



BELLEVUE COMETS
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUPERINTENDENT

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Comet Highlights - March 12, 2024

Notes from the Board of Education Meeting on March 11, 2024

From Tom Meyer, Superintendent

March 14	Kindergarten Roundup
March 16	Athletic Booster Chicken Dinner at the Legion
March 19	Preschool Open House
March 20	2-Hour Early Dismissal for Teacher Professional Learning
March 29-April 2	No School for Students
April 2	Teacher Professional Learning Day
April 9	ACT at Bellevue HS for any Juniors interested
May 25	Bellevue CSD Graduation - 4:00

To view a calendar of events, see the following link:

<https://www.rivervalleyconference.org/public/genie/628/school/1/>

Board Notes for the Board Meeting on March 11, 2024

APPROVED - Consent Agenda

Open Enrollment

- Approve Open Enrollment for Grace Elizabeth Lensch for the 2024-2025 school year. Grace is an 11th-grade student moving with her family to Dubuque. She is requesting to be enrolled in the Bellevue CSD from her resident district of Dubuque Senior High School

Approve Resignations

- Erica Theisen - HS Spanish Teacher - Erica is moving to Tennessee at the end of the school year.
- Jennie Michels - MS Reading Teacher - Jennie and her family have decided that she will step away from teaching to have more time with family.
- Kelley Humphrey - Assistant HS Volleyball - Kelley has served as a volleyball coach for our district in a positive manner, but her daughter is playing collegiate volleyball, and the schedule conflicts with the high school schedule and the commitment she can make to this role.

- Derek Ploegger - Custodian - Derek is pursuing another job interest in Maquoketa that is available for him at this time.

Approve Recommendations to Hire

- Linda Lucy - Part-time AM associate in preschool, and then food service for approximately one hour each day.
- Sherene Pitts - Full-time associate at the elementary school for student needs to meet IEP requirements, etc.
 - I anticipate both of these positions will carry over into next school year in some capacity.

Recognize any Visitors

Tracey Till (5th grade teacher), Melissa Fondell (4th grade teacher), and Andy McKean (former legislator).

Andy McKean

Andy McKean, a former legislator running for office again, requested to be on our agenda to discuss education, school financing, etc. Andy discussed the failure of the legislature to approve SSA for schools to complete budget accurately, the AEA system, teacher pay bills (and their sustainability), and some other aspects dealing with education as a whole (including current and past legislative actions). Andy emphasized the aspect of representing people "beyond political party allegiance" and legislating for various viewpoints

I have also invited State Representative Steve Bradley to attend one of our meetings in the future. He has indicated this will be after the legislative session based on scheduling.

Comet Curriculum

Bellevue Elementary has been working on its literacy program, and Melissa Fondell (4th grade teacher), Tracey Till (5th grade teacher), and Mrs. Hartung-Schroeder (Principal) shared some aspects of it and the progress they are making (and seeing with student learning). Some key points mentioned were the aspect of increased reading and writing for students (along with an emphasis on speaking and listening), the use of fiction and nonfiction texts, connection to grade level standards and the Science of Reading, along with the general scaffolding of material ("pulling it all together").

Comet Finance Information and 24-25

Abbey has been outstanding in working on our budget, especially considering this is her first year working in a school district.

Abbey and I will share some budget information with the Board. This is part of our normal procedures in the district, although this year we must have two budget hearings based on state law. Abbey and I determined a tax rate for our stakeholders based on a 1.5% SSA from the state (we anticipate this being higher, but using a moderately conservative rate to share with our taxpayers).

Our property tax rate will decrease based on our estimations from \$13.45926 to \$13.23798. This is a result of increased property valuations in our district (that has been consistently increasing) and some adjustments with our bond levy.

Budget Specifics and the State Legislature

Right now, the state legislature has not agreed/decided on SSA funds for next school year (the House approved 3.0% on in the last 2-3 weeks, but the Senate has not developed any type of bill yet on this). But, as we shared at the last board meeting, we also must have a budget ready for the auditor's office to mail to all property owners in our district. The budget can be adjusted to a lower rate in the future. This process is new this school year based on legislative action where this occurs, along with a second budget hearing.

