



BELLEVUE COMETS
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUPERINTENDENT

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Comet Highlights - September 13, 2023
From the September 11, 2023 Board Meeting

September 13	2-Hour Early Dismissal - Teacher Professional Learning - 1:30-3:30
September 13	OPN and Bellevue CSD Open House for the progress and planning for the Bellevue Elementary School - 6:30-7:30 - Elementary Gym
September 25	Homecoming Week
September 29	Homecoming Pep Rally at the MS/HS for grades PK-12 and Homecoming Parade
October 11	2-Hour Early Dismissal - Teacher Professional Learning - 1:30-3:30
October 18 & 19	Parent-Teacher Conferences
October 20	No School

To view a calendar of events, see the following link:
<https://www.rivervalleyconference.org/public/genie/628/school/1/>

Notes for the Board Meeting on 9.11.23

APPROVED - Consent Agenda

Approve Open Enrollment Requests

- Shiloh George Meyer - Andrew to Bellevue - PK3
- Teana Barner - Andrew to BelleVue - Grade 10
- Xavian Barner - Andrew to Bellevue - Grade 8

Approve Resignations

- Blair Gerlach - Assistant Softball - Blair stated that she wants to continue building a strong agriculture program in the school and providing more opportunities for students.
- Ryan Ernst - Head HS Softball - Ryan stated this was a difficult decision but decided to step away based on his children's schedule and his new work schedule. He did indicate he is still interested in being involved in the program in some manner in the future to work with pitchers, etc.

Recommendations to Hire

- Rylie Pickett - In the process of replacing and moving staff due to Paquita Ditzler's retirement, we needed to hire someone for Tuesdays and Thursdays to work in Mrs. Malone's PK room. Rylie has experience working with this age at other locations (including the Andrew Daycare).
- Pam Van Vleck - Middle School Sponsor - This position is for someone to take tickets during middle school events and assist in general during middle school events.
- John Malone - Substitute Custodian & Event Clean-Up - John applied for the position that was posted and is going to be doing clean-up after events this Fall (and beyond potentially) for volleyball and football games. This will vary from zero nights a week to 3 or 4 nights some weeks as the year progresses. Clean-up is likely about 2.5-4 hours each night when the routine is established.

Recognize any Visitors

No specific visitors, although Leo Aschenbrenner joined the board as the BHS Student Representative for the 2023-2024 school year. Leo is the Bellevue HS Student Council President.

Comet Curriculum

Meyer shared information/results regarding the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP), and the following is some general information on our results in each grade where tests are taken and required.

Bellevue CSD ISASP Results
2022 & 2023
(State Averages)

Mathematics

Grade	Not Proficient		Proficient		Advanced		Proficient & Advanced	
	22	23	22	23	22	23	22	23
3	17 (28)	16 (25)	62 (52)	37 (56)	21 (21)	28 (19)	83 (73)	85 (76)
4	12 (31)	9 (27)	66 (55)	75 (62)	22 (14)	16 (17)	88 (69)	91 (73)
5	7 (35)	15 (29)	46 (50)	65 (60)	46 (15)	20 (15)	92 (65)	85 (71)
6	30 (33)	26 (30)	67 (52)	67 (63)	2 (15)	7 (15)	69 (67)	74 (70)
7	35 (35)	24 (31)	63 (56)	72 (62)	2 (9)	4 (10)	65 (65)	76 (68)
8	40 (34)	52 (28)	60 (58)	48 (67)	0 (9)	0 (12)	60 (67)	48 (72)
9	45 (42)	31 (39)	57 (49)	60 (63)	0 (9)	9 (12)	57 (58)	69 (61)
10	39 (39)	35 (34)	56 (52)	59 (60)	5 (9)	7 (10)	61 (61)	66 (66)
11	33 (40)	30 (33)	61 (49)	59 (56)	7 (11)	11 (14)	68 (60)	70 (67)

EIA

Grade	Not Proficient		Proficient		Advanced		Proficient & Advanced	
	22	23	22	23	22	23	22	23
3	36 (65)	26 (34)	62 (55)	67 (56)	2 (10)	7 (10)	64 (65)	74 (66)
4	20 (26)	27 (27)	63 (62)	71 (62)	17 (12)	2 (11)	80 (74)	73 (73)
5	12 (33)	30 (32)	80 (60)	59 (60)	7 (7)	11 (9)	87 (67)	70 (69)
6	50 (31)	29 (27)	50 (62)	69 (63)	0 (7)	2 (10)	50 (59)	71 (73)
7	35 (27)	37 (26)	43 (63)	59 (62)	2 (10)	4 (12)	45 (73)	63 (74)
8	22 (25)	40 (24)	76 (67)	60 (67)	2 (9)	0 (9)	78 (76)	60 (76)
9	38 (29)	28 (31)	63 (63)	71 (63)	4 (8)	2 (7)	67 (71)	73 (70)
10	37 (27)	24 (28)	52 (63)	72 (60)	11 (10)	4 (13)	63 (73)	76 (73)
11	41 (30)	39 (32)	50 (57)	49 (56)	9 (13)	11 (13)	59 (70)	60 (63)

Science

Grade	Not Proficient		Proficient		Advanced		Proficient & Advanced	
	22	23	22	23	22	23	22	23
5	27 (40)	41 (37)	73 (58)	54 (60)	0 (3)	4 (3)	73 (61)	58 (63)
8	31 (38)	60 (34)	69 (60)	40 (60)	0 (7)	0 (6)	69 (67)	40 (66)
10	37 (36)	50 (38)	50 (52)	43 (50)	13 (12)	7 (12)	63 (64)	50 (62)

APPROVED Cash Report

Also discussion on Finances, Enrollment, and Related Items

Each year the Board approves the Cash Report. Abbey Skrivseth shared this information with the Board.

Meyer shared updated enrollment information, along with a document on the following pages with information in regard to our overall enrollment figures.

