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Secretary/Treasurer

BELLEVUE COMETS COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comet Highlights from the July 12, 2021 Board of Education Meeting for the Bellevue Community School District

July 25-August 1 activities in	Family Week - State Sanctioned - No student
	school during this time period in any schools across the
	state for athletics.
August 2 & 3	School Registration
August 9	Fall Sports Practices Start (XC, VB, & FB)
August 23	Tentative 1st Day of School
First Extracurricula	ar Contests for the 21-22 School Year

August	23	HS	Volleyball at Easton Valley	7
August	24	HS	XC at Wahlert	
August	27	HS	FB at Northeast	

APPROVED - Consent Agenda

Open Enrollments

None at this time.

Approve Resignations

• None at this time.

Approve Recommendations to Hire

- Amanda Canganelli K-12 Art Amanda will be an outstanding addition to our district and our students. She is originally from Bellevue, and wants to return to our community with her family. This is dependent on her release from her current contract in another district, which will be known the week of July 19.
- Isabel Krabbenhoft Color Guard This is a limited role (only for the summer and the 1st quarter) for our Band. Isabel just graduated this school year, but we believe her knowledge, skills, and relationships make her a great addition to our program. Isabel is taking college courses online, along with working at a nearby daycare so she has flexibility in her schedule.

- Cindy Mahan Nutrition Department/Food Service Worker Cindy is going to fill one of the Nutrition Services positions, which is for 2.5 hours a day approximately at Bellevue Elementary.
- Zachary Michels Nutrition Department/Food Service Worker Zachary is going to fill one of the other Nutrition Services positions, which is for 2.5 hours a day approximately at Bellevue Elementary. Zach has "graduated" from school, but will still be attending to receive some educational programming in the mornings, and this will be a part of his work during the day as well. Zachary has worked in the kitchen for multiple years, performing multiple roles and tasks. He applied for this position as an individual (and not as a student), and will be hired as a general worker (with some exceptions since he is still a student technically).
- MS Volleyball Jodi Heim & Judy Michels Both of these individuals have experience in volleyball, and both were former Head HS VB coaches, Jodi last year. Judy coached MS VB last year and was planning on stepping away, but agreed to do it one more year. Jodi stepped away from HS VB based on time, but is interested in doing MS VB. These are two very strong coaches for our programs.

Recognize any Visitors

No one was in attendance.

APPROVED - Bread Bids

We (Jessica Bormann in the Nutrition Department) received our "Bread Bid" from Bimbo Bakery in Dubuque. Meyer recommended the Board approve it.

An overview is that pricing is down on everything, except sandwich bread is up \$.10 and hotdog buns went up \$.14 per package from last year. This should still be okay overall. This is a formality in many ways as we need bread for meals for our students.

ltem #	Unit	Description	Producer/Bread	Quantity (Qty)-	Unit Pricing Per	Extended Costs
LA	24 oz/20 slice	Whole Grain Wheat, Sandwich	Bimbo Bakeries USA	1,000	2.19	\$2,190.00
2B	24 oz/16 ct	3.5",53% Whole Grain Wheat Hamburger Bun	Discontinued	1,200		none
	12 count	53% Whole Grain Wheat Hamburger Bun	Bimbo Bakeries USA	1,000	2.36	\$2,360.00
3C	34 oz/16 ct	53%, Whole Grain Wheat Coney Bun	Bimbo Bakeries USA	230	3.11	\$715.30
4D	17 oz/12ct	53%, Whole Grain Wheat, Dinner Roll	Bimbo Bakeries USA	350		\$584.50
					Total	
					Total Extended	\$5,849.80

Facilities Update

District Facilities in the Future - What do our Students Need?

Meyer met recently with Duane Van Hemert (retired facilities coordinator at the Iowa City CSD recently) about buildings and facilities as a whole. His one statement to me was "what is best for the kids"...this resonated with me and my belief (and all of our beliefs!). This must always be in the forefront of our decisions.