This "date" brings up another point of question from districts, the state, and others. We do not legally have to have our information to the auditor's office until March 15, but the state auditor says they need it by March 5. Our financial advocates/experts are also confused about this. As a result, this is why we will likely share the information above before our board meeting - recognizing that the rate can change and go "down" after it is printed. Ultimately, the state is seeing some "unforeseen consequences and results" due to the new legislation.

We did have to increase our Management fund to \$300,000 from \$250,000 last year due to an increase in our property insurance rates that I mentioned in the past.

Some notes on the budget and SSA - Abbey has two documents included in the attachments in regard to the "Tax Notice", FAQ's about the budget process, etc.

SET DATES - Public Hearings

The district needs to set two public hearings for our budget. The Board approved a public hearing for Tuesday, April 2 at 8:00 AM (Property Tax Levy Hearing), followed by a second (Budget Adoption Hearing) at our regular board of education meeting on Monday, April 8 at 6:30 PM for budget adoption.

Tricon Construction

Key dates:

- Accept Contracts - **March 11** Board Meeting
- Substantial Completion - **June 15, 2025 (15 months for completion)**
- Final Completion - **June 30, 2025**

Subcontractors provided by Tricon (unofficial) are the following:

Tricon's Unofficial List of Subcontractors (3.11.24)

Building concrete

Southside

<i>Paving concrete</i>	<i>Valentine</i>
<i>Paving</i>	<i>River City</i>
<i>Sprinkler</i>	<i>Continental</i>
<i>Electrical/low voltage</i>	<i>TriCity Electric</i>
<i>Plumbing</i>	<i>Kraus plumbing</i>
<i>HVAC</i>	<i>Geisler Brothers</i>
<i>Steel fabricator</i>	<i>Grosse Steel</i>
<i>Masonry</i>	<i>Cummer Masonry</i>
<i>Precast</i>	<i>APC</i>
<i>Flooring</i>	<i>Home and Floor Show</i>
<i>Kitchen</i>	<i>Rapids Foodservice</i>
<i>Doors and Hardware</i>	<i>Walsh</i>
<i>Casework</i>	<i>Décor Cabinets</i>
<i>Gym flooring, bleachers, and lockers</i>	<i>H2I</i>
<i>Aluminum windows.</i>	<i>Zephyr</i>

APPROVED - Technology

We have adjusted our rotation of devices (Chromebooks) over the last few years, and we now replace three sets of devices each year - 3rd grade, 6th grade, and 9th grade. We get one set of devices for grades 3 & 6, with a "stronger" device (memory) for 9th-grade students. The price of devices for grades 3 & 6 are \$244 each, while the price for the 9th grade students is \$325. Additionally, there are also prices for the Management System and a case for each computer. We are planning on getting 130 devices for grades 3 & 6, with 55 for grade 9.

While we still have Macbooks in grades 11 & 12, the plan for the future is to continue with the Chromebooks for grades 11 & 12 in the future based on our natural rotation that we utilize. Chromebooks have developed significantly through the years, and they can be used effectively by all grades. At one time we had issues with some of the online college courses for upperclassmen, but with the changes in programs, etc. this is not a large concern for us.

A breakdown of costs is the following:

Grade	Number	Device Price	Management System Price	Case Price
3 & 6	130	\$244	\$32	\$26
9	55	\$325	\$32	\$26

Costs Overall

3rd & 6th = \$39,260

9th = \$21,065

Total = \$60,325

APPROVED (Soccer and Softball) - Extracurricular Participation

Pete Bonifas (Activities Director) shared information on our participation numbers, trends locally and across the state, and more (attached).