Enrollment Trends - Updated on 8.23.23

Year	TK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Elem (TK-5)	MS/HS (6-12)	Dist (TK-12)	4/3PK (Total)
10-11	8	34	35	34	55	50	39	43	45	50	58	47	60	49	262	352	614	45/21 (680)
11-12	10	46	34	33	37	53	52	40	42	43	61	62	56	58	265	362	627	33/34 (694)
12-13	12	34	49	33	38	36	55	50	43	44	49	60	61	55	262	362	624	32/28 (684)
13-14	9	43	38	45	37	35	41	55	54	43	51	56	63	61	248	383	631	36/35 (702)
14-15	7	36	39	36	49	37	43	42	59	59	45	52	55	62	250	374	624	40/31 (695)
15-16	15	42	35	42	37	49	39	45	43	59	67	44	53	53	259	364	623	37/18 (678)
16-17	12	37	44	37	43	38	53	45	49	48	65	64	46	50	264	367	631	35/32 (698)
17-18	10	37	38	42	40	49	40	54	49	50	61	64	63	47	256	388	644	42/33 (719)
18-19	14	48	41	39	44	42	48	44	55	53	55	60	68	60	276	395	671	40/48 (769)
19-20	10	54	52	43	42	44	44	52	45	57	51	54	58	67	289	384	673	58/34 (765)
20-21	15	57	54	54	41	41	44	46	52	46	57	50	50	59	306	360	666	47/30 (743)
21/22	7	64	59	54	53	42	41	46	49	56	46	62	49	58	320	366	686	47/35 (768)
22-23	8	55	61	62	58	56	47	43	47	56	59	48	61	52	347	366	713	46/37 (796)
23-24	13	42	52	62	62	60	57	44	47	47	59	57	46	66	348	366	714	47/31 (792)

Total Enrollment Trend - September 2023 Data

<u>District Enrollment</u>	<u>PK (3- & 4yr old)</u>	<u>Elementary (TK-5)</u>	<u>MS/HS</u>	<u>TK-12</u>	
2010-11	680	66	262	352	614
2011-12	694	67	265	362	627
2012-13	684	60	262	362	624
2013-14	702	71	248	383	631
2014-15	695	71	250	374	624
2015-16	678	55	259	364	623
2016-17	698	67	264	367	631
2017-18	719	75	256	388	644
2018-19	769	88	276	395	671
2019-20	765	92	289	384	673
2020-21	743	77	306	360	666
2021-22	768	82	320	366	686
2022-23	794	83	345	366	711
2023-24	792	78	348	366	714

Summary (as of 8.28.23)

- * The 714 students in grades TK-12 is the largest number indicated in the last 13 years (and longer) and an increase of one from last school year. This is a 16.3% increase since the 2010-2011 school year.
- * The 792 students overall in 3-year-old through 12th grade is the 2nd largest in the last 13 years (and beyond). Last year's enrollment in this area was the largest. This is a 16.5% increase since the 2010-2011 school year.
- * The 348 in grades TK-5 is the largest number in the same time period. This is a 32.8% increase since the 2010-2011 school year. This is also a 13.7% increase since the 20-21 school year.
- * The 366 students in grades 6-12 is a 4.0% increase since the 2010-2011 school year.
- * The number of 3- and 4-year-olds is the fourth-largest in the last 13 years (and beyond). This is a 18.2% increase since the 2010-2011 school year.
- * This is the second consecutive year that the Bellevue CSD has three sections for grades K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade in the history of the district (the 2022-23 school year was the first time).

**While students in school may show a slight increase, funding may be slightly lower as not all students are full-time students (TK students, students who are homeschooled and take a limited number of classes at the school, whole-grade sharing students where the district does not get the full portion of funds from their resident district, and similar situations).*

Facilities Update and Discussion

Bellevue CSD Open House - Bellevue Elementary Building Project

The following is a press release that was shared with the Bellevue Herald-Leader and the Dubuque Telegraph Herald concerning the open house on **Wednesday, September 13, from 6:30-7:30 PM**. I hope all board members can attend and arrive by about 6:20. I also shared with the Facilities Team that was involved in the discussions leading up to the bond referendum.

Community invited to preview design of school district's new 3-5 building
 Open house at Bellevue Elementary School Sept. 13

BELLEVUE – The community is invited to view designs for the Bellevue Community School District's new elementary school building from 6:30-7:30 p.m. during an open house at the current Bellevue Elementary gym on Wednesday, September 13.

Representatives from the district and OPN Architects, the Eastern Iowa-based firm hired by the district to design the new school, will be at the event to share the design of the new school, which will be built to the east of the current secondary school. In place of an official presentation time, attendees will have the opportunity to view the design and renderings of the building, ask questions, and visit with representatives of the district and OPN throughout the night.

Tom Meyer, Bellevue Community School District superintendent, encourages community members to attend. "This is another opportunity for our stakeholders to provide input to our district. The perspectives and thoughts on the current proposed design is essential to designing a building to meet the educational needs of our students."

The approximately 36,000-square-foot two-story building will have nine classrooms, three for each grade third through fifth. This will be enough space for half of the district's elementary school students to move out of the current Bellevue Elementary School. PreK through second grade will remain at the current elementary school for the immediate future where they will have much-needed additional space once the 3-5 students are relocated.

The school will also include a gym, art and music rooms, special education classrooms, and a media center. The building will have a secure entrance and a playground. The site has been planned to accommodate a potential future expansion for PreK-2.

The design of the new school, which began immediately following the March 2023 vote, reflects feedback from the school board, district staff, and administrators who identified space needs for the new building and visited recently completed elementary schools in other Iowa school districts.

The project is currently on schedule. Construction drawings should be done by late 2023/early 2024 with construction starting soon thereafter. The intent is for the new building to be open for school on the first day of the 2025-2026 school year.

The project is being paid for through a combination of a general obligation bond and district PPEL and SAVE funds. Bellevue voters approved the bond, which will partially fund the first phase of a multi-year facility master plan, on March 7.

