared with the formal interview teams. Each finalist will interview with two different mixed interview teams, district administrators and supervisors, the school board, and have a tour of both the district and larger community.

Meet the Finalists

Nicole Kooiker



Nicole has been the Superintendent of Schools at Ottumwa Community School District for the past 4 years and has served as Superintendent of Schools at West Marshall for 3 years prior. Nicole's other leadership experiences include 3 years as MS principal at SE Polk, 3 years as Associate MS Principal at SE Polk, and 2 years as MS principal/K-12 curriculum director at West Hancock. She is actively involved in Rotary, Mayor's Advisory in Ottumwa, Urban Education Network, and in the Children's Mental Health and Well-Being Collaborative. She has helped develop "Spark Tank", which is an innovative program where students engage in authentic learning experiences with local business and community partners.

Chad Straight



Chad has been the Superintendent of Schools at Belle Plaine for 6 years (shared position with Tri-County for the past 3). He has been a MS/HS principal/AD at Boyer Valley for 9 years, a HS language arts instructor and coach at Logan-Magnolia CSD, a HS language arts instructor and coach at Battle Creek-Ida Grove CSD for 2 years, and a JH language arts teacher and coach in South Sioux City, NE, for 3 years. Chad helped Belle Plaine receive a \$100,000 STEM grant, helped implement STEM programming in the district, initiated a 1:1 Chromebook program for 4-12 students, and has led facility improvements through PPEL and SAVE dollars. He is an active member of Lions, Chamber of Commerce, and Community Development in Belle Plaine.

Thomas Messinger



Tom currently serves as the Superintendent for the Red Oak Community School District in Red Oak, IA. He has served the district for the last five years. His prior experience includes serving as a high school principal for the Burlington School District. He also has experience as an activities director, assistant principal, math teacher, and coach. He led a \$29 million bond issue in Red Oak resulting in new facilities for the district while improving the financial condition of the district. He was recently named 2019 Administrator of the Year from the Iowa Association of Agriculture Educators and Outstanding Administrator by the Iowa Association for Career and Technical Education.

Everyone invited to formally interview candidates will be asked to provide feedback to the board on each finalist. The school board will go into closed session at 6:00 on Feb. 20th to review the data from all the stakeholders involved. The board hopes to make an offer to the successful candidate soon after the formal interviews and will announce the new hire upon a successful background check.