We discussed several aspects but one specifically the board wishes to pursue is having a well-done assessment of our current Bellevue Elementary completed by a "Professional Estimator" (could be an engineer, architectural group, etc.)...but no connection to building a new building. Ultimately, this would allow us to evaluate the current situation again and discover the cost of what it would take to bring the building up to requirements for the following (to name a few):

a. ADA

- b. Fire Systems
- c. Windows
- d. Electrical
- e. Heating and Cooling
- f. Air Quality
- g. Mechanical (in general)
- h. Classroom Space

Meyer will contact some engineering firms for this (stressing that this is an estimate/approximation of costs with very specific data about costs...more than we had before). Meyer will share at the next meeting in August his conversations and potential costs for this work by an organization.

Meyer and the Board shared the need for future conversations gathering input on facilities from the community, and that this would be most appropriate when we have more information on potential costs and needs for the current building vs a new building. The Board agreed that there is a need for this information for our stakeholders and the Board. The district may also look to examine the need for further updates to the facilities to serve our students and greater community in regard to childcare, recreation center, etc.

<u>APPROVED - Board Policy Approval</u>

Each year the Board reviews a series of policies based on a continuous rotation. This year we are reviewing the 300 Series (Administration), the 400 Series (Employees), along with 201(Board of Directors Elections) and 202.3 (Term of Office). I shared the documents last month. The following link will take you to all policies in the district.

http://www.bellevue.k12.ia.us/board-policies

REVIEWED AND WILL DISCUSS FURTHER AT NEXT MEETING - Iowa Legislature - Policies

This year's legislative session also lead to a few other policies we will need to review this month, and then potentially approve at the August 2021 Board meeting. They are included in a separate document, and should be updated.

WILL DECIDE AT NEXT MEETING - IASB Legislative Priorities

I am attaching the IASB Legislative Priorities for the 2022 Legislative Session from IASB. As they do each year, they would like us to choose 3-4 priorities. We can discuss these at this month's meeting, or wait until August to do this. The previous two year's priorities from the Bellevue CSD are listed below:

August 2020

- #3 Preschool Funding
- #7 Mental Health Support
- #8 Special Ed Funding
- #18 School Funding Policy

August 2019

- #7 Mental Health Support
- #8 Special Ed Funding
- #19 School Funding Policy
- #21 Bond Issues

<u>APPROVED - Board Secretary/Treasurer</u>

I strongly recommend we appoint Penny Medinger as Board Secretary/Treasurer for the 2021-2022 school year. Penny is absolutely outstanding in her role with her knowledge, "common sense" approach, and overall efficiency in so many ways.

<u>APPROVED - Level I Investigators</u>

As a formality we need to officially appoint the two principals as Level I Investigators for allegations of abuse of students by employees.

APPROVED - Level II Investigators

As a formality we need to officially appoint Dennis Schroeder, Bellevue Police Department Chief as the district's Level II investigator for allegations of abuse of students by employees.

<u>APPROVED - Equity Coordinator</u>

As a formality as well to a point, although I am changing the recommendation to the Superintendent based on recent Title IX training, I recommend we have Tom Meyer serve as Equity Coordinator for the district for the 2021-2022 school year.

APPROVED - Superintendent Goals

With a new evaluation at the state system, I mentioned setting goals this month instead of last to give you time to review the new standards. I am open to any ideas you have as priorities, but I am responsible for all ten standards ultimately. It is good to have an emphasis on 2-3 standards. Meyer suggested those in bold as primary goals:

The 10 areas include the following (see attachment as well):

1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

- 2. Ethics and Professional Norms
- 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
- 4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- 5. Community of Care and Support for Students
- 6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel
- 7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff
- 8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
- 9. Operations and Management
- 10. School Improvement

Information Items

Curricular Updates

Two Items:

 Our classes are established for next school year with students "registered" for courses throughout the day at the MS/HS (although as always there will be changes prior to school starting and the first two days of the school year), and sections are established at the elementary (We have 3 sections for grades K-3 this school year based on enrollment). There are always some last minute changes as a result of enrollment changes and student course selections, but ideally things are in place for where they should be at this time for the district.

2. I had a meeting via Zoom with the AEA Chief Administrator, Bill Decker, recently. He apologized for the information that was shared to a small group of people (staff members at the MBAEA) earlier. It had not been properly vetted and was not planned on being utilized in a bigger format, but...he agreed it needed to be neutral (and was not).