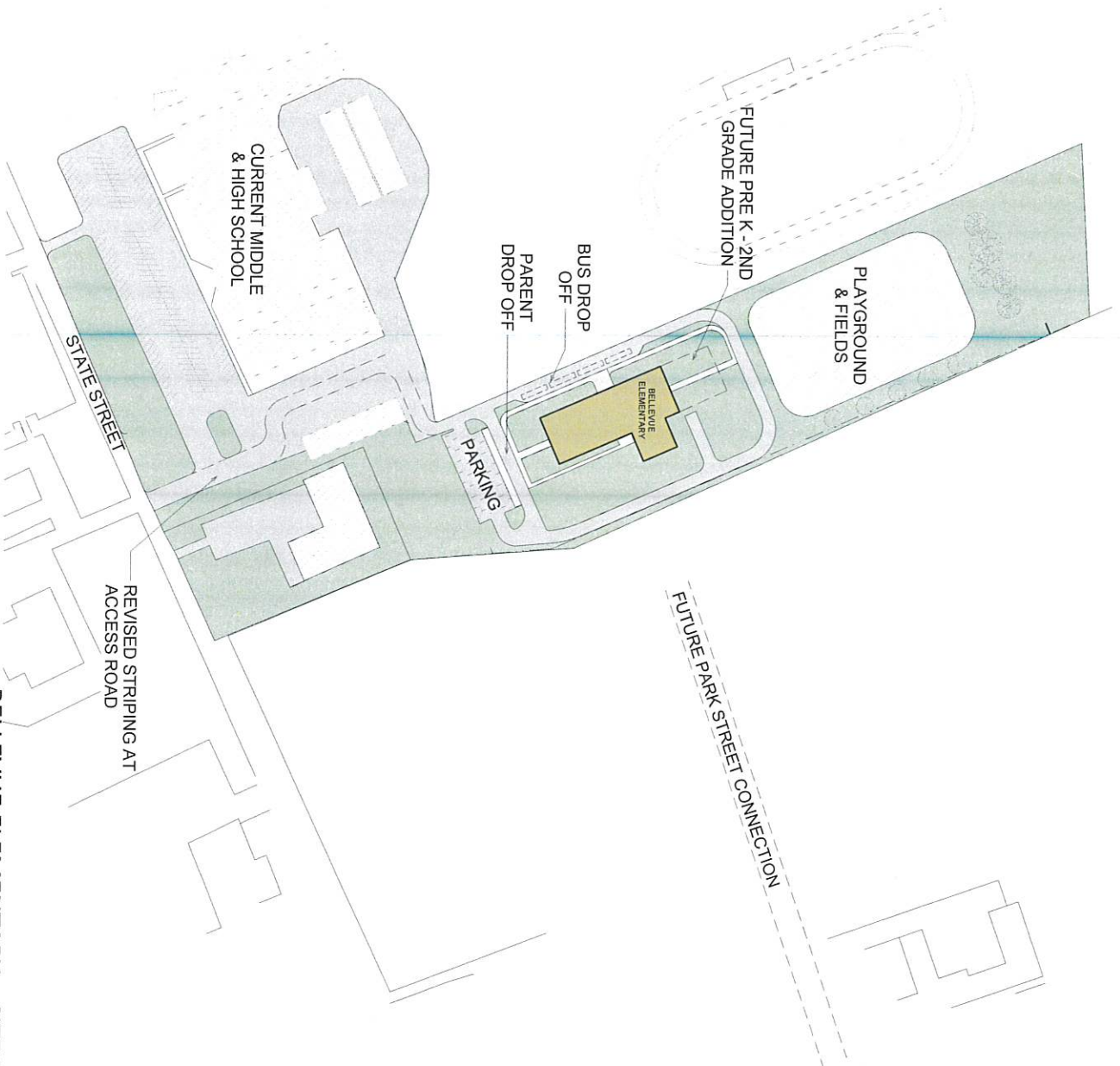
The second phase will include renovations and improvements to the high school's fine arts and CTE spaces and/or other facility projects to address space needs based on enrollment, including a potential addition to the new building for PK-2. Phase 2 will be funded using state sales tax revenues and will not affect property taxes.

The long-term plan was presented to the district in January 2023 by members of the community-based committee.

Contact: Tom Meyer, PhD, Superintendent, Bellevue Community School District, (563) 872-4001, TomMeyer@bellevue.k12.ia.us

The following is information that will be shared at the open house on Wednesday night.

SITE PLAN
T = 80%



BELLEVUE ELEMENTARY - SITE PLAN

09/13/2023

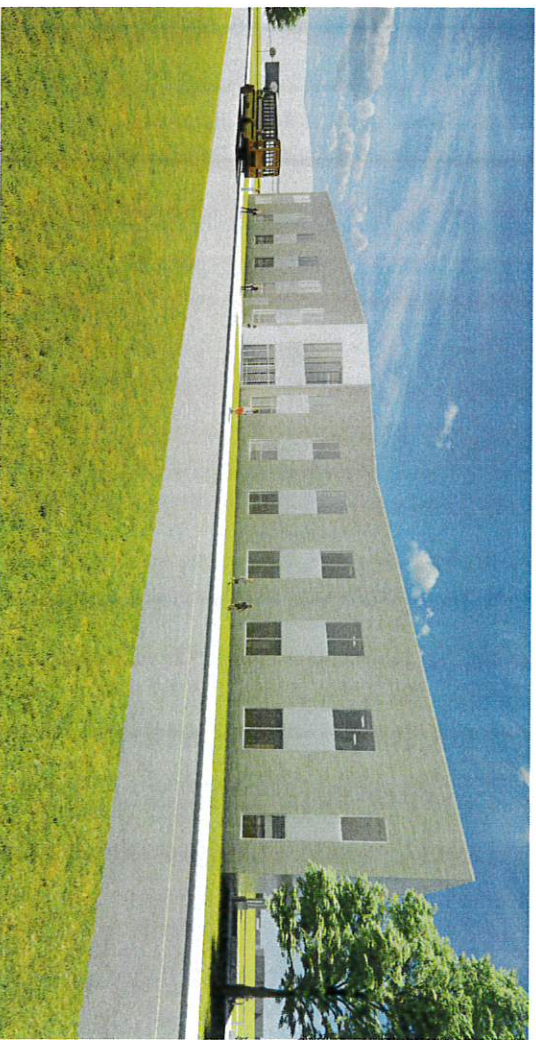




FUTURE PARK STREET CONNECTION- EAST 3D VIEW



MAIN VISITOR ENTRY - SOUTH 3D VIEW



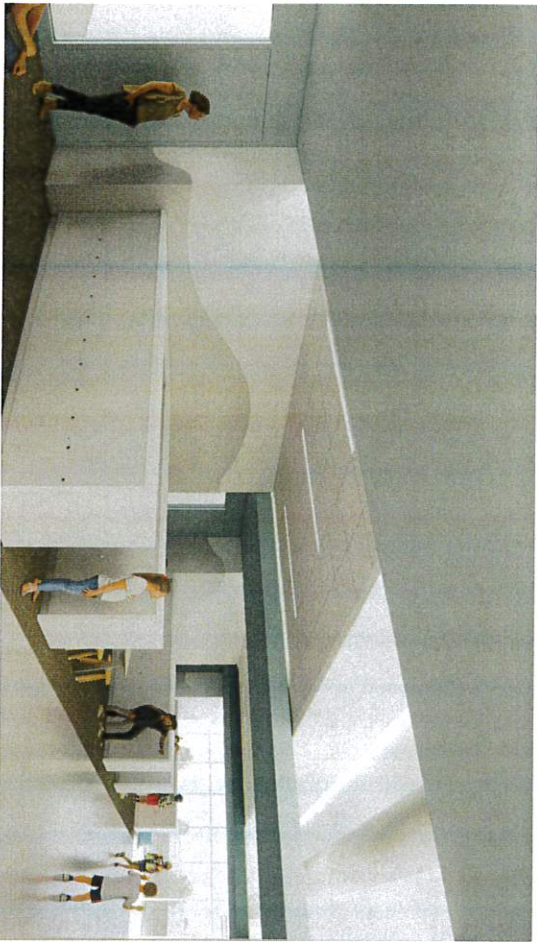
ENTRY VIEW FROM HIGH SCHOOL- SOUTHWEST 3D VIEW

