

Board of Education Workshop  
Monday, March 13, 2023  
4:30 PM  
Parkside Elementary  
207 - 3rd St NE  
Buffalo, MN 55313

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## MINUTES

Present: Melissa Brings, Amanda Lawrence, Bob Sansevere, Adam Bjorklund, Matt Hoffman, and Sheila Smude

Absent: None

1. Presentation: Jeanna Miller, PES Principal

Jeanna Miller shared about AVID-related work underway at Parkside, specifically to help students develop organizational skills. Parkside staff members worked with Buffalo Community Middle School to see what organizational skills students need when they arrive there, then worked backward to create a step-by-step plan for each grade level down to kindergarten. The goal is for students to manage time effectively, organize their materials well, understand expectations, and take responsibility for their organization and learning.

Dawn Przekurat, special education teacher, shared about improvements made to one of the building's two courtyards. The courtyard provides a safe alternative space for students with special needs, and is engaging, inviting and stimulating. Staff members worked with Ethan Gallart, who dedicated his Eagle Scout project to improving the space. The courtyard now features a ship structure, a sensory wall and a music wall. Future goals are to add more sensory options, storage for toys and materials, and communication boards for students with limited verbal skills.

Stephanie DeSmith, school social worker, shared about a peer mentoring program that pairs students with older students for morning activities, and helps them build positive relationships with students and staff members. The program helps both mentors and mentees improve their leadership abilities, communication skills, confidence and self-esteem, and has led to better overall social and emotional outcomes. There are currently 10 pairs of mentors and mentees at Parkside and the program may grow next year. One of the students' favorite activities is bringing the Kindness Kart around the building to share treats with all staff members, thus creating positive interactions.

2. Buffalo FFA Presentation – Backyard Chickens in City Limits

Presenter: BHS FFA Agriculture Issues Team

Teacher Gary Wirkus introduced student team members, and explained that the group needed to research an agricultural issue and present both sides of it. The team must present before five different community groups, then submit a portfolio in a competition. Following that introduction, students presented a dramatized version of a public hearing before a city council where arguments were made for and against keeping chickens within city limits. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session with the school board and audience.

3. Quarterly Financial Report

Presenter: Miranda Kramer, Controller

The quarterly report was presented, including revenues and expenditures for various funds. Miranda Kramer noted that revenues and expenditures as a percentage of the budget have been mostly consistent over the past five years when apples-to-apples comparisons are made.

4. Quarterly Investment Report

Presenter: Ryan Tangen, Director of Finance and Operations

Ryan Tangen presented the report, and explained that investments help to supplement the district's budget. The top two considerations in terms of investments are liquidity and risk. Schools are limited in their investment options, and are not aggressive in terms of risk. Cash flow is trending as expected, and Tangen said that a good reminder about why school districts maintain a fund balance is that the state can and has withheld funding when it has budget issues. Tangen also explained that the district had invested \$10 million in the OPEB Trust Fund in the past, has since paid out more than \$8 million in post-employment benefits, and still has more funds to draw from than the original investment. This means these benefit payments have not added to local property taxes, and the district is in good shape for the future.

5. Committee Reports

MH - DCTL

AB - Insurance

SL - WTC

SS - DCTL

AL - AMSD

BS - ESP negotiations

MB - ESP negotiations

Adjourned at 5:57 p.m.