Below is information I put together with some resources from other districts in regard to Critical Race Theory and effective non-biased teaching in our school setting. Ultimately, this should be a natural process for teachers anyway as we need to be "apolitical" in our approaches with students (ultimately, they should not know our personal feelings about politics and any other potentially controversial subject matter). But, this will be emphasized to all teachers (and others). <u>A key part of this is, "The law does not ban instructors from answering questions about these concepts." But, it must be taught with "thought" and an impartial and unbiased manner.</u>



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BELLEVUE COMETS COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Curricular Conversation Expectations

The purpose of this checklist is to guide teachers through a step-by-step process that will ensure a balanced approach is taken when discussing or incorporating potentially controversial and politically polarizing topics into classroom instruction.

Remaining balanced when incorporating controversial and politically polarizing topics into classroom instruction is a district expectation. Staff must appear neutral to their students - our students should not know where district employees stand on polarizing, political, and/or highly publicized topics.

The topic will support student learning of a standard in my class
I am introducing a new topic/theme OR expanding on a topic/theme in a new way (rather than focusing on a singular <i>theme</i> all semester)
The topic will be presented in a grade-level appropriate manner
In my preparation for instruction and the creation of assignments, I used balanced sources. I am purposeful when choosing sources to meet desired learning outcomes.
I use balanced resources and terminology in directions, assignments, prompts, etc.
I have talked to my colleagues (teaching partner, department, etc.) about the topic and the approach I will take when presenting information. They agree I am taking a balanced/neutral stance.
I have drafted a letter to parents that explains the learning objectives of the unit of study, lesson, etc. The letter provides context and background information. The letter is timely and invites parents to reach out with questions or concerns.
I have consulted with an administrator. They are aware of the unit of study or lesson. They have viewed the letter I will send to parents
I will provide an optional lesson for students to work on should the assignment not be appropriate for them.
I will include building administration in any parent or student follow-up to the lesson.

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When to use this checklist

- When a teacher knows/expects they will be potentially discussing or incorporating controversial and politically polarizing topics into instruction.
- At the beginning of a unit of study.

Examples of controversial and politically polarizing topics in the Fall of 2021

- Defunding the Police
- Black Lives Matters Movement
- Capital Insurrection
- 2020 Election Results and 2021 Political Unrest
- COVID-19
- Critical Race Theory

This list is not all-encompassing and will evolve over time. If you are questioning whether a topic is controversial or politically polarizing, please check with your curricular and grade-level colleagues and administration. Ultimately, when in doubt check with someone.

Contacting Parents about Curriculum - Outline of Email to send home prior to the unit of study:

- Rationale for Assignment
- Acknowledgment of why this letter is being sent
 State the controversial topic (be open and direct)
- Standards and Learning targets addressed in the unit
- Example activities and resources
- Instructional plan to ensure balanced viewpoints in discussions and assignments
- Offer option for alternative assignment stated
- Contact information for the teacher



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BLUE

Secretary/Treasurer Matt Wedeking Member

Dear (Class Name) Parents and Caregivers,

In the spirit of transparency, I wanted to inform all of you of the next book and unit we will be studying in ______. You may recall from past conversations and the goals of the class that we will be discussing the topic of race. We will begin our unit on race and the human condition using the novel, The Hate U Give (T.H.U.G.), by Angie Thomas. This novel has been used in English Literature classes for three years and has been met with positive reactions from students and generated wonderful conversations about current affairs while exercising critical thinking skills.

I am aware tensions are high regarding race and policing, so the purpose of examining this particular text in a literature class is two-fold:

 The nature of the course, to examine how literature informs and depicts the human condition, is designed to guide students in attaining the skills necessary to work through such a piece of literature, and
 The curricular standards do require the class to dive into topics that are "relevant to current conditions and affairs" and "examine themes that appear across genres" of which race is a suggestion mentioned by name.

By examining this publicized, complex topic, students will be able to empathize with all parties and, instead of villainizing one or the other, they can see both sides of the issue and hopefully consider ways we can bridge these divides by considering aspects of the human condition and what makes us unapologetically human.

We will have a list of activities on the first day that will include....This is carefully curated to give a comprehensive background to the text and establish the author's purpose and influences for this particular text in addition to addressing the course outline.