BELLEVUE ELEMENTARY - EXTERIOR 3D VIEWS

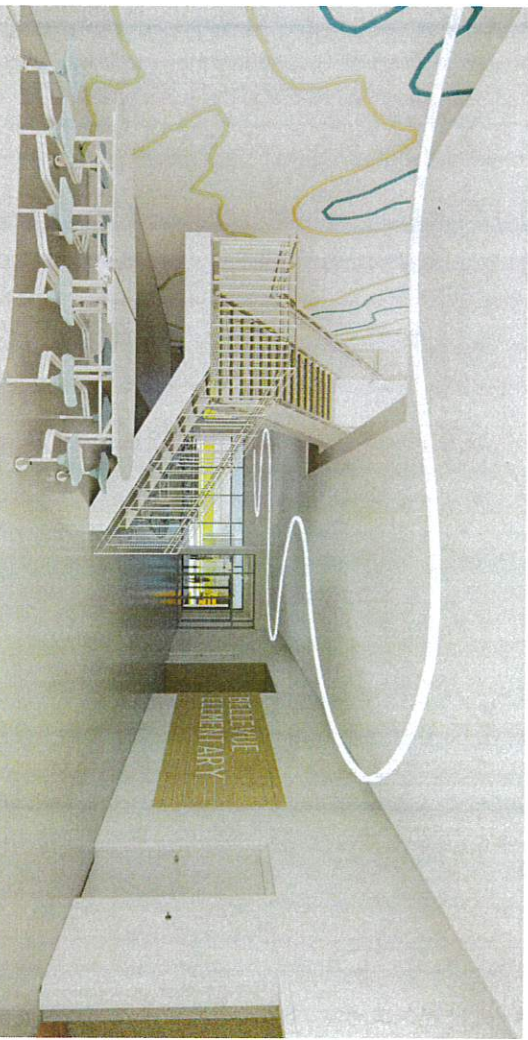
09/13/2023



LIBRARY - LEVEL 1 3D VIEW



COLLABORATION & LOCKER AREA - LEVEL 2 3D VIEW



COMMONS - LEVEL 1 3D VIEW

BELLEVUE ELEMENTARY - INTERIOR 3D VIEWS

09/13/2023

Meyer (and others on the Steering Committee from the Board and at the Board meeting) provided an overview of several things related to the planning for the building with the school board, along with providing time for Board members to share thoughts, etc.

Mechanical - MODUS Engineering did a Life-Cycle Cost Analysis (LCCA) on the different mechanical systems for heating and cooling. They are meeting with Brett Ernst, Matt Wedeking, and Meyer on Friday morning. Meyer and Wedeking shared information about this at our meeting. MODUS calculated the overall use of energy, compared to depreciation (roughly 25-year life cycle), and made recommendations based on the information of the best, better, and good system options. The options are the following (and pricing is likely higher than actual costs):

- Base Bid
Air Handler with DX cooling and hot water VAV reheat using Natural Gas Boilers
- Option 2 (ADD \$308,923)
Air Handler with chilled water cooling using an air-cooled chiller and hot water VAV reheat with natural gas boilers
- Option 3 (ADD \$326,639)
Variable refrigerant flow with a dedicated outdoor air system with energy recovery
- Option 4 (ADD \$593,486)
Geothermal Pump and reinject system with 2-pipe Heat pump loop with water source heat pumps and energy recovery ventilator

*Overall, if the district qualifies for the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, the geothermal option seems to be the best option for our district for efficiency and cost savings. Meyer is still waiting to hear if we will qualify for this incentive as a public entity.

Gym Floor - The question about the surface of the gym floor has been addressed, and based on the input that was shared with OPN, they believe the gym can have a wood floor for approximately the same cost. They are proceeding with that intent.

Gym Size - Below is some information on an extension of a gym. Ultimately, a competition gym seating 700-800 people and the necessary things would cost around \$3-3.5 million (you can see the math below) more than the current proposed gym.

- *The current model is a **regulation-width floor** but about 25 feet shorter in length. The additional cost to make it regulation size is approximately \$600,000-\$700,000 more (an additional 2000 square feet to make regulation length). To increase it to a competition gym with seating for 700-800, it would add an additional 4800 square feet, plus additional restrooms (plus locker rooms for four teams). The cost for this would be another \$2.5-\$3.0 million to the \$600,000-\$700,000 of the floor extension (\$3.1-\$3.7 million overall cost - a rough estimate from OPN).*

Currently the gym does not have bleachers planned, but bleachers would be realistic for the school to have for assemblies in comparison to sitting on the floor. It is also the only area in the school where all students in grades 3-5 could meet, or eventually PK-5. This is not a competition gym, and bleachers would likely not be pulled out for youth tournaments and not impact the playing floor. Meyer is checking with OPN on the aspect of cost of bleachers and other potential needed changes in this regard.

Two other options were considered:

1. Full-Size practice Gym - 94' x 50' with 3' or 4' clear out of bounds. This could easily be reduced to 84' gym if just for practice, but 94' is the recommended length to host district play.
 - a. This would add about 2000 sf to the gym space at roughly \$320 - 350/sf = \$600,000 - \$700,000
2. Full-Size Competition Gym - 94' x 50' with 3' or 4' clear out of bounds (this should be larger for district play). Additional 2400 sf for bleachers to hold 700 - 800 seating. Additionally, significant Restrooms for that seating capacity and locker rooms would be required for District Play.
 - a. This would add about 4800 sf of space on top of the gym floor extension. Locker rooms and Restrooms carry a premium, so would look at \$450-\$500/sf for this space. The total would be in a 2.5M-\$3.0M total add.

Those estimates are very high level, but would impact other areas of the building if pursued.

There is also going to be some type of color on the wall going up the stairs. Likely something resembling the rivers and bluffs in our area, possibly somewhat topographic in nature. This is still being worked on overall, but they shared some samples.



Brick on Exterior - The following will likely be the brick on the outside of the building:



Sinks - Each classroom will have a sink and counter space, including a bottle filler as part of the faucet for students and staff.

