Lebanon School District

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School Board Meeting Highlights

Highlights from the School Board Meeting held on Tuesday, August 13, 2024.

*You can view all Board meeting agendas and minutes**here**.*

RECOGNITIONS & CELEBRATIONS

School Bus Inspection Report
Our transportation fleet underwent annual inspections to ensure student safety. Districts that achieved a 90% or higher approval rating in these inspections earned the MO State Highway Patrol Total Fleet Excellence Award. Additionally, the Exemplary School Bus Maintenance Award was given to schools that maintained at least 90% compliance over five years.

Successful maintenance of a pupil transportation fleet was a true team effort, and we were thrilled to recognize and congratulate the Lebanon Public Schools Transportation team. Their dedication and hard work in preparing for the inspection and ensuring our students' safe travel were commendable.



Back to School Fair

Lebanon Schools collaborated with the Free Store Ministry and other community members to ensure that students in our community were well-prepared for the year ahead. The Lebanon Community consistently demonstrated its strong spirit of support by coming together to make this event a success. Driven by donations, this initiative provided students with essential school supplies, food, haircuts, vision checks, hygiene products, and more. The generosity and commitment of our community members made a significant impact, helping every student start their school year with confidence and readiness. Representatives from the Free Store Ministry joined us, Amber Merideth, Kelly Hendricks, and Susan Snyder.



Love Lebanon

Sixteen local churches in our community united with a shared vision to make a significant impact on Lebanon Schools through an outreach event called Love Lebanon. This initiative provided teachers, administrators, and our maintenance team the opportunity to request assistance in setting up classrooms and tidying up school campuses in preparation for the new school year. We are deeply grateful for their generosity and support! Representatives present at the Board meeting included Luke Winfrey from First Baptist Church and Kelly Rhoades from LifePoint Church.



CONSENT AGENDA

The board voted 7-0 to approve the Consent Agenda, which included the following items:

- Minutes of Regular Board of Directors Meeting: July 9, 2024
- Monthly Financial Report
- Residency Waivers for Employees
- Declaration of Surplus Property
- JAG TANF Funds Agreement
- 2024-25 Assessment Plan

PERSONNEL REPORT

The Board voted 7-0 to approve the personnel report in closed session.

ACTION

Set 2024 Tax Rate
Per Board Policy DC-1, the tax rate was calculated to produce substantially the same revenues as required in the annual budget. The Board had sole authority to determine how the total authorized rate was used to provide revenue for each of the funds.

The Board utilized the most current input from the State Auditor's Office to finalize how the total authorized rate was allocated.

Using data from the State Auditor's office, the administration recommended setting the 2024 total

property tax rate at $4.4900 per $100 of assessed value. This levy rate reflects the total amount approved by voters. The total levy for the Lebanon R-3 School District for tax year 2024, at $4.4900, reflected no change from the total 2023 rate.

The Board approved the set tax rate for the 2024-2025 school year with a unanimous vote.

Maplecrest Construction Gross Maximum Price and Project Expense Budget
Kristi Beattie from Sapp Design Architects and Brandon Poindexter from Branco Enterprises presented the gross maximum price (GMP) and project expense budget for the Maplecrest Elementary construction project.

The GMP for the eight-classroom addition was $3,989,521, covering the total construction cost. In addition, the District anticipated extra costs totaling $793,000 for services such as architectural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, geo-tech, survey, civil engineering, testing, landscaping, advertising, permitting, legal, FFE (furniture, fixtures, and equipment), and a project contingency. The total construction budget was therefore $4,782,521.

The recommendation to approve GMP Amendment #1 from Branco Enterprises and the project expense budget was accepted, and the Board approved the project with a 7-0 vote.

Purchase of Van for Transport of Homeless Students (Grant Funded)
Dr. Cotta presented bids for the purchase of a minivan for the District. The District was awarded a grant under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act for $44,464 to purchase a vehicle to support the needs of its homeless population. The McKinney-Vento Act ensures that homeless children and youth have access to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE), providing funding for emergency shelters, transitional housing, transportation, and other services for homeless individuals and families. It also requires schools to remove barriers to enrollment and attendance for homeless students.

The recommendation was accepted with a 7-0 vote.

2024-25 Budget Letter
Each year, the Board is required to approve the budget prior to June 30th. As a follow up to the approved budget, the Board is also required to approve an annual budget message providing detail about any significant changes from the prior year's budget. The budget letter includes a narrative of the District's budget development for FY 2024-25, including revenue and expenditure estimates, and debt service obligations. The budget letter can be found here.

The Board approved this letter in a unanimous vote.

INFORMATION/REPORT ITEMS

Construction Fund Grant for Career and Technical Education Programming
Mr. Wilkerson presented on the state legislature's recent allocation of $5.5 million for CTE construction grant opportunities. As Mr. Wilkerson envisions Lebanon's long-term plans for career and technical education programs, some of the programs will benefit through location at The Robert W. Plaster Center for Student Success. The funds allocated by the state will be distributed through a 50/50 matching grant that may be used to create innovative and upgraded facilities for our programs and students. The addition of these facilities will bolster the District's ability to offer comprehensive, real-world training environments, preparing students for success in their respective careers. Pursuing this grant will be instrumental in bringing these visions to life and furthering the District's priority to provide high-quality education and support to our students.