The video establishes issues in the community and the article talks about....The final project is ______. This ties together the....

I will continuously monitor students to ensure they are having balanced and productive conversations relating the text to the human condition and that they are doing so in a respectful manner to all sides. This includes not generalizing all cops and villainizing the policemen and women who serve our communities, and not generalizing and drawing false equivalencies of the Black Lives Matter movement and the mission they are forwarding. By analyzing topics from different viewpoints, we will ensure to have a balanced representation of both aspects of complicated issues.

If you have any questions about the content, please feel free to contact me directly through email and I will be more than happy to clarify how this work meets the expectations for the district. In addition, if you would like to discuss the option of an alternative assignment for your students, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely, Your Name Email: Phone Number: 563.872.4001

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BELIEVE IN THE

Fact check: An Iowa anti-racism presentation went viral, but it wasn't mandated in schools Ian Richardson

Des Moines Register

The claim: Documents show 'mandatory critical race theory training' for Iowa teachers targeted Trump supporters

Amid debates in statehouses around the country on how schools and diversity trainers should approach discussions about racism, a conservative commentator recently claimed documents from an Iowa school district are evidence of how schools are using "critical race theory" as a weapon against Republicans.

Benny Johnson, a Newsmax host and the chief creative officer at Turning Point USA, a conservative group, on June 22 tweeted to his nearly 340,000 followers about slides taken from a presentation given by the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency in eastern Iowa. Johnson said a whistleblower provided him with information about the presentation.

One slide includes a list of examples of racism, among them the phrase "Make America Great Again," which was categorized as "covert white supremacy."

"LEAKED DOCUMENTS from Iowa School System show Teachers are FORCED to classify 'Make America Great Again' as a type of 'racism' & 'white supremacy.' This is done through MANDATORY Critical Race Theory training FORCED on teachers at taxpayer expense," Johnson said in a tweet.

Johnson said "hundreds" of educators and staff were "forced" to take the training, and that they are "planning on teaching this to your children next semester."

In addition to his social media posts, Johnson is the listed author of an article on the Turning Point USA website titled "Critical Race Theory Training Mandated In Iowa School System" and discussed the documents on his Newsmax program, "The Benny Report."

The documents, which the Des Moines Register has confirmed belong to a presentation given at the Mississippi Bend AEA, circulated widely.

Johnson's original tweet gained more than 11,700 likes and more than 8,700 retweets and quote tweets as of midday Wednesday. A June 22 Facebook post with a video where Johnson discussed the documents had more than 2,800 shares.

"This is the curriculum being taught inside of the Iowa school system, inside of one of Iowa's largest school districts," he said in the video.

Fox News has also reported on the documents and posted its own story last week. Multiple Iowa Republican lawmakers have commented publicly. Gov. Kim Reynolds said in a statement that the presentation "is indoctrination not education." "It's exactly why I took action to ban teaching divisive concepts and critical race theory in Iowa schools. Kids need to be taught how to think and not what to think," Reynolds, a Republican, said in her statement.

Reynolds earlier in June signed a law banning the teaching of several concepts in school curriculum and diversity training for government employees. She touted the new law, which goes into effect July 1, as a ban on critical race theory.

An Iowa area education agency has apologized for use of a presentation that they say was "not properly sources" and "unnecessarily political." Slides from the presentation have circulated widely on social media, drawing criticism from conservative commentators and Iowa Republican politicians.

Education agency apologizes

The Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency has apologized for the political nature of some of the content. In a statement provided to the Register, the agency said the presentation was "not properly vetted through the necessary channels" and would no longer be used.

"The Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency Board of Directors and Agency Administrative Leadership emphatically disavow the political nature of the presentation and will make appropriate corrections to processes and oversight within the agency," the statement said.

Johnson shared the statement on Facebook Monday, calling it a "massive victory against critical race theory."

Presentation came from Iowa area education agency, not a school district While the content from the presentation that Johnson's posts share is accurate, his tweets incorrectly identify some of the context.

The Mississippi Bend AEA is not a school district, but one of nine state-funded area education agencies that serve Iowa's public and private school districts with special education services, media and curriculum support. Iowa's area education agencies provide resources to the districts within their designated region.