Meetings with Teachers about Classrooms - OPN met with a variety of groups on Thursday, August 31 in regard to their "wants" in classrooms. For example: What kind of storage? Drawers, Cabinets, Open Shelves, less/more counterspace, etc. Talking with a few groups who participated in the meetings, it appears that they were worthwhile.

Soil Borings - OPN contacts will be performing some additional soil borings that will need to be done on the land where the school is being planned. They are

using some of our previous borings when we worked with Legat, but they also need a few more specific borings.

Modifications - Some modifications were made, as noted in past notes, in regard to the building to bring the price down. I do not believe these are significant or noticeable items overall, but more realistic if anything.

Pricing - Plans are to be sent for pricing again on 9.22.23.

IASB Convention and Delegate

Meyer asked if any board members planning on attending the IASB Convention or the Delegate Convention? The full-day convention is on November 16, with the delegate assembly and another training/learning time on November 15. This will be followed-up at our October Board meeting.

Legislative Action Review

I developed a book committee for the district that includes staff from both the elementary and middle/high school buildings. In total there are 12 educators involved in this. I also plan on having a student(s) involved in this at some point. The focus for the group is on developing a process to evaluate our books in regard to being age-appropriate. Specific focus areas based on legislation are in regard to sexual content and gender identity, and are highlighted in the information below from RSAI (Rural School Advocates of Iowa):

- **Defines "Age-Appropriate" to mean topics, messages, and teaching methods suitable to particular ages or age groups of children and adolescents, based on developing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacity typical for the age or age group. "Age-appropriate" does not include any material with descriptions or visual depictions of a sex act as defined in section [702.17](#). Note: The House version of this language prohibited "graphic descriptions or visual depictions of a sex act as defined in section [702.17](#)". The final version of the Bill did not include the adjective "graphic" to describe sex act, leaving school leaders, librarians and staff somewhat confused about the intent of the legislation.**

The first meeting was on Monday, September 11 in the morning. Meyer shared with the Board that he will keep them informed of the discussions of the group, and future actions accordingly. Additionally, area Teacher-Librarians will also be meeting in the future to discuss books in their respective districts as all districts move forward in examining books to make sure they meet state requirements.

Some topics of discussion at the book committee meeting included the following:

1. Compare movie ratings to a "book rating"
 - If the book was made into a movie, what rating would it have? "G", "PG", "PG-13", "R"
2. List of books being considered for removal or being removed
 - Multiple reasons why to not share this list (we do not do it at other times when books are removed..)

3. Tools to use to review books, by page numbers, etc.
 - Judging a book on one paragraph on one page of a 300+ page book
4. Choose books to meet the "standard" for courses that are not controversial
 - What is not "controversial" is a concern
5. Work through with area districts (administration, teacher-librarians, other teachers, etc.)
 - "Link" with other districts in our decisions with books; Collaborating with other districts
6. Sexual and Familial Relations - Not CRT
7. No one disagrees with "age-appropriate"
 - Different grades; Different appropriateness
8. Lack of Guidance from the State
9. December 31 actions
 - Review of our books in the library and curriculum as a whole.

APPROVED - Special Education Deficit - School Budget Review Committee

Special Education - It looks like the Bellevue CSD will be in special education deficit for the second consecutive year (we had not been in deficit since FY2016 in the past...which was the first time in many years).

We will be in a deficit of \$53,314.69 (which was about what we expected, but a little lower). As a result, I recommend the Board takes the following steps:

1. The Board approves a request for modified allowable growth and supplemental aid for the special education deficit.
2. I will apply to the SBRC for this spending authority for this deficit.
3. In the Winter/Spring the board will decide to potentially (or not) add this amount on to the cash reserve levy for the 2024-2025 school year.

While I shared this last year, when I tell the DE and other area districts that our deficit was likely going to be around \$50,000 or a little over, they laugh. So, it is not that bad I guess...most districts do this annually (some neighboring small districts have been in the \$200,000-\$300,000 plus deficit area). Yet, it is not something I wish to continue. Our costs have increased due to...

- A change in "weighting" for special education students in comparison to the past,
- Increased costs for special education programming outside of the district,
- More expensive teachers based on seniority and pay in the district,
- and likely some other aspects.
- The number of special education students

One thing to remember is that we also utilize our staff in co-teaching regularly which assists all students in some manner. Taking this support away, could impact the learning overall. We have actually reduced some special education staff to "at-risk" programming (another fund we utilize to assist students).

I recommend we approve the application for Modified Allowable Growth and Supplemental State Aid for the Special Education Deficit. This will give us extra spending authority, which is key. We are okay with cash right now, but will levy again as normal in March for "cash reserve" (an increase is not an automatic at this time).

APPROVED - Transfer of Funds

When the archery club started in the school district it was given initial funding from the state. Therefore, funds were in the General Fund. Since that time, there is no specific funding from the district for archery (we provide a bus at times and space to practice). As a result, the Archery Club funds need to be moved to the Activity account. The funds to be moved total \$12,462.27. I recommend we approve this transfer of funds. This will not change anything that the Archery Club does in its actions.

This will have no impact on the archery club, their funds, or general operations - It is an auditing aspect for the district.

APPROVED - Central DeWitt - AEA Partnership School

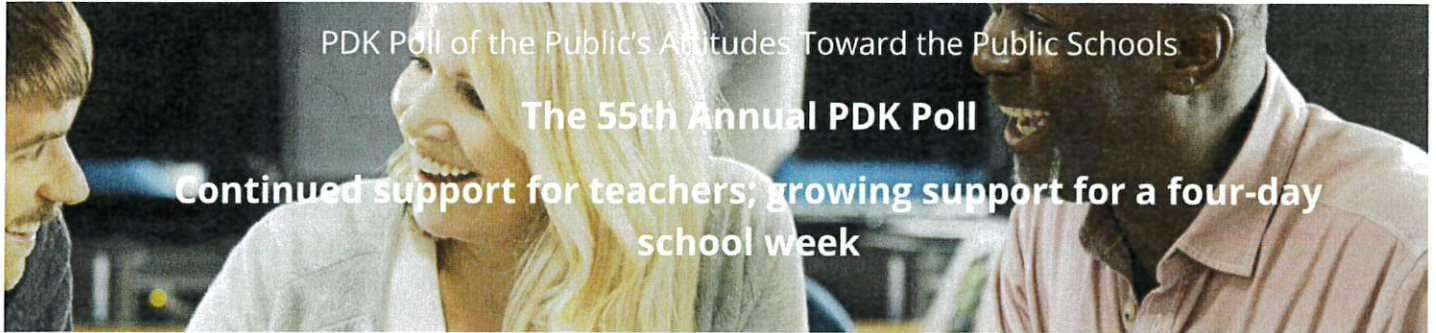
This agenda item deals with the agreement to participate in this program as needed for our students that cannot be served within our district based on educational needs. We have not utilized this program at this point, but we also need to have services available if student needs dictate the programming. Earlier in the summer we approved the building for the services, but this is for the services.