Sport	Varsity	JV	Comments
Football	30	8	Small Sr and FR classes next season
Volleyball	16	F/S - 7	JV and F/S were stretched thin
Cross Country Boys	13		
Cross Country Girls	7		
Basketball Boys	15	F/S - 8	Consistently around 25 kids each year
Basketball Girls	15	1	16 Girls Total. Up from last year!
Wrestling Girls	11		Increase from last year!
Wrestling Boys	20		Increase from last year!
Bowling Boys	6		0 seniors this season
Bowling Girls	0		Did not have a team this season
Track & Field Boys	30-33		Increase from last season
Track & Field Girls	14		Same as last season
Soccer Boys	18-20		10 Seniors on this years Team
Soccer Girls	25		Includes Maquoketa Girls.
Golf Boys	8-10		Same as last season
Golf Girls	8		Same as last season
Baseball Boys	12		Co-Op with Marquette, 2nd Year
Softball Girls	4-8	14 Last season	Co-Op with Maquoketa, 1st Year

7th Grade

8th Grade

Football	14	9	
Volleyball	13	13	
Girls Basketball	8	7	
Boys Wrestling	5	6	
Boys Basketball	11	10	
Girls Wrestling	3	3	
Girls T/F	7	11	
Boys T/F	11	11	
Cross Country Girls	1	2	
Cross Country Boys	0	1	
Baseball	12	6	
Softball	9	9	

RVC Trends and Impacts

- ❖ Monticello did not field Girls JV basketball most of this season
- ❖ Monticello did not have a F/S Boys team this season

- ❖ Anamosa Did not have a Girls JV Basketball team this season
- ❖ Anamosa would not reschedule Girls Varsity basketball games (Bellevue and Cascade) that were postponed due to their small roster, lack of competitiveness and fear of losing players for next year.
 - They are building a 20 Million dollar Athletic facility.

- ❖ Maquoketa will not have Girls Soccer this season

- ❖ Club VB Impact, especially on rescheduling Basketball games this Winter

- ❖ Camanche did not have JV softball last season
- ❖ Tipton has struggled with Softball participation
- ❖ North Cedar did not have a baseball team in 2022

- ❖ Current JR class and 8th Grade class on the boys side does not have great Athletic participation numbers

- ❖ Currently have 10 Seniors boys out for Soccer. This could be a factor next season!

- ❖ Currently looking to add 3-4 JV Girls Soccer Matches
 - Currently have a Co-Ed Match with Durant 4-23-24 (trying to start a soccer program)

Softball

Additionally, Mr. Bonifas and I recommended that the Board officially approve a sharing agreement with Maquoketa CSD for softball for this year based on our lack of numbers (7-9 students). Maquoketa would be the host school and is willing to allow our students to participate in their program. I believe our district may also need to provide some transportation to our students to get to practices and games in Maquoketa, along with getting our students to Maquoketa to ride a bus as a team to games.

Maquoketa's SB coach is excited about this opportunity based on discussions with Mr. Bonifas. Official practice will start on April 29, and they will have open gyms on Thursdays from 6:30-8:00. Pitchers and catchers will have open gym

on Sundays from 11:30-12:45, along with team workouts from 12:45-1:30. Once practice starts they will have JV and Varsity together from 5:30-8:00 PM (teams split some of this time). They will also have Saturday practices while school is in session. Once school is out for the summer, they will also have consistent practice times (later in the day).

Maquoketa would approve this at their March 18 board meeting.

APPROVED - Girl's Soccer

Maquoketa also requests that the Bellevue CSD allow their students to participate in the GIRL'S soccer program at Bellevue. We would be the host for this. Practice started on Monday, March 11. Stephanie Penniston (coach) met with the Maquoketa girls interested in this opportunity last week after school. I recommend that the Board approve this request. 11 students attended the first practice from Maquoketa on Monday.

From Past Notes (with some updates)

Softball Meetings

Pete Bonifas met with parents/students about softball a few times in the last month or so. Approximately 7-9 potential players were represented at the meetings. Pete outlined the process of potential sharing that has taken place, including Marquette approaching us about sharing based on their low numbers (and our willingness to share), Marquette's determination to continue with Easton Valley, and the work of Coach Schroeder and Pete in contacting parents and students about their participation. Additionally, Pete shared the contacts made about sharing with EV/Marquette, Wahlert, and Maquoketa (Maquoketa has a board meeting on Monday night to discuss this and take potential action).

