

*From the desk of the*

# *Superintendent*

## Consolidation Talks

In November I was approached by Franklin to request that the Waverly School Board of Education begin a feasibility study to move towards consolidation. In November the Board had an open meeting discussion and voted to meet with the Franklin team to discuss what a Feasibility Study is and to gather information. Dr. Guerrero, Mrs. Ortman, and Mr. J. Brown are the representatives for Waverly in these talks. In December, the Board of Education voted to table any vote on the Feasibility Study until we were able to have an open forum community discussion on the topic. **DR. BILL PHILIPS WILL LEAD THIS INFORMATIONAL MEETING JAN 19, 7PM IN THE WAVERLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY.**

Dr. Phillips would be leading the team involved in this study. This will also be a time to ask Dr. Phillips about consolidation and the feasibility study.

## Semester Reflection

Being new to the community and school district, I hit the ground running, starting several weeks early to close out last school year's budgets and required paperwork for the state. I quickly built a positive relationship with Mrs. Nevius, the District Bookkeeper, as we worked many late nights and weekends in those pre-service weeks! The 2019 - 2020 G5 grant provided the furniture you see in the library. When I took this position, we were in a situation where these funds would have to be sent back to the Federal Government because they were unspent. These are restricted funds. An allowable use is to update the multi-media or library space. The new furniture in the library was at no cost to the district, and we did not have to send the money back!

The curriculum is the central topic in education as it drives the business of schools and student learning! We are fortunate to have ESSER 3 monies which allow the School District to purchase training, curriculum, and support at unprecedented levels. We have a curriculum coordinator, which is significant and unique for a rural district of Waverly's size, allowing our teachers access to daily and in-the-moment support. We are building on what is already occurring in the classrooms to create future opportunities for our students.

The new and/or updated curriculum is the instructional plan that is critical for equitable learning opportunities. The High School teachers, Mr. Hendrick's and Mrs. Sidener, have selected and are



## Important Dates

December 11 Homecoming  
Dance @ Franklin High, 7pm to  
10 pm

December 12, Waverly Christmas  
Parade, hosting this event in the  
elementary

December 17, Toys for Tots  
campaign, bring a new toy to the  
Varsity Boys game for admission!

December 21, 11:30 am  
dismissal for students

Holiday Break December 22 thru  
Jan 3, Jan 4 students return to  
school

Holiday Tournament, December  
27 to December 30

January 12 School Board  
Meeting

January 19 Consolidation  
Townhall Informational Meeting  
7pm

## Congratulations!

Art Enrichment 1st Place at the Jr.  
High Category for the Holiday  
Fest

Thanksgiving Tournament- Lady  
Vipers 1st Place

Kenna Bixby- Thanksgiving All  
Tournament Team- South County  
Lady Vipers

scheduling future training and making plans around teaching and learning. We are hopeful that we can get the textbooks, materials, and training in time for next school year, but we recognize we need to be flexible if there are delays.

Elementary teachers are diligently reviewing the math curriculum. Mr. Lounsberry is in charge of the Math Curriculum selection process. He is very confident in the process he has delivered and the curriculum choices presented. Mr. Lounsberry led this process at PORTA and was excited for the opportunity to lead it at Waverly. This decision will be made during the Spring semester.

Social-Emotional Learning is taking place in the majority of our interactions with students. We are using BIST Language and PBIS to assist with developing our framework. Teachers attended summer training and BIST trainer revisited the school and worked with teachers during their last Professional Development day. Mrs. Prola, Mrs. Cantrell, and Mrs. Strode all teach the Second Step curriculum throughout the Waverly CUSD to our students.

I am currently leading two local book studies, and we are progressing into deep conversations and professional reflection. We are reading *The Deepest Well* by Nadine Harris and *Visible Learning* by John Hattie. Book studies are a great way to build professional communities of practice.

I have built strong community partnerships. I have built strong community partnerships. It is essential to engage the community services that enrich our school community in my professional work. I have been able to deepen our collaboration with Jared's Keepers. Deb Martin works directly with our 7th-grade class and Jared's Keepers High School Club. We recently worked and submitted a Community in Partnership Grant with Jared's Keepers, Four Rivers, and the Illinois PBIS Network to train staff and students in social-emotional learning.

**It's recruiting season.** We are focused on December and May graduates. We have posted current vacancies held by non-certificated staff, retired staff, and anticipated vacancies for the next school year.

We had our Golden Apple Accelerator program meeting. We

had two participants interested in exploring this option to earn their Teacher Certification and continue to work at Waverly through this process to become fully certified teachers.

I am working with a variety of career centers, and I was able to use my network at WIU to establish a potential cohort housed at Waverly for a paraprofessional to a bachelor degree program. This program would be on weekends and allow our employees to work while earning a degree. I am working on opening our school campus where professors come here to teach classes. I have several area superintendents interested in having paraprofessionals create a support cohort for those participating in the program.

I continue to be excited to build the capacity of teacher leaders in the school district. We have several training opportunities and have worked with teachers and staff interested in professional growth opportunities. Several teachers and I are working on professional growth plans to earn their Master's Degree in related educational fields. We have three staff members interning as they can in administrative roles. We have teachers seeking professional opportunities at the classroom level as well. For example, we have Seesaw Ambassadors, where teachers who are already using this system are training more in-depth lead to encourage others to use this. We have Moby Max leaders for Response to Intervention, and we have several teachers gaining practical experiences utilizing this program and significant have seen student success at closing learning gaps.