School districts included are the following: Central DeWitt, Bennett, Bellevue, Calamus-Wheatland, Camanche, Clinton, Maquoketa, and Northeast

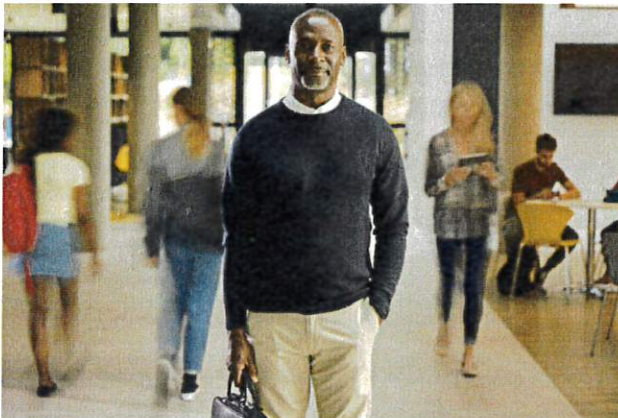
Comet Reading and Reflection

Meyer shared that he found the following article worthwhile to share with Board members from the educational journal Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) on "Attitudes Toward Public Schools."

Some discussion focused on the 4-day school week, teacher salaries increase, and other related items.



A wide majority (66%) of adults say teachers should have a substantial say in what's taught in public schools, more than say so about school boards, local residents, or lawmakers. Indeed, on the 2023 PDK Poll on Public Attitudes Toward Public Education, teachers garnered twice as much support as influences than state governors and legislatures, who finish last on the list. Yet a slim majority (51%) supports state laws regarding what teachers can and cannot teach.



Support for teachers also is apparent in another result from the 55th Annual PDK Poll: 67% of respondents support increasing local teacher salaries by raising property taxes. That result reflects the public's broad sense that public school teachers are undervalued, underpaid, and overworked.

At the same time, more than half of Americans support shifting to a four-day school week in their community, nearly twice as many as said so two decades ago. This change would reflect a fundamental shift in the structure of public education in the U.S.

Structurally, beyond a four-day week, the poll finds that about six in 10 adults support other changes in how schools operate — longer school days and/or a longer school year — as ways to try to improve student learning outcomes. However, the public fragments between one or the other of those options, or both together.

On another topic, results show widespread support for schools conducting mental health assessments of students, but with a division as to whether these should be done only for students whose parents or guardians request it (45%) or for all students (39%). Just 14% prefer no mental health assessments at all.

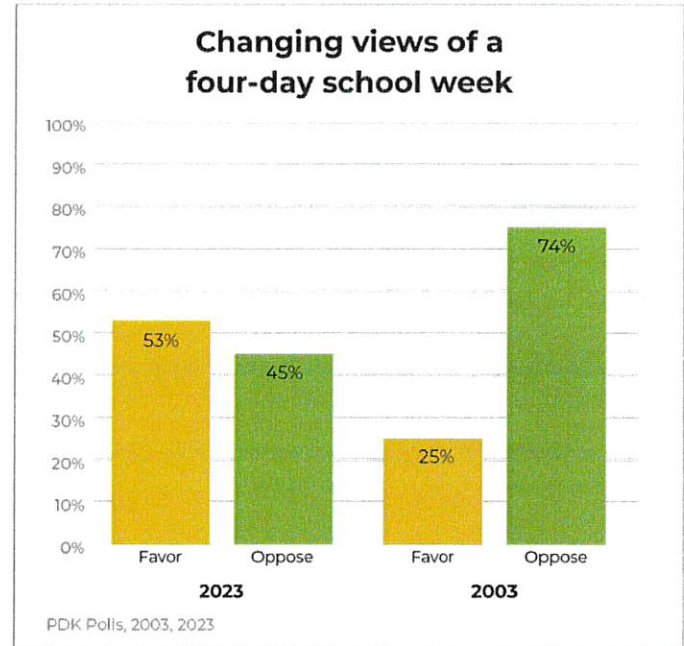
The survey was produced by Langer Research Associates for PDK International, with data collected June 16-25, 2023, in English and Spanish, among a representative, random national sample of 1,002 adults.

Alternative school schedules

The biggest change over time is in the number of Americans who support a four-day school week with longer school days, up dramatically from 25% in a PDK/Gallup Poll in 2003 to 53% now, a roughly twofold increase.

Perhaps surprisingly, results don't differ substantially among Americans who have a child younger than 18 living at home. Fifty percent in this group support a four-day school week with longer school days, as do 54% of those without a child at home.

This question has a large gap by age: Among adults younger than 30, 63% favor a four-day school week, compared with 41% of those age 65 and older. In other differences, support is 12 percentage points higher among adults without a college degree than among college graduates, 57% versus 45%; it also slips to 45% among those who identify themselves as conservatives, compared with 55% among liberals and 58% of moderates.



Four-day school weeks have gained popularity since the COVID-19 pandemic; they're reportedly in place in more than 1,600 schools in approximately 850 school districts, up from 650 districts in 2020 (Gunter et al, n.d.; National Conference of State Legislatures, 2023). Still, that represents only a tiny slice of the roughly 13,000 districts and 99,000 K-12 public schools in the U.S. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

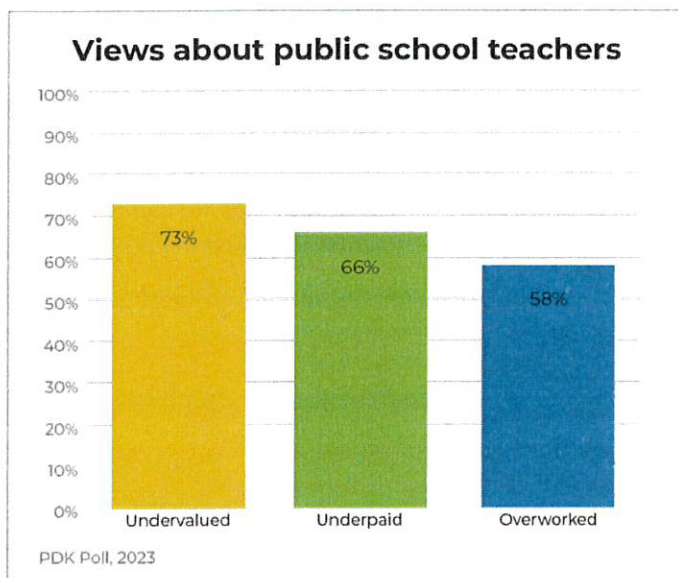
Longer school days or school years

In another question, 62% of adults support longer school days, longer school years, or both as ways to try to improve student learning outcomes, while 36% oppose any of these. Still, the majority fractures on the best approach: 26% prefer a longer school year only, 19% prefer longer school days only, and 17% both.