Finally, parents had questions about whether we would be involved in the coaching at Maquoketa, transportation to Maquoketa for practice (which I believe we will need to provide, especially based on the young age of a significant amount of the students interested), scheduling (following the RVC schedule - DH on Monday and Thursday, JV Wednesday mornings, and Non-Conference games added at the team's discretion), and next steps (Maquoketa board meeting approval on March 18).

Sharing with Marquette

Marquette had contacted our district in October about sharing softball with them based on their anticipated low numbers in softball, but then indicated in late November that they were reaching out to Easton Valley based on an agreement they had with them over the past two seasons. Discussion continued after the winter break, and then we were informed that they would be playing with Easton Valley. I met with the superintendent of Easton Valley and Mr. Kaiser at Marquette in the past two months, and they indicated the difficulty of a sharing agreement with their program at this time.

It is important to note for our community if asked about this, that Marquette approached our district in October about sharing softball, and we expressed an

interest in doing this (and said that we would) - but, that changed when they spoke with EV at the end of November. There will be some in our community wondering why our district is potentially sharing with a district for softball, and then the other school in our district is sharing with another district. I provided the explanation above (as we were planning on this), but this will likely be a question that is asked by a community member who cannot make sense as to why our schools would share with two separate school systems.

Teaching Staff Updates - From the Past and New

Below is some information on staffing for next school year.

3rd Section - 5th Grade - As the larger classes move upward in the elementary school, we will need to add another section for 5th grade for the 2024-2025 school year, while also reducing 1st grade to two sections. This has been posted internally, and Jeanette and a team of teachers interviewed an internal candidate for the 5th-grade position. Alex Wulfekuhle, currently a 2nd-grade teacher, has past experience in upper elementary and is interested in moving to 5th grade. The team believes he will be a good fit for this position, and we will be moving Alex to 5th grade for next school year.

Elementary Special Education - Shannon Anderson has expressed an interest in this position and will be moving to this next school year. I have agreed with her and the BEA (in writing) that she will have an opportunity to return to 1st grade when there are three sections again in the future (anticipated at this time in the 2025-2026 school year). This seems fair to do, and the right thing to do.

Middle School - As we move forward with larger elementary classes starting to enter the middle/high school, and students open enrolling in grades and coming to our district from Andrew through the whole-grade sharing agreement, we need to consider expanding staff at the middle/high level. After conferring with Mr. Recker, we have concluded that we need to add a teacher for this level. We will likely advertise this in the future, as a new position, with some certifications for middle school (and high school would also be good to make them more flexible in assignments based on needs as students get older).

HS Spanish - This position is being advertised in multiple areas.

MS Reading - This position is being advertised in multiple areas.

APPROVED - 23-24 School Year Days/Hours and Seniors "Excused"

At this time, we have the following four dates where there has not been school, along with one late start:

- January 9
- January 10
- January 12
- January 16
- January 22 (2-hour late start)
- January 23

Each school day counts for 6.5 hours toward the total of 1080 hours that is required for schools in the state of Iowa. At the start of the school year we had a total of 1133 hours built into our calendar. Therefore, we are still at 1098.5 hours.

$$\begin{array}{r} 6.5 \text{ hours} \times 5 \text{ days} = 32.5 \text{ hours} \\ \underline{2.0 \text{ hours} \times 1 \text{ day} = 2.0 \text{ hours}} \\ 34.5 \text{ hours} \end{array}$$

1098.5 - 1080 hours = 18.5 hours over the required amount of hours.

We do not have to make up any school days with students if we meet the 1080 hours, but teachers do have a 188-day contract (calculated into the school calendar). The last school day scheduled for this year in the original calendar is Thursday, May 23. Graduation is on Saturday, May 25. In the past, we have made up days in the final week when we were supposed to end school. I could realistically see this being done again (going to school on Friday, May 24) if the board would approve this.

