

Durham/Hillsboro/Lehigh

U.S.D. 410

State of the District Report

**Presented to the
USD 410 Board of Education**

By Dr. Steve P. Noble, Superintendent

December 14, 2015

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District Beliefs, Vision, Exit Outcomes

During the 1993-94 school year, district staff, parents, and patrons formulated a set of belief statements designed to reflect the purpose of education in our community. From these statements a Vision Statement and a set of Exit Outcomes were developed. These documents have been adopted by the Board of Education and provide guidance as decisions are made concerning the operation of our schools.

All stakeholders should periodically review these statements as a way of providing guidance to the district's endeavors.

VISION OF U.S.D. 410

Unified School District 410 requires that students enrolled in district schools develop and demonstrate scholastic, technical, social, and problem-solving skills essential for achieving personal, academic, and occupational success.

EXIT OUTCOMES

The following outcomes are designed to prepare U.S.D. 410 students for the adult roles of citizen, consumer, family member, lifelong learner, and worker.

U.S.D. 410 STUDENTS WILL BE:***LITERATE IN THE BASICS***

Able to apply skills in the areas of communication, math, science, and social studies.

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNERS

Able to use learning experiences to create a concept of the future vision; identify options; develop, implement and monitor goals; produce a quality product; and assume responsibility for results.

RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS

Able to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary for life as a citizen, family member, consumer, lifelong learner, and worker.

WELLNESS PROMOTERS

Able to maintain physical, emotional, and social wellness through a variety of leisure, cultural, and fine arts activities.

RESOURCE MANAGERS

Able to understand, manage, and evaluate the use of time, materials, finances, systems, human and natural resources.

COMMUNICATORS

Able to read, write, speak, and listen effectively in our culture as well as a foreign culture.

COLLABORATORS

Able to apply human relations skills while working with others.

INFORMATION USERS

Able to utilize a variety of systems to acquire and manage information and draw conclusions based on the information acquired.

PROBLEM FINDERS AND DECISION MAKERS

Able to apply higher order thinking skills to find, define, and solve problems.

ADAPTABLE TECHNOLOGISTS

Able to use present and emerging technologies as a tool to enhance learning and the quality of life.

Board Goals

For the past five years, the board has engaged in a goal setting process to help guide the direction of the district for the next 1 – 3 years. For the fall of 2013, the following goals were established. These goals are reviewed annually at the board retreat with administration:

USD 410 BOE Goal Statement:

Given that we want the best for the students, staff, and the greater USD 410 Community, the following are some of the goals upon which we should focus for the next 1-3 years.

Goals

People First

Strategies:
 Retain our highly qualified people
 Recognize and celebrate staff and district accomplishments
 Maintain awareness of the impact of budget cuts on people
 Provide appropriate professional development for staff
 Provide staff development on effective computer use for 21st century learning

Meet Educational Needs of All

Strategies:
 Continue focus on College and Career Readiness
 Implement Elementary School Farm Project
 Obtain District Greenhouse for horticulture, biotechnical, and grow your own produce programs
 Implement foreign language for K-8
 Focus on creativity in our teaching and learning
 Continue 3-year rotation on all computers
 Study the demand for unconventional school programs and locations
 Build public awareness of school funding challenges

Parent/Community Collaboration

Strategies:
 Schedule community tours of our classrooms and buildings.
 Continue to enhance volunteerism throughout our school system
 Provide for and excel at fine arts, activities, and athletics
 Advertise the strengths of the school district
 Continue to grow entrepreneurship curriculum at HHS
 Maintain Walking School Bus Program
 Partner with community assets to expand pre-school
 Create a community-wide event to build connections between our schools, colleges, and businesses
 Grow Early Childhood Education Fund
 Grow corporate and business partnerships
 Use TEEN to offer classes outside the consortium
 Build public awareness of school funding challenges

Maintain Quality Facilities

Strategies:
 Move to more efficient lighting in the HES Gym
 Update district phone system to VOIP technology
 Update MS Gym Bleachers for safety concerns
 Improve MS Gym Floor
 Improve HES Playground
 Replace sound and lighting system for auditorium
 Increase pursuit of facility improvement grants
 Build public awareness of school funding challenges

Over the past 2 years, the district has made good strides in accomplishing the goals established by the board of education.