Among demographic differences, preference for some change is highest among liberals (70%); people with postgraduate degrees (71%); Democrats (69%); and those living in the West (66%). Results again are similar among people who have a child at home (60% favor a change) and those who do not (62% in favor).

In other groups, Black adults are particularly likely to prefer both longer school days and a longer school year combined. Twenty-six percent favor both options, compared with 16% of whites and 13% of Hispanic adults.

Views about public school teachers



Most Americans express compassion for public school teachers. About three-quarters say they are undervalued in society, 66% say teacher salaries in their community are too low, and 58% think teachers in their area are overworked.

The number who say teachers are underpaid is unchanged from the 2018 PDK Poll, remaining at its highest level in 10 PDK and PDK/Gallup polls to ask the question since 1969. It's more than double its low point, 29%, in the 1981 PDK/Gallup poll.

Views on the topic are intertwined. People who say teachers are overworked are more likely than others to also say they're undervalued (91% versus 48%) and more likely to say they're underpaid (90% versus 33%).

Among groups, women are 12 percentage points more likely than men to say teachers are undervalued and 13 points more likely to say they're overworked. Political differences emerge here as well: Democrats are 17 percentage points more likely than Republicans to say teachers in their community are overworked and 18 percentage points more likely to say they are undervalued.

Teacher salaries

Given views on how teachers are valued, it follows that a substantial majority of Americans, 67%, support increasing teacher salaries in their community by raising local property taxes. Twenty-four percent strongly support this versus 11% strongly opposed.

The result echoes a variety of similar poll findings in recent years. In PDK Polls in 2018 and 2019, for instance, about seven in 10 Americans said they would support teachers in their community going on strike for higher pay.

Such sentiments follow prominent reports of the economic challenges facing teachers. A 2022 report by the U.S. Census Bureau, for example, stated, "Although teachers are among the nation's most educated workers, they earn far less on average than most other highly educated workers and their earnings have declined since 2010" (Newburger & Backhusen, 2022).



There is a strong partisan aspect to views on raising teacher pay via higher property taxes, which provide a substantial portion of public school funding. Eighty-three percent of Democrats are in favor, declining to 67% of independents, and falling further to 48% of Republicans. Results are similar by ideology, with 86% of liberals in favor, compared with 70% of moderates and 48% of conservatives.

Views about public school teachers, by party and ideology

	Overworked	Undervalued	Underpaid	Support increasing pay
All	58%	73%	66%	67%
Democrats	68%	82%	78%	83%
Independents	55%	71%	64%	67%
Republicans	51%	64%	53%	48%
Liberals	73%	87%	82%	86%
Moderates	57%	75%	68%	70%
Conservatives	46%	59%	49%	48%

PDK Poll, 2023

“People who say teachers are overworked are more likely than others also to say they’re undervalued and more likely to say they’re underpaid.”

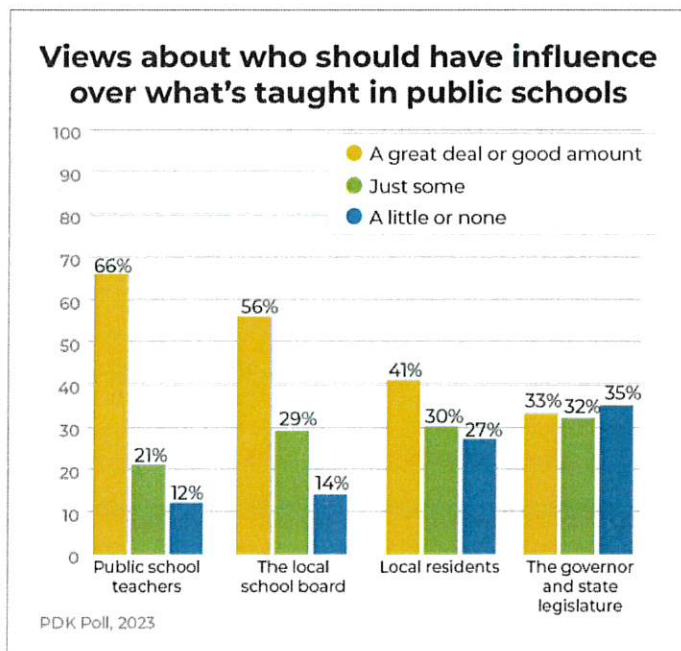
Support for raising teacher salaries is closely associated with sensitivity toward their current working conditions. It reaches 85% among those who feel teachers are underpaid, 84% among those who say they’re overworked, and 81% among those who say they’re undervalued in society.

Support for raising teacher pay also is elevated among those who perceive a shortage of teachers in their community as problematic. Among those who see this as either a crisis or a serious problem, 83% support raising teacher salaries through higher property taxes. This declines to 51% — still a majority, albeit barely — among those who see teacher shortages as less of a problem.

That said, the public divides on the severity of teacher shortages: 51% call it either a crisis (16%) or a serious problem but not a crisis (35%). Nearly as many, 47%, call it either not a serious problem (31%) or not a problem at all (16%). Partisanship and ideology again are big factors; having a child younger than 18 at home is not.

Curriculum influence

Regarding influence on school curriculum, a hot political topic, 66% of Americans say public school teachers should have a great deal or good amount of influence in deciding what's taught in public schools. That surpasses the number who say the same about the local school board (56%); local residents (41%); and the governor and state legislature (33%).



Majorities across the political spectrum say teachers should have substantial say in what's taught — 75% of Democrats, 64% of independents, and 60% of Republicans. The gap between Democrats and Republicans was similar when it comes to the local school board, although the majorities saying school boards should have a great deal or good amount of influence were smaller.

By contrast, Republicans (53%) are more likely than independents (42%) or Democrats (32%) to say local residents should have substantial influence on what's taught. On the last item, influence by the governor and state legislature, support is low across groups.

At the same time, this doesn't mean the majority sees no place at all for legislative involvement. In a separate question, 51% say there should be state laws setting rules on what public school teachers can and cannot teach versus 47% who say they should be permitted to teach their subjects as they think best.