The intent of this information item was to notify the Board of the grant opportunity as a prelude to a discussion/presentation about innovative learning spaces planned for the August 28th Study Session. The grant is due on September 1st and the final FV-2 is due by May 15th.

CSIP 2.1.1. Positive Culture & Climate
Ms. Chisum and Mrs. Thornhill presented the scorecard for CSIP 2.1.1. This CSIP strategy focuses on fostering a positive culture and climate that supports our adaptive learning community.

For the 2023-2024 school year, CSIP 2.0 2.1.1 included three action steps. Action step one was to identify barriers to improving Jacket Pride. The intention of the goal was to seek to understand what gaps and barriers stakeholders have to increase a sense of belonging as a Yellowjacket. The goal was developed to foster a stronger sense of community and engagement among all stakeholders, ensuring that every member feels valued and connected as a Yellowjacket.

The second goal was to identify staff needs for support and incentives. This goal encompasses collecting feedback on what support mechanisms and incentives are most valued by staff. The goal with this was to implement tailored support systems and incentive programs based on survey results to help staff reach their full potential and enhance their overall performance and morale.
The third goal encompassed identifying communication gaps in internal and external communication. This goal included seeking feedback on current communication practices and identifying areas for improvement. Based on these conclusions, the team began to develop and implement strategies to enhance communication flow and effectiveness, ensuring that all relevant information is clearly and consistently shared with both internal and external audiences.

Communications Plan/Strategy
District Communications Director, Sadie Chisum, presented the 2024-25 communications plan. This plan emphasized highlighting positive stories within the District. These stories were and will continue to be shared through various channels to ensure stakeholders receive timely and relevant information in the most effective manner. Quality communication is a critical component of District operations. During the presentation, Ms. Chisum reviewed processes and mediums used to both share and receive information throughout the school community.

Attendance Report for Students and Staff
Dr. Holly Schrage presented student attendance data for the 2023-2024 school year and reviewed the District's attendance plan, which included goals and strategies for increasing student attendance. A focus on improving student attendance was a priority, as good attendance is a key factor in student achievement. In the 2023-2024 school year, the District increased its percentage of regular attenders by 2% and decreased chronic absenteeism by 2%. A plan was put in place to address severe chronic absenteeism, with a goal to maintain an average below 7%.

Dr. Brownfield also reported staff attendance data for 2023-2024. Overall staff attendance percentages increased slightly during the past year. This, combined with other factors, resulted in a significant decrease in substitute costs. Although the District had well-trained, qualified substitute teachers through Penmac, we recognize the impact on student learning when the regular teacher was absent.

Our next steps include monitoring staff attendance through new leave policies, GCBDA and GDBDA, and exploring incentive programs that are meaningful to staff.

MSBA Policy 2024B Update
As a member of the Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA), the Lebanon R3 School District purchased policy review services to ensure compliance with current law changes. MSBA attorneys review current legislation to make sure the District's policies comply with changes, which often come in three to four updates throughout the year. Dr. Brownfield presented the MSBA 2024B policy updates for a first reading.
Policy updates were made in the following:

- BDC - Closed Meetings, Records, and Votes
- DFI-1 - Setting Tuition for District Programs
- FFA - Memorials on Facilities and Grounds
- GBEBC - Criminal Background Checks
- IND - Ceremonies and Observances
- JEC-1 - School Admissions
- JECA-1 - Eligibility to Enroll
- JO-1 - Student Records
- KH: Public Gifts to the Schools
- EEA-AP(1) - Student Transportation Services

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Summer Experience
Dr. Holly Schrage, Assistant Superintendent of Quality Learning and Experiences, summarized the 2024 Summer Experience program. Enrollment for Summer Experience continued to improve, with over 1500 students enrolled and over 1,200 attending regularly through in-person and virtual courses. Students enjoyed hands-on learning experiences inside and outside the classroom.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

August Activities for the 2024-2025 School Year
Dr. Schmitz shared an update on August activities for the start of the 2024-25 School Year.

- New Teacher Institute: August 7-9
  - The New Teachers Institute (NTI) provided an opportunity to share essential information with our new teachers. Approximately half of the District's teachers were new to the profession, while the other half brought valuable experience. It was a point of pride for Lebanon to recruit veteran teachers and celebrate their addition to our team.
- First Day of School: August 20
  - Administrators in the Central Office will travel to visit every building on the first day of school. We look forward to seeing new students find their place in our District. Our goal will be to guide them and support their growth as they progress throughout the year to eventually find a passion for learning.
- Back to School Mailer arrived in mailboxes the first week of August
  - The 2024-2025 Back-to-School mailer has been distributed. Dr. Schmitz celebrated the continued commitment to Proposition Lebanon Schools and reviewed information within the mailer.

Lebanon R-3 School District
224 West Commercial St.
Lebanon, MO 65536
Phone: (417) 657-6001
Fax: (417) 532-9492

Contact Us

Lebanon R-3 School District | 224 W. Commercial St. | Lebanon, MO 65536 US

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