Vision and Strategic Planning

In 2014-15, the district participated in a study with the Center for Innovative School Leadership (CISL). A team of researchers conducted observations, focus groups, and interviews with many of our staff, parents, and patrons. We also completed surveys conducted by the CISL team. The CISL research team studied the following areas within our district: Facility Management, Human Resources, Leadership, and Teaching and Learning. From that research, we were presented an Executive Summary that included commendations and recommendations. From this feedback, we began discussions on how to improve our district for our students.

The board of education, leadership team, and staff have participated in discussions surrounding the results of the CISL study. We have also begun the process of establishing our vision for the next 5 years. In November, the board and administrative team began reading the book, “Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action.” The board and administrative team will participate in conversations about the book beginning in January. These conversations, along with the review of staff input, will assist the board in establishing our new vision.

Once our new vision has been set, the board will revisit our mission statement, goals, and strategies. These will become our new district strategic plan in the areas identified by the CISL team in their 2014-15 research. The revised district strategic plan will be completed in the spring of 2016.

Board Operations

The board has a long tradition of fostering longevity and continuity in board membership. These factors help the district to take an extended view of district endeavors and for smooth transitions as membership on the board changes. Over the past few years, some positions open for election have gone unfilled. From 2009 to 2014, the board has appointed persons to serve on the board on three occasions. For this reason, the board of education asked the patrons of the district to consider changing the method of election and voting plan during the fall 2014 general elections. The question asked patrons if all seven board members should be “at large” positions where any board candidate for election can be voted on by any legal voter residing in the district. This proposed change was approved by voters nearly 2 – 1. Starting in July of 2015, all positions will become at-large as the term expires.

Presently, all board positions are filled. The board of education has a mix of veteran leadership and new members in their first year. Below are the current board members, their years of service, and term ending dates:

BOE Member	Years of Service (including current year)	Term End Date
Tim Kaufman	1	December 31, 2019
Jim Paulus	1	December 31, 2019
Jared Jost	1	December 31, 2019
Mark Rooker	13	December 31, 2017
Joe Sechrist	7	December 31, 2017
Kim Klein	3	December 31, 2017
Rod Koons	13	December 31, 2017

Participation in Kansas Association of School Boards

KASB offers a variety of opportunities for board members to grow and for participation in the development of statewide school-focused initiatives. Recently, board members have participated in training offered by KASB. In the fall of 2015, board members participated in boardsmanship training at

the USD 410 technology center. In December 2015, three board members attended the KASB state convention in Wichita with the superintendent.

The board president regularly participates in the annual delegate assembly. It might be beneficial for the Board of Education to become more involved with some of these activities. The board should continue the push for greater representation at the state convention in coming years.

The Role of the Board

Patrons of USD 410 are fortunate to be served by a board of education that focuses on providing the district direction for the future rather than on the daily operational issues. The superintendent has found a positive working relationship between the board and district employees. As a result, discussions throughout the district continue to focus on improving services to children and families.

Board/Superintendent Relationship

From the view of the superintendent, the relationship between the board and superintendent is very positive and productive. The board is consistently supportive of the superintendent and supports efforts to include staff and the board in continuous effort of improving the district.

A study by MCREL (2006) continues to be relevant as it documents the importance of a positive working relationship between the board and superintendent. Therefore, it remains a part of this report.

The following findings are contained in the 2006 research from McREL entitled “*School District Leadership that Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement.*”

Finding 1: District-level leadership matters

The MCREL research team found a statistically significant relationship between district leadership and student achievement.

Finding 2: Effective superintendents focus their efforts on creating goal-oriented districts

MCREL researchers identified five district-level leadership responsibilities that have a statistically significant correlation with average student academic achievement. All five of these responsibilities relate to setting and keeping districts focused on teaching and learning goals. The responsibilities are:

- ***Collaborative goal-setting***
Researchers found that effective superintendents include all relevant stakeholders, including central office staff, building-level administrators, and board members, in establishing goals for their districts.
- ***Non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction***
Effective superintendents ensure that the collaborative goal-setting process results in non-negotiable goals (i.e., goals that all staff members must act upon) in at least two areas: student achievement and classroom instruction. Effective superintendents set specific achievement targets for schools and students and then ensure the consistent use of research-based instructional strategies in all classrooms to reach those targets.
- ***Board alignment and support of district goals***
In districts with higher levels of student achievement, the local board of education is aligned with and supportive of the non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction. They ensure these goals remain the primary focus of the district’s efforts and that no other initiatives detract attention or resources from accomplishing these goals.