Republicans are more likely (71%) than independents (49%) and Democrats (38%) to favor state laws setting rules on what teachers can and cannot teach. Divisions by ideology are similar. In a notable gap by race/ethnicity, 64% of Hispanics opt for state laws in this regard, versus 38% of Black people. Whites are between the two, at 51%.

Views about who should have a great deal or good amount of influence on what is taught, by party and ideology

	Public school teachers	Local school board	Local residents	Governor & state legislature
All	66%	56%	41%	33%
Democrats	75%	64%	32%	33%
Independents	64%	52%	42%	29%
Republicans	60%	54%	53%	39%
Liberals	76%	61%	29%	32%
Moderates	63%	55%	40%	33%
Conservatives	60%	53%	55%	34%

POK Poll, 2023

Majorities across the political spectrum say teachers should have substantial say in what's taught.

Mental health assessments

The survey, lastly, looks at the topic of mental health assessments of students. Eighty-four percent of respondents favor such assessments in some form, albeit with a sharp division on conditions: 45% say schools should conduct such assessments only when a student's parents or guardians request it, while 39% say they should be done for all students.

As with many results of this survey, differences in response by partisanship and ideology stand out. Twenty-nine percent of Republicans and conservatives alike favor mental health assessments of all students. This rises to about four in 10 apiece among independents and moderates and 47% of both Democrats and liberals.

References

Gunter, K., Schuna, J., Thompson, P.N., Tomayko, E., & Ward, J. (n.d.). Four-day school week policy. Hallie E. Ford Center for Healthy Children and Families, Oregon State University.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). Table 214.10. Number of public school districts and public and private elementary and secondary schools: Selected school years, 1869-70 through 2021-22. Digest of Education Statistics. U.S. Department of Education.

National Conference of State Legislatures. (2023, June 28). Four-day school week overview.

Newburger, J.C. & Beckhusen, J. (2022). Teachers are among most educated, yet their pay lags. U.S. Census Bureau.

Methodology and topline

The 2023 Phi Delta Kappa poll was produced for PDK by Langer Research Associates via the nationally representative Ipsos KnowledgePanel®, in which participants are randomly recruited via address-based sampling to respond to survey questionnaires online. Households without internet connections are provided with a web-enabled device and service.

The survey was designed to consist of approximately 1,000 adults. Field work was conducted June 16-25, 2023. Out of 1,637 panel members invited to participate, completed, qualified surveys were provided by 1,014.

The 12 panelists who completed the survey in less than a quarter of the median completion time or who skipped more than three-quarters of the questions were deleted in quality control. The final sample included 1,002 U.S. adults.

Data were weighted via iterative proportional fitting to the following benchmark distributions of adults from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 Current Population Survey:

- Gender (male, female) by age (18-29, 30-44, 45-59, 60+)
- Race/ethnicity (white, Black, Hispanic)
- Education (high school or less, some college, bachelor or higher)
- Household income (\$0-\$24,999, \$25K-\$49,999, \$50K-\$74,999, \$75K-\$99,999, \$100K-\$149,999, \$150K+)
- Census Region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West)

The survey has a design effect due to weighting of 1.05, for a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points for the full sample. Error margins are larger for subgroups. Sampling error is not the only source of differences in polls.

PDF: [Topline Survey Data](#)

PDF: [Survey Questions](#)

About the PDK Poll

The PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools has been a steady reflection of U.S. opinion about public education since 1969. PDK produces the annual poll as part of its mission to engage educators and serve schools so every student thrives. The PDK Poll results provide researchers with some of the finest longitudinal data on how the public feels about the nation's schools and education policies. Education policy makers use the poll's findings to inform their decisions, and educators across the country use the results to guide planning and action in their communities. Since 2016, Langer Research Associates has produced the poll for PDK.

Information Items

Extracurricular Events and Homecoming Week

Extracurricular Participation

Over the years, we have discussed the extracurricular participation numbers of our students in the school district. Last year's approximate participation rate for being involved in one activity at a minimum was approximately 79.1% at the grade levels of 9-12. This is down from approximately 85% several years ago. I based this on their participation in the following:

- Sports
- Fine Arts
- FFA
- FBLA
- FFCLA
- Quiz Bowl
- Robotics
- Student Council

The reasons for a decline over the year are likely varied, in my opinion, and to say it is for only one or two reasons may not be accurate. Some aspects that contribute to this may include:

- A feeling they want a job to earn money
- Friends not participating
- Time commitment to the activity
- Sponsor or coach "conflict"
- Emphasis on developing for "one-sport" only
- Individual or team success in a program - thought they may not be very good or competitive (W-L Record)
- Parental support or indifference for the activity
- Family dynamics or living situations

*These are only some of the aspects that may impact participation.

On a related note, we have 26 girls in middle school volleyball (13 in each grade) and 23 in middle school football. The key is to keep these students interested in the activity, making it enjoyable for them to learn and compete, and to allow them to feel that "they matter" to the team and are valuable contributors and assets for the program with their teammates.

Homecoming Week

Leo Aschenbrenner shared information in regard to Homecoming Week, and the parade information for Board members who can participate. Some key aspects include the following:

- The theme this year is "Barbie".
- An assembly for PK-12 will be held at the Bellevue MS/HS Main Gym on Friday, September 29
- The parade will begin at 2:45 and will follow its traditional route ending at the elementary school.
- Powderpuff will be held at the beginning of the week on Sunday, September 24.
- The game is on Friday, September 29 vs Maquoketa Valley. It will begin at 7:00.

August Staff Professional Learning Review

Meyer shared the Professional Learning Review last week with the Board that was shared with teachers to complete. Over 40 teachers completed the survey, and overall the learning aspects and time working was viewed as positive.

Comments from Building Principals, Superintendent, and Board Members

I have started some "interviews" with staff members that are being shared on social media. I plan on doing this through the 1st semester, and likely in the 2nd semester. It will include staff and some students at times to discuss what they are learning, involved in, and other things.

Meyer also shared that 71 students are taking online college courses, with the total of online college courses being 146 for the 1st semester. Additionally, 38 students are taking college courses at BHS in a face-to-face setting - English Composition and two business/computer courses. This adds up to 184 college courses being taken this semester by students from BHS (at no cost to students) that lead to college credits and degrees. The district has several students (10+) who are working toward their Associates degree through EICC (which can be transferred to other colleges and universities. Courses also include those in the "trade" areas.

Adjourn

Next meeting is on Monday, October 9, 2023. This is also the night of the River Valley Conference "North" Volleyball tournament being hosted by Bellevue.