



West Plains Schools Board Update

November 18th, 2014

Pledge of Allegiance - The Pledge of Allegiance was led by several West Plains High School student groups including the Lady Zizzer golf team, the varsity football team, boys and girls cross country, Zizzer Pride Band, Zizzer Concert Choir, and members of the cast of "A Christmas Carol".

Regular Agenda

Ballot Discussion for Elementary Classrooms

During the October monthly board meeting, Dr. Mulford asked the school board to consider placing a tax levy issue on the ballot in the coming year. The purpose of the levy would be to address classroom space needs at both West Plains and South Fork Elementary while providing funds that would allow the district to reduce class size in these lower grades.

Initially, the board looked at placing the issue on the April ballot for voters to consider. However, Dr. Mulford has since recommended that the board wait until either August or November to pursue the issue as a neighboring district is considering pursuing a tax issue to build a new high school on the April ballot.

Mulford asked the board to allow the district to solicit proposals from consulting firms that specialize in working with school district stakeholders to conduct a needs assessment and evaluate support for potential tax levy issues. The board voted unanimously to seek proposals for a consultant and those proposals will be brought to the board in December.

Strategic Planning Update

The West Plains Public School District is currently reviewing and revising the district Comprehensive School Improvement Communication (CSIP). Six committees consisting of Communication, Safety, Academic, Finance, Professional Development, and Community Relations have been formed. The committees are currently brainstorming objectives which align with the goals listed below. Once the objectives are finalized the committees will meet to present the individual goals to all committee members.

GOALS:

1. Improve academic achievement in at least one core area for each student on an annual basis.
2. Provide opportunities and incentives for each student to participate in community service.
3. Ensure a safe environment that promotes excellence for students, faculty and staff.
4. Communicate effectively on all levels.
5. Attract, retain and continually develop a highly qualified and professional administration, faculty and staff.
6. Operate in a fiscally responsible manner by being good stewards of patron resources.

Insurance Committee Proposal

The district recently received claims data for the past year as it relates to district health insurance. For this year, the district has paid in 2.1 million in premiums and the insurance company has paid out 2.6 million in claims. The district is looking at a 34% increase in premiums by staying with Coventry. Last month, the board approved going to bid and exploring consortium options.

The district is currently still in the process of receiving rate information from various companies.

Early Separation Incentive

For the 2014-15 school year, the West Plains School Board has approved the request of the salary committee to offer an Early Separation Incentive. There is a lot of legal language in the agreement, but the basic requirements and elements are below:

- Must be a certified employee

- Must have worked in the district for at least 10 years
- Must be qualified to receive unreduced retirement benefits from PSRS (this means you must meet one of the typical methods of retirement)
- Employee must have 25 years of service as a certified educator (all 25 years do not have to be with the WP school district)
- Must sign and return both attachments by the end of business on Dec. 15, 2014
- The incentive is 20% of your placement on the salary schedule
- No extra duty pay is included
- The decision to offer an early separation incentive is made annually, no guarantee it will be offered in subsequent years

The West Plains School District has offered an Early Separation Incentive previously when a large number of retirees were expected. The purpose of such an incentive is not to encourage retirement, but rather early notice of intent to retire so that the district can access a stronger pool of candidates for replacement.

Trillium Trust- “Unlock the Ozarks”

Trillium Trust began the project “Unlock the Ozarks” designed to promote the rich history in the Ozarks region. Trillium Trust would like to partner with West Plains Schools to bring the history and culture of being a Zizzer into the modern world through their Unlock the Ozarks project. West Plains Schools would be among many partners working to help “Ozarkians” and visitors better understand our unique part of the world. The project is designed to be a digital repository for the history and culture of the Ozarks that presents the information in a modern and engaging manner.

Partnering with Trillium Trust would offer an opportunity to engage students, parents and visitors in the history and cultural identity of being a Zizzer. The project would be an integral part of a campaign to brand the Zizzer identity while sharing the history of education in West Plains. Keys, styled and branded in Zizzer fashion, will be placed around the campus with information about the location they are placed as well as a QR (quick response) code at the top of the keyhole shape that people can scan with their smartphone. Once scanned the Key will direct users to a webpage dedicated to that particular building or location and share information like stories, pictures, video, and audio. This mix of media will keep people engaged and excited, and hopefully get students interested in learning more. Each page in the "tour" or grouping of pages dedicated to West Plains Schools will be styled to match the Zizzer theme and include links to school websites.

The school board will make a decision on this partnership at the December board meeting.

Board Candidate Filings Update – December 16th – January 20, 2014

Board candidate election filing opens 8:00 a.m. on December 16th and runs through 5:00 p.m. January 20, 2014. Sam Riggs and Brian Mitchell are in their final year of a three year term and Courtney Beykirch is completing an appointed year of the term previously held by Bo Pace. All three seats will be up for election in April.

Resignations

Mary Beth Lunday – Paraprofessional

New Hires

Ashley Strazdas – Paraprofessional

Christina Hodgson – Paraprofessional

Robert Arnett – Custodian

Jerry Pendergrass – Bus Driver

Next Regular Meeting-

The next board meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2014 at 5:00pm, @ West Plains Middle School
School board meetings are held monthly on the third Tuesday of each month at the West Plains School of Education Office, 305 Valley View Drive, unless otherwise posted.