- ***Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction***
Effective superintendents continually monitor district progress toward achievement and instructional goals to ensure that these goals remain the driving force behind a district's actions.
- ***Use of resources to support achievement and instruction goals***
Effective superintendents ensure that the necessary resources, including time, money, personnel, and materials, are allocated to accomplish the district's goals. This can mean cutting back on or dropping initiatives that are not aligned with district goals for achievement and instruction.

Finding 3: Superintendent tenure is positively correlated with student achievement

MCREL found two studies that looked specifically at the correlations between superintendent tenure and student achievement. The weighted average correlation in these two studies was a statistically significant .19, which suggests that length of superintendent tenure in a district positively correlates to student achievement. These positive effects appear to manifest themselves as early as two years into a superintendent's tenure.

Curriculum & Instruction

The commitment of USD 410 to the continuing improvement of curriculum and instruction is focused on four interrelated and important areas: the Kansas College and Career Ready (KCCR) Standards, Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathways, Fine Arts, and Technology Literacy. The nature of curriculum work continues to change and intensify with the new standards and ever evolving curriculum and technology applications. USD 410 began full implementation of the KCCR standards in the fall of 2012 and purchased curriculum addressing the standards for math during that school year.

The middle school principal was charged with the curricular development tasks in the district for many years. With administrative reductions due to budget cuts, the curriculum coordinator duties moved to the superintendent. Beginning in January, 2016, faculty in the middle/high school will begin a review of curriculum that closely align to the ACT College and Career Ready Standards. These standards closely mirror the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards and resources available through the ACT CCR enable our faculty to map our curriculum to these standards to ensure our students are properly prepared for success on the ACT exam as juniors and for success after high school with a career or further post-secondary training.

TEEN continues to allow for an expanded course offering at Hillsboro High School. TEEN has expanded by offering courses through our new learning management system, Canvass. These online courses are designed and taught by TEEN teachers. Students are provided school time to log into canvass to work on their class. At Hillsboro High School, these students utilize the Wiebe Media Center as their classroom location for their online classes. These online canvass courses allow for our students to take classes that are not schedule or time dependent and keep our offerings numerous by sharing teaching staff across the TEEN network.

Student Achievement

The State of Kansas is currently in a transition period between accreditation systems. Previously, we were accredited through the No Child Left Behind law where state assessment performances, graduation rates, and attendance rates were the measures of success. With the recent reauthorization of ESEA and our state board continuing their work on a new accreditation system, we must realize that change may come

quickly regarding how we measure student success in Kansas. Currently, the district is utilizing two types of assessments to measure student success and performance:

1. Formative Assessment in the form of Dibels, AimsWeb, ACT Aspire Periodic Assessments, Kansas Formative Assessments, teacher designed projects, and unit/chapter assessments; and
2. Summative Assessments in the form of the Kansas State Assessment, ACT Aspire, ACT, and WorkKeys.

ACT Assessment Summary Report

Table 1 – Five Year Trends – Average ACT Scores

Figure 1 – Percent of ACT-Tested Students Ready for Credit Bearing College Level Coursework

Figure 2 – Average ACT Math Scores by Course Sequence

Figure 3 – Average ACT Science Scores by Course Sequence

Table 1: Five Year Trends - Average ACT Scores

Grad Year	Total Tested		English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Composite	
	District	State	District	State	District	State	District	State	District	State	District	State
2011	41	23,628	23.8	21.4	22.9	21.8	24.6	22.3	23.9	21.9	23.9	22.0
2012	30	23,907	21.5	21.3	22.8	21.8	22.1	22.3	22.4	21.7	22.4	21.9
2013	42	24,268	21.8	21.2	22.3	21.7	22.5	22.3	21.8	21.7	22.2	21.8
2014	32	23,924	22.8	21.4	23.0	21.7	23.5	22.5	22.4	21.8	23.1	22.0
2015	37	23,708	25.8	21.3	24.6	21.6	25.4	22.4	24.1	21.8	25.1	21.9