The Mississippi Bend AEA's region includes all of Clinton, Scott and Muscatine counties and parts of Cedar, Jackson and Louisa counties. The agency serves nearly 50,000 students in 143 school buildings, according to its website.

The presentation, dated April 2021, was put together by a voluntary subcommittee of AEA staff members, said Bill Decker, the Mississippi Bend AEA's chief administrator. Decker said in an email that the subcommittee's goal was to explore how the agency could "positively impact disproportionality in the academic and discipline data of the districts we serve."

The presentation — which Decker said was not vetted and was "not a valid exercise in meeting the original charge given to the district" — took place as part of department meetings that included AEA staff.

AEA: Presentation not part of mandated training, never used in school setting

Decker said the item was part of an agenda for a mandatory department meeting, although the presentation was not part of a mandatory training "and never will be." Teachers employed by school districts in the region were not involved, he said.

"There were no - and would have never been - presentations to schools, teachers, students or anyone else outside the AEA," Decker said. He reiterated that "claims of any student or teacher involvement are patently false."

Iowa Department of Education spokesperson Heather Doe also said the presentation was part of an "in-service equity meeting held for staff" and, "to our knowledge, was never used in a school setting."

The April presentation lists the purpose of the meeting was to provide the opportunity for departments to complete a handful of outcomes, including filling out an "equity rubric" to gauge perceptions of the Mississippi AEA's progress toward equitable practices, as well as building consensus around a draft "anti-racism" statement for the agency.

"The subcommittee was given direct instruction not to continue working on an anti-racism statement," Decker said. "It does appear this presentation was a continuation of that work and is one of the primary reasons the subcommittee work has been suspended."

Who was at the meeting?

The Fox News report, which unlike Johnson's tweets correctly identifies that the presentation originated from an area education agency, not a school, also says that reporters had obtained a copy of one attendance sheet that showed at least 142 workers from the education agency attended - many of them speech language pathologists and social workers.

The Register requested a copy of the sign-in sheet, but Decker declined to provide it, saying it is considered "confidential personal information and part of staff personnel records."

Decker said he believes the Fox News report of around 142 staff members is "fairly accurate." Reports that "hundreds" of staff received the training are incorrect, he said.

The presentation was given at multiple meetings for individual departments, meaning it occurred at multiple small group meetings, he said. The AEA's largest department is around 57 people. Some AEA staff who work in schools cannot attend meetings, he said.

"It is important to note that the sign-in sheets were for required department meetings, not specifically for this presentation," he said.

How would Iowa's new law affect presentations like this?

Johnson in his tweets referred to a new Iowa law that will go into effect Thursday that puts stipulations on mandatory diversity training provided to state or local government employees. It prohibits "stereotyping, scapegoating, or prejudice toward others on the basis of demographic group membership or identity."

Iowa Republicans have touted it as a ban on "critical race theory," although the law does not use that specific term.

The law does not ban instructors from answering questions about these concepts.

The Iowa Department of Education and the governor's office did not respond to a Register request to identify what particular elements of the presentation would have been illegal under the new Iowa law.

Doe in a previous email said the Iowa Department of Education is reviewing the new law and will be issuing guidance "to help our AEAs and schools implement and adhere to the new law and avoid situations like this in the future."

Decker said he learned of the presentation on June 10 after a meeting with a certified staff member. He looked into the documents and decided to stop the subcommittee's work.

"On Tuesday, June 15, I reported to the MBAEA Board of Directors that, because of conversations with staff and given the signing of (House File) 802, we would be pausing and completely reevaluating the work of the Equity Sub-Committee," he said.

Johnson's spokesperson responds

Andrew Kolvet, a spokesperson for Johnson, responded to a Register request for comment late Tuesday by saying the information Johnson reported is "accurate according to multiple sources within the school district who provided Benny with documents, emails, correspondence and guidance directly."

He said Johnson has a sign-in sheet that includes "educators and teachers on it."

He did not acknowledge the difference between an area education agency and a school district.

Kolvet defended the use of the word "hundreds" in the tweet, saying the definition of the term is the numbers 100 to 999. Regarding teaching to students, he said he believes it's "clear" the ideas would be passed down to students since it was being provided to AEA staff.