Teachers have had the opportunity for two virtual learning days, and those who opted to participate only need to make up three days at this point...therefore, student days at maximum would also only be three days. Teachers in the past, if we had more days than students made up, have made up their contractual time after school or on other days when we have scheduled days off of school.

APPROVED - Recommendation:

- Meyer recommended the district make up one student day on Friday, May 24.
- Meyer recommended that the board allow the administration to determine how teachers will make up these days to fulfill their contractual obligations. Options will be discussed with the DLT and may include before/after school, dates when we do not have school, conference(s) in June, etc.

On another note - Some of our hourly staff (associates, food service workers, bus drivers, etc.) may miss out on some pay IF we do not make-up days. Some years in the past, we have offered opportunities for them to make up time and get paid. Bus drivers clean their buses, associates help to move furniture at the end of the school year, etc. This will be offered to staff, but more discussion will take place in the future about the upcoming years and this year.

We spoke about this at our last meeting, and this is a valuable discussion to have again likely, while also recognizing this needs to be fair to everyone and respect the funds of our school district (taxpayer funds).

APPROVED - Seniors: Additionally, as we have done in previous years, exempting seniors from making up any snow days.

24-25 School Calendar

At this time, Meyer did not have much information to share, but this could change with some actions by the legislature. Specifically, can we start the Monday or Tuesday after the Iowa State Fair? Currently, we cannot start until August 23 (which is Friday this year). If we could start earlier, Meyer recommends we do. It would allow us to have a more balanced schedule for semesters at the secondary level - This year (and similar to other years), we have 82 days in the 1st semester and 96 in the second semester. Part of this is a request by teachers to finish the semester before our Winter Break. Mr. Kaiser at Marquette also agreed with this potential approach.

Bellevue Masonic Lodge

The Bellevue Masonic Lodge recently recognized Adam Smith as Teacher of the Year for their organization based on recommendations from the administration. Adam is an outstanding teacher and advocate for students. He will officially be recognized at the Bellevue Masonic Lodge Breakfast in early May.

Secondly, the Bellevue Masonic Lodge would like to have a "cornerstone" for the new elementary school as advocates for our school and public education as a whole. This will likely draw people from across the state to be present at the ceremony when it takes place. I plan on attending a meeting at the Masonic Lodge on March 18 @ 6:00 PM to discuss this more, including logistics and time frames.

The Bellevue Masonic Lodge is involved in our school system, including working with the elementary school to provide bikes to some students and being advocates for public education and our staff.

APPROVED - Student Teaching Agreements

As an annual formality, I recommend we approve a student teaching agreement with UNI, Morningside, and Phoenix University for the next school year. It serves the purpose of training new teachers, providing new ideas to our supervising teachers and other teachers in the building, providing support to aspiring teachers, and giving us an "in" potentially for teachers entering the field who may want to come to Bellevue as a licensed teacher in the future.

Information Items

Legislative

- Many of the topics were discussed in the discussion with Andy McKean earlier in the meeting.

ACT Testing

- While we do not require the ACT anymore for ALL of our students, a large majority do participate at NO charge to the students. The date is April 9, 2024.

Beyond the Blue

- The Beyond the Blue Committee met and selected recipients for this year's recognition. This year's recipients will be honored on the Friday of Graduation weekend with a social at the Button Factory (2nd level) at 6:00, with a program at 7:00. Recipients are the following:

Graduates

- Darrell Ernst - 1974 Graduate
- Eric Kilburg - 1992 Graduate
- Hayley Norpel-Coffas - 2010 Graduate
- Jerry Zamzow - 1998 Graduate

Contributors

- Maury Anderson
- Cliff Hammann

Below are the criteria that were developed in the past and amended slightly over the years.