Figure 1. Percent of ACT-Tested Students Ready for College-Level Coursework

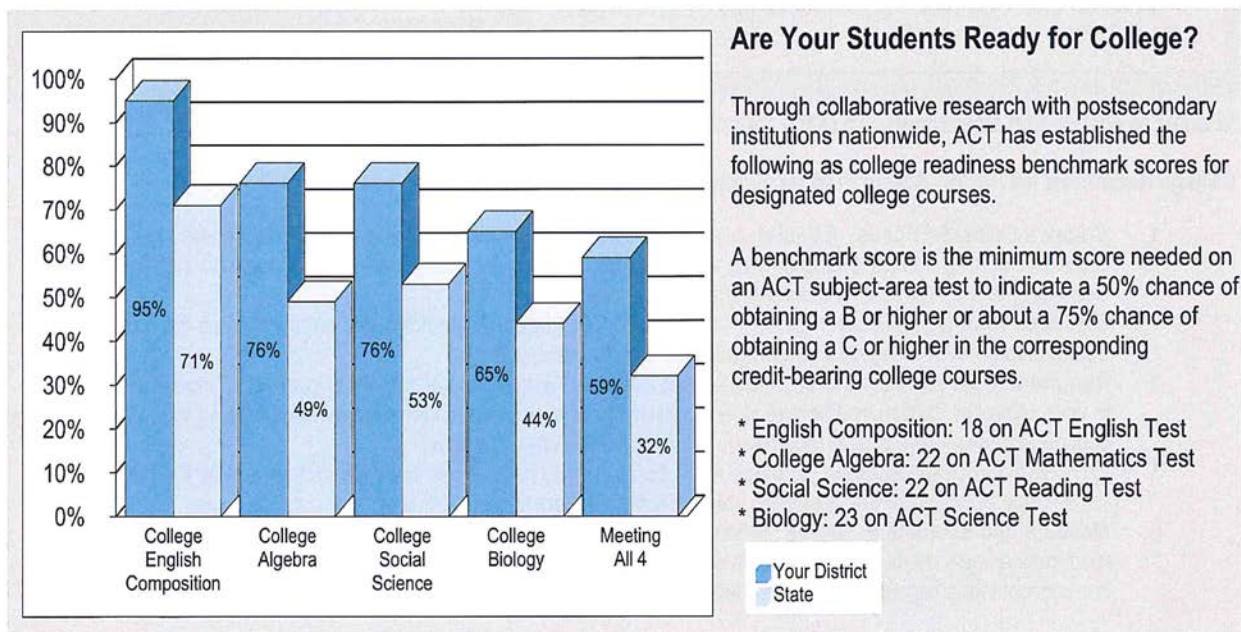


Figure 2. Average ACT Mathematics Scores by Course Sequence

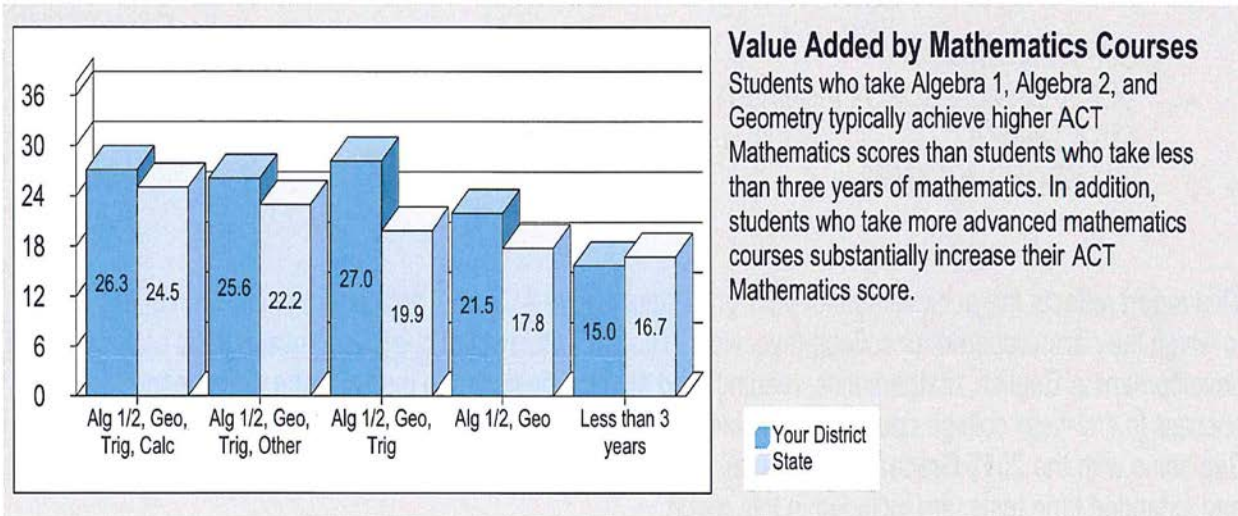