### *New Attendance Policy Effective Jan 1, 2022*

**The new attendance policy removes punitive measures for those who were truant, incorporates the new legislation on Mental Health Days, and includes procedures for students who have guardians and parents going on deployment.**

Illinois law requires that whoever has custody or control of a child between 6 (by September 1st ) and 17 years of age shall assure that the child attends school in the district in which he/she resides the entire time school is in session. Illinois law also requires that whoever has custody or control of a child enrolled in the school, regardless of the child's age, shall assure that the child attends school during the entire time school is in session.

The legal obligation for regular and continuous school attendance rests with the parent(s)/guardian(s). Irregularity in school attendance is a serious handicap to the progress of students. The principal, not the parent or guardian, determines whether an absence is excused or unexcused. Without prior notice or a written statement from the parent/guardian, the absence will be considered unexcused.

#### **Tardies**

Being present in class and participating in class are academic functions. All students are to be in their proper classroom and in their seats when the tardy bell rings. A student who is tardy for the first period of the day or late for class must report to the office for an admit slip before entering the classroom. Students will be considered tardy if they arrive after 8:10 but before 8:45. The principal shall have the prerogative of deciding whether the student is tardy or truant and will set up a procedure for administering discipline.

#### **Absences**

There are two types of absences: EXCUSED and UNEXCUSED.

**Excused absences** include: illness (including the mental and behavioral health of the child for up to 5 days for which the child need not provide a medical note), observance of a religious holiday or event, death in the immediate family, family emergency, situations beyond the control of the student, circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional or physical health or safety, attending a military honors funeral to sound TAPS, or other reason as approved by the building principal. Additionally, a student will be excused for up to 5 days in cases where the student's parent/guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings. The Board of Education, in its discretion, may excuse a student for additional days relative to such leave or deployment.

From the 1st through the 5th absence in a semester a parent phone call alerting the office of the reason for the absence is sufficient to consider the absence excused. However, regardless of whether any of the initial 5 absences in the semester were excused with or without authorized forms of documentation other than a parent call (e.g., Dr's. note, court papers, visitation brochure, etc.), after the 5th absence in a semester a parent phone call is not sufficient to excuse the student's absence. Therefore, and except as provided below, the **6th absence and beyond in a semester** will be unexcused unless one of the following criteria are met:

1. Dr. note containing ALL of the following:
  - Name of the student.
  - Date and Time student was seen (call-ins are not accepted)
  - Date and Time a student is released to return to school/activity.
  - Notes must be received by the office within 3 school days.
2. Death in the immediate family.
3. Observance of a religious holiday.
4. Summoned court appearances.
5. Participation in school sponsored activities.
6. Any circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's safety or health, or other reason as approved by the administration.

Excused absences of up to 5 days for the mental and behavioral health of a child do not require a medical note, but after the second mental health day used the student may be referred to the appropriate school support personnel.

If a student's absence is excused, he/she will be permitted to make up any missed work, including homework and tests. A student and the student's parent/guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teachers prior to any excused absences and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student by the time set by the teacher.

**Unexcused absences** include, but are not limited to,

1. Working
2. Overslept
3. Home studying
4. Family trip with inadequate notice as explained in Category II or in excess of 10 days.
5. Shopping
6. Getting a haircut or having hair fixed.
7. Appointment not specified by parent or approved by the office.
8. All unspecified excuses or notes: "had my permission", "problem", "emergency", "our business", etc.
9. "Take your child to work day" – do this in the summer or during school holidays, etc.

Any missed work occasioned by the unexcused absence will be due the day the student returns to school.

### **Truants and Truancy**

Student attendance is critical to the learning process. Truancy is a serious issue and will be dealt with in a serious manner by the school and district. When a student is scheduled to be at school and his/her whereabouts are unknown to the school, it creates a safety issue. In addition, a student's education suffers when school is missed. Students who miss more than 1% but less than 5% of the prior 180 regular school days without valid cause (a recognized excuse) are truants. Students who miss 5% or more of the prior 180 regular school days ( $5\% \times 180 \text{ days} = 9 \text{ days}$ ) without valid cause are chronic truants. Students who are chronic truants will be offered support services and resources aimed at correcting the truancy issue. In addition, the parent/guardian of a chronic truant will be requested to meet with school officials to discuss the truancy and to develop a plan to ensure the student's attendance at school.

If chronic truancy persists after support services and other resources are made available, the school and district will take further action, including:

- Appropriate school discipline
- Referral to the Regional Truant Officer
- Reporting to officials under the Juvenile Court Act
- Referral to the State's Attorney

Letters will be sent to the parent/guardian's address on file with the school and to the County Regional Office of Education for students who reach 6 days and 9 days of absences.

A truant minor student may not be expelled for non-attendance unless he/she has accrued 15 consecutive days of absences without valid cause and the student cannot be located by the school district or the school district has located the student but cannot, after exhausting all available supportive services, compel the student to return to school.