Mission of Beyond the Blue

The mission of Beyond the Blue is to recognize individuals for their accomplishments and work overall. These fall into two categories:

- 1. The recognition of graduates who have impacted society in a positive manner through their outstanding accomplishments and contributions.*
- 2. The recognition of "contributors" to the district who are not graduates of the school district but have made significant contributions to the success of the Bellevue CSD.*

Criteria for the Recognition of Graduates

Recognition for graduates (out of school for a minimum of 10 years) is based on their contributions, accomplishments, and impact in life after graduation through any of the following areas:

- *Community, State, National or World Impact*
- *Professional Careers*
- *Military Service*
- *Humanitarian Contributions*
- *Leadership Positions/Actions*
- *Intercollegiate Accomplishments*
- *Lifetime Achievements*
- *Contributions and accomplishments to the school district*

Comments from Building Principals, Superintendent, and Board Members

Staff Surveys

Meyer shared this information with Board members, and discussion will take place at the April meeting. The theme of the survey is around "learning, climate, relationships, and similar items of interest for school systems".

Fuel Discussion

The Bellevue CSD has had the same fuel service (diesel, etc.) for many years from River Valley. Tim and I have been approached separately about putting this out for bid. Meyer is researching this with other districts and will share more information at the April Board meeting.

Insurance Costs

Abbey and I received an email from Mike Hansen about our EMC insurance. As the message below indicates, our district can expect continued increases for our renewal. A few excerpts from the message are below:

As you are well aware, the property market remains extremely challenging due to natural disasters, high inflation, increased costs of material/labor, and shortages. In addition, social inflation continues to impact liability claim costs due to increased amounts awarded by jury verdicts and via settlements. Unfortunately, all of these factors continue to drive increased claim and reinsurance costs and do require a rate increase for Safety Group members in 2024.

EMC is projecting the pricing to increase 25%.

They will also be making the significant changes below:

- **Roof Surfacing Valuation Limitations (CP7370 - see attached):**

- Roof coverage will be changed from Replacement Cost coverage to Actual Cash Value coverage when a roof is more than 15 years old. Under Actual Cash Value coverage, claims payments will be based on the current value of the damaged roof. Actual Cash Value is determined

- by the amount to replace the damaged roof, minus depreciation, at the time of loss. As used, "depreciation" is the amount of value that an item loses over time, typically through use, wear and tear, or by obsolescence. If the age of the roof is less than 15 years, Replacement

- Cost coverage will apply unless the entire building is covered under Actual Cash Value.

- **Wind/Hail Deductibles (CP0321 - see attached):**

- We will be adding a 1% Wind/Hail deductible to all property. The % wind/hail deductible will not apply when 1% of the property is lower than the All Other Peril property deductible. Further clarification is:

- 1) A 1% wind/hail deductible will **NOT** be applied to buildings where the AOP (all other peril) deductible is more than 1% of the building's coverage limit.

- a. BPP (Business personal property) and PIO (Property in the Open) at that building will also **NOT** be subject to the 1% wind/hail deductible.

- b. Deductible application for wind/hail claims for all location that fall into this category will remain as a single, per occurrence deductible which is the AOP deductible.

- 2) A 1% wind/hail deductible will be applied to all buildings where the AOP deductible is less than or equal to the 1% of the building's coverage limit.

- a. BPP and PIO at that building will also be subject to their own 1% wind/hail deductible.

3) A 1% wind/hail deductible will be applied to PIO that is assigned its own location and the AOP deductible is less than 1% of the PIO coverage limit.

Just to give you an example the High School Building is currently insured for \$18,816,711, so the deductible for wind or hail claims would be \$188,167.

Adjourn

The next meeting is on Monday, April 8, at 6:30 PM; Public Hearing for the 1st budget meeting will be on Tuesday, April 2 at 8:00 AM (pending board action).

Exempt Session

At this point, the Board entered into an exempt session to discuss negotiations for the 2024-2025 school year.



MARCH 16, 2024

CHICKEN DINNER

FUNDRAISER

Location

Bellevue American Legion
111 Market Street

Doors open at 4
Serving food from 4:30-7
Silent Auction ends at 6:30
Live auction starts at 7

Menu: Fried Chicken, Potato, Salad, Vegetable, Dessert
Catered by Jeronimo's
Takeout Available

Dinner Cost \$15



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Created by Logan Kloser