



# BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

## District initiates Social and Emotional Learning program Symposium outlines vision for employees, students

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in the Davis School District is moving forward with a newly created vision, Assistant Superintendent John Zurbuchen told members of the Board of Education.

Reporting on the outcome of a recent two-day SEL Symposium, Zurbuchen said the vision statement for the district's SEL is that "Employees and students acquire and effectively apply personal and social attitudes, behaviors and skills necessary to lead happy and fulfilling lives."

The purpose of the symposium was to take what other states have already started and from those materials create a program that is distinctly Davis School District.

Student Services Director Brad Christensen said the vision ties directly to the district's strategic plan and becomes the culture of the district. A key component to the creation of the SEL vision was the community support, Christensen said. The symposium included input from parents, board members, community health partners and other stakeholders.

"The question was put to everybody, 'Does this SEL vision align with your hopes and dreams for you and your students?'" Christensen said. "I think that is what this is all about. That's the message that is coming out."

The next step, he said, is building awareness at the school level. An initial roll-out of SEL will focus on adults and their wellness. If the adults don't have the tools to work on their own social and emotional well-being, they cannot

help the students, he said.

"Once we have that in place, we need to use data to inform the decisions we make going forward," Christensen said.

Moving forward, he said, will include steering committees, needs assessments and pilot programs at a few schools. Once a strong foundation has been established, the SEL program will spread to more schools.

In other workshop business:

- The Board of Education heard a report on the progress at Farmington High which opened in 2018 with a new learning model. Principal Richard Swanson said the school is celebrating a very successful first year, but that success didn't happen without a few bumps in the beginning. The school is lauding the highest average ACT score in the district of 22.2. Additionally, juniors at that school saw an average increase of 1.3 percent from the ACT practice test taken in the fall.

"Our students are taking responsibility for their education," Swanson said. "Our students have to be critical thinkers and know how to put that information in context so they can use it to help them be successful."

- The Board discussed ending the activity bus at Farmington High. The board had agreed to fund a bus for after-school activities when the boundaries were initially established. A recent report from Business Administrator Craig Carter indicated the average ridership was five to

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## Board opts to contract with independent auditor

The Board of Education will use an independent auditor on a contractual basis during the upcoming school year.

Board Vice President Liz Mumford explained that the move allows the board to act independently as needed. Previously, the board employed a full-time independent auditor. The district currently employs a full-time auditor and has another staff member who is certified to perform audits as well. Mumford said the audit

committee will also work with those auditors on some audits the board deems needed.

Board member Gordon Eckerley said his only concern with contracting for audits would be making sure that the audits still occur.

Superintendent Reid Newey said because of the district's size, it is audited often by external auditors in addition to the many internal audits conducted. Those audits have often resulted in welcomed improvements in

procedures.

Board member Brigit Gerrard questioned who would determine the "as needed audits." She said she hesitates contracting for work that could be conducted by district employees.

Board President John Robinson, in explaining his reasons for voting against the proposal, said he feels the district's internal auditor is competent and can be trusted to conduct any audit the board wants with integrity.

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## SEL, from Pg. 1

eight riders. At this point, the school will decide if it wants to continue the activity bus at its expense.

- Board members discussed changes to its handbook, specifically the area that addresses methods a board member can use to get an item on a future board meeting agenda. The suggested changes will be discussed further in a future policy review committee meeting.

- The Board learned more about changes coming to school fees. The Utah State Board of Education is adding new administrative rules to bring districts into compliance with some issues found during a couple of audits. Other changes were also introduced through new legislation. District High School Director Dr. Dan Linford outlined some of the requirements coming up, which include:

- A new certificate of compliance that must be submitted by schools.
- A rule that students cannot be required to perform work in lieu of waivers. Linford said the dis-

trict never had that requirement.

- Not requiring individual fundraising.
- A spend plan for all fees. Linford said districts are still trying to understand what that requirement will entail.

- Not using a fee for one program to subsidize another program.

- Not charging textbook fees beginning in the school year of 2021-22.

- Assuring that fees are equal or less than the cost of the activity.

State Board Member Laura Belnap also updated the Board on some changes the Utah State Board of Education is still discussing. One of those is allowing local districts the option to limit the number of extracurricular activities a student can participate in and still have fees waived.

## AUDIT, from Pg. 1

"When I ran for the Board of Education in 2016, I met with hundreds of constituents," Robison said. "Not one person asked about my philosophy of the audit program. Not one expressed concerns about fraud or mismanagement of funds in the district. But I had a significant number of people ... who expressed their concern that the district hires people they don't need."

Robison said he feels the estimated \$30,000 it will cost to contract with an auditor is a waste of taxpayer's money.

Robison and Gerrard voted against the proposal and Board Member Marie Stevenson said she was not prepared to vote.

In other business the board approved:

- Changes to the nutrition and physical activity wellness policy. The changes include a PE credit for students in conditioning classes for two years participation in a school-sponsored sport and

some community-based sports. It also addresses how unpaid meal balances will be handled.

- The Student Conduct and Discipline and Acceptable Use Agreements amendments. Those changes outline expected conduct for the use of electronic devices.

- Ethical Conduct of District Employees policy changes which describe unacceptable behavior of employees with students.

- Purchase of a building in west Kaysville at 1265 West Sportsplex Dr., for \$7 million. The building currently has a tenant that may lease the building until August 2021. The district plans to use the building for a Career and Technical Education Center. The building would allow students from throughout the district to participate in multiple pathway programs.

- A resolution to refund 2010 Build America Bonds which will save the district more than \$4 million in interest.

## Board recognitions



The Board of Education recognized the Environmental Maintenance Services Department and Utility Services Department for the work done on the auditorium in the administration building. The work was completed by district crews on a tight deadline.



West Point Junior High School Resource Officer Ben Parker was honored for his work at the school. Student Services Director Brad Christensen said Parker's calm demeanor and positive outlook have had a big impact on the school.