"If they didn't intend for this to carry over from teachers to students, why was this information being provided through the MBAEA?" Kolvet said.

Our ruling: Lacks context

The Register has confirmed that the documents circulating on social media did come from portions of the presentation, and the presentation did include a graphic identifying phrases like "Make America Great Again" on a spectrum of white supremacy.

The Mississippi Bend AEA's chief administrator has also acknowledged that the presentation, while it was not part of a mandatory diversity training required by

AEA leadership, was shared during mandatory staff meetings for various departments.

However, Johnson's posts have inaccurately portrayed the context surrounding the presentation. The presentation did not come from a school district, as Johnson claimed, but an area education agency. The AEA and state education department say the training was not mandated for teachers at Iowa school districts nor intended to be.

They instead say the presentation was created for AEA department meetings, and there is not evidence that it was required for any school districts or that the concepts were intended to be taught to children in the fall.

For these reasons, we rate Johnson's claim as LACKS CONTEXT.

Sharing of Courses...Additionally, Marquette sent a letter to President Reed and Superintendent Meyer on Monday morning in regard to the all-inclusive proposal offered by the Bellevue CSD. This was not an action item as it was not received prior to the agenda being established, or 24-hours prior to the meeting as required. Some discussion was held about this aspect during this section of the meeting, but no change was made at this time.

New Teacher's Social Evening

The Board is planning on having a Social Evening for new teachers from both this upcoming school year, and the 20-21 school year (since we were not able to do this last August). A date and location are being finalized.

Comments from Building Principals, Superintendent, and Board Members

Meyer shared that the district will likely be adding a bus stop near Cole Park for the future to transport students to/from school based on needs/requests. Details are still being worked out, and Meyer will provide an update at the August Board meeting.

FROM PAST NOTES

- What do our students need to assist them to learn effectively for both the present and the future?
- Do we have the facilities and staff to accomplish this?
- What needs to be done to make us the most effective as possible

Facilities - Some other general information to consider:

I believe there is a need for a new **Bellevue Elementary** in the future, along with the following:

- Ag Room (possibly with STEM or even Industrial Tech upgrades in the future)
- Potentially moving the **Industrial Tech and Bus Barn** to make room for other upgrades
- Music/Art Room
- Other

Another consideration to keep in mind in regard to a new elementary school is to add a **daycare to it on-site** (either as part of the building, or a separate building across the parking lot, etc.). The benefit of having it on-site is the convenience aspect for our parents when dropping off students for school. Does this need to happen prior to an elementary school, or in the same area as a planned elementary to "start the process?"

Some people have also mentioned the following (these are only some, and some are likely inadvertently left off of this list) as "desires" to be included:

- Auditorium
- Recreation Center (collaboratively with the City of Bellevue), including an indoor pool, indoor track, weightroom, VB/BB Courts, etc. There may be some partnerships available with the city or other entities for this type of vision and plan.
- New Competition Gym
- Music Room/Athletic Practice Area (separate building)

Some of these are obviously a little more "visionary" as a whole, and some would say a huge "wish list" but it is worth noting and considering. If we are going to do something, let's make sure we do it right.

Financial Options for Construction

General Obligation (GO) Bo	nd Funds with a 60%+1 vote:
• \$2.70 GO Bond	\$12.5 million
• \$4.05 GO Bond	\$19 million
<pre>PPEL with board approval, \$1.34 PPEL</pre>	and no vote or public hearing needed \$3.5 million
SAVE with board approval,	and a public hearing

• 20 Years \$4.2 million

Some scenarios include the following:

•	GO	\$2.70	vote	and	SAVE	\$16.7	million
-	~ ~	<u> </u>				A1 C	

• GO \$2.70 vote with PPEL \$16 million

Recognize the following:

- These are estimates (our enrollment also impacts the SAVE...higher enrollment = more funds)
- We also have other needs that we use SAVE and PPEL for, including roofs, building needs, and future building needs (Ag/STEM building, upgrades to current buildings and facilities overall)

Meyer believes we need to establish a "visual" where facilities will be located in the future. A key component is recognizing "where these additions are located" in the future, with a clear plan and "map for the future."