

TO: BENTON COMMUNITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: DR. PAM EWELL, SUPERINTENDENT
RE: WORK SESSION
TIME: 5:30 P.M., JULY 15, 2020
PLACE: HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY
600 1ST STREET, VAN HORNE, IA 52346

5:30 P.M. - Work Session

Present: Directors Stepanek, Ludeking, Thompson, E. Upah, Werning, Becker (on Zoom), and Nolte.

Also Present: Dr. Ewell, Dr. Bieschke, Doug Embray, Harry Heiligenthal from IASB, Rob Arnold, Jason West, Phil Eastman and Anna Upah.

5:30 P.M. – WORK SESSION OPEN

Discussed Role of School Board in Superintendent in the evaluation process and her work aligned with Board goals. Elements around the role of Superintendent in process, pace of actionable steps, clarity of process, and context for timelines. Harry Heiligenthal, representing IASB, facilitated the work session on goal setting. Focus on work session was to 'unpack' goals for #4 Infrastructure and Facilities and for #5 Marketing and Customer Satisfaction.

Opened discussion of how COVID 19 may impact current goals, look to future on how actions of goals may be influenced by COVID 19 in coming months.

Focusing on goal #4, Harry Heiligenthal asked the board to highlight the ability to communicate this goal to school community. Where is goal headed? Can board members speak to the worth or value of this goal in interactions with the community? How accountable is the board with this goal? Board shared big ideas, short and long-term plans for facilities, study and demographics of the school district, all of our facilities are aging and how we deal with the pressures of maintenance and repair, what is a 21st century learning environment, unbalanced growth in our communities and impacts on school facilities, and reflection back and forward message of visionary facilities.

With goal #4 where do we need to be by next April 2021? The Superintendent shared the time frame and time line of goal #4 and all the aspects of work to date. Development of facilities study and baseline data on demography were highlighted.

Harry Heiligenthal highlighted for the board strategies on breaking down information into shorter segments combined with regular updates, on the potential for quarterly reviews enhancing board members with a better understanding of the goal, and communicating progress to school patrons. Typical road blocks with process of goal management include assessing needs, supports, and necessary adjustments to the goal path.

What would a monthly and or quarterly review progress update look like and how would the board process this information for influence in goal documentation?

Does COVID 19 impact this process? Yes, could reframe the timeline, the study, and the actionable final reports of the process.

Board and Harry Heiligenthal moved to Goal # 5, Marketing and Customer Satisfaction. Board members shared what is our best foot forward on articulating our facilities discussion and plan? There are challenges with eight communities and communicating intent, manage division, and work to be one community with a school focus. How do we communicate for work to the school community? How do you handle the Nay Sayers? How do we support the school community that wants to progress and improve? We need to be able to sell our school to promote enrollment and stability? Benton has a good story but we struggle to sell that message to all elements of our community? The superintendent reviewed the progress update for this goal. Various forms of communication are used and highlighted, i.e. Facebook, Twitter, print/paper, article submission with the local Paper, and website statistics (11k followers).

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The Board shared that this goal has been impacted by the COVID 19 closure. How can we communicate and market our district against open enrollment for online learning in the future due to COVID 19 enrollment allowances provided by the State of Iowa and Department of Education? The Superintendent shared that we might ramp this goal area up and work this goal more aggressively. New forms of communication may be encountered that enhance enrollment options. Could be a very negative impact on our district finances due to COVID-19. Valuable to tell our good rural story and great aspects of Benton life styles. Leverage the moment of risk and challenges. Board members need to be able to speak clearly and accurately on this topic. If we have the courage we can bring COVID 19 to a positive level for Benton CSD. Good opportunity to tie goal #4 and #5 into one goal? Where do we want to be in April and what resources do we have or need to be making progress on this goal?

Summary focus on monthly and quarterly reviews of these two goals. What is anticipated? What has been unanticipated? What resources are needed? What adjustments are necessary to maintain movement forward?

Harry and Board Members ranked standards to priorities, and the expectation for work is to progress with updates on a regular basis in a bi-annual context.

The Superintendent, Board, and Harry H. prioritized performance standards and order of board preference.

Harry H. asked the board to provide feedback electronically on the work session.

Work Session Ended 7:34 P.M.