

Board Briefs



Survey says: Balanced Calendar is positively viewed by stakeholders

Since implementing the Balanced Calendar two school years ago, the district has seen some encouraging and positive trends when it comes to the Board of Education's three goals of academics, climate and resources.

"Can we say it all has to do with the Balanced Calendar?" Superintendent **Eric Lieske** posed the question to board members Monday night. "We probably cannot."

Lieske explained that there are too many variables—like changes in assessments, instituting best practices and even the weather—have all contributed to the favorable changes that have taken place throughout the district since the Balanced Calendar was implemented.

What is irrefutable, however, is that the majority of all stakeholders, including students, parents and staff, are in favor of the Balanced Calendar, according to recent surveys.

In online surveys given last month, 82 percent (2,803 respondents in grades 3-12) of students said they like the Balanced Calendar.

Nearly 1,100 parents—about one-third of district parents—responded to a survey emailed to them in October. Of those responses, 77.5 percent answered yes when asked "Do you support Davison Community Schools continuing to operate on a K-12 Balanced Calendar?"

In addition, 70 percent of staff members responded they were supportive of the Balanced Calendar in a similar survey.

"In terms of perception data, that is far more positive than negative," Lieske said.

That does not mean that certain aspects of the Balanced Calendar may not need tweaking. For example, the surveys also indicated that some parents and staff are not supportive of the May intersession. While the district must adhere to keeping a summer break of eight weeks or less, Lieske said there is nothing stopping the district from considering those viewpoints when developing the school calendar.

"Our stakeholders matter," Lieske said. "We always believe that."

Lieske recommended that the district stay on course with the district-wide Balanced Calendar school year.

"Right now, based on perception data and how we feel the Balanced Calendar fits into our different board goals, I think we are going in the right direction."



Donations gratefully accepted by Board

The following contributions were accepted at last night's meeting:

- **Mark Owen MEEMIC Insurance** donated three \$100 Visa gift cards in support of the Kids First award program.
- **Paul and Rosemary Palawski** donated eight winter coats to Thomson Elementary for children who do not have a warm coat.
- **Richfield United Methodist Church** donated backpacks, school supplies and snacks to Siple Elementary for students in need.
- **Davison Eagle Riders #3859** made a monetary donation to the Davison Community Schools Cardinals Care Fund. The money will be used to support families through the Holiday Assistance program.

Board Briefs is a monthly newsletter published after Board of Education meetings. For additional information, please contact the Communications Department at 591-0852.



Davison Community Schools

Where Kids Come First and Futures Begin

Connections ♦ Curriculum ♦ Opportunities

Presentations

DMS teacher Jim Bronson named “Kids First” December recipient

Davison Middle School Teacher **Jim Bronson** is the December recipient of the “Kids First” Award.

Each month, administrators nominate a DCS employee who best exemplifies what it means to be “Kids First.” Winners receive a \$100 Visa gift card thanks to Mark Owen, owner of MEEMIC insurance agencies in Davison and Flint Township, and a certificate. The winner is chosen at random.

Jim was nominated by Davison Middle School Principal **Shelly Fenner-Krasny**, who wrote:

“Jim Bronson always puts kids first! As the DMS Band Director, Hahn music teacher, Jazz Band Director and Assistant Marching Band Director, Jim is actively involved with music students in fifth grade through 12th grade, demonstrating an iron-clad commitment to them and their success as musicians and as people. A recent observation drives this commitment home.

It was the Wednesday before this past Thanksgiving. The busses taking students home were long gone and the building was just about deserted, save for the custodians and.....Jim Bronson. As I walked down the hallway by the band room on my way to the custodial office, I heard music being played. I stopped and ducked my head into the room. I saw Jim sitting next to a student, coaching him on a particular piece of music by playing the section on his own trumpet.

The student was reading the music and listening intently. There were probably six or seven other students practicing, too. Even though I was aware of the upcoming Solo and Ensemble competition, I also knew his after school help was something Jim does nearly every single day. But still...the Wednesday before Thanksgiving? Wow ...

Jim is a tremendous cheerleader and supporter of the entire music program in Davison. Whether he is teaching fifth graders, middle school students or high school students, Jim is always professional and student-focused, giving everything he has to give in order to bring out the best in his kids.

Jim Bronson has made a significant impact on music students in Davison Community Schools. Just as important, he puts kids first everyday!”

Other great DCS staff members who were nominated this month include: **Andrea Alband**, Hill Elementary Monitor; **Maida Demo**, Central Elementary Counselor; **Veronique Hungerford**, Davison High School Teacher; **Rob Mahon**, Hill Elementary Monitor and Bus Driver; **Kelly Porter**, Siple Elementary Monitor; **Julie Whitman**, Siple Elementary Paraprofessional; and **Jill Wilmeth**, Davison Middle School Monitor.



Left to right, Davison Middle School Principal Shelly Fenner-Krasny, Davison Middle School Teacher James Bronson, Superintendent Eric Lieske and Board of Education President Kathy Sudia.



Action Items

Board approves first reading of policies

Board members spent some time reviewing a number of changes in board policies at the December meeting. The changes were based on the recommendations of Neola of Michigan, a policy review company hired by the district to examine and update Board of Education policies. The district has been working with Neola since 2014 to keep policies updated and the district in compliance.

Superintendent **Eric Lieske** said the updates were prompted from legislation and statutory changes as well as best practices.

More options for staff with amended plan

Board members approved the re-statement of the district's 403b tax sheltered annuity plan. With the restatement of this plan Davison was able to choose to add the following 403(b) benefits for our employees:

- **Roth Deferrals:** Roth is an after-tax deduction that will allow our employees to diversify the tax status of their portfolios. This option also adds the ability for in-plan Roth rollovers, which allows employees the option of conversion within the plan of pre-tax contributions to Roth amounts.

- **Additional post severance distributions methods:** This option will allow employees more flexibility in receiving funds after retiring or leaving the district. Currently, the district plan allows for lump sum distributions, however; the new plan will also add installments, and/or partial sum (ad hoc) distributions.



Oath of office

The Honorable Judge Mark Latchana administers the Oath of Office to new school board member Granger Stefanko, who was elected to fill the two-year seat vacated by Doug Theodoroff.



Leading the Pledge

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Davison Alternative Education students who represent the Principal's Advisory Students (PAS). The students meet once a month with Principal Jerry Piger to discuss relevant DAE topics and then are responsible for reporting back to their Advisory Class. They have become the student voice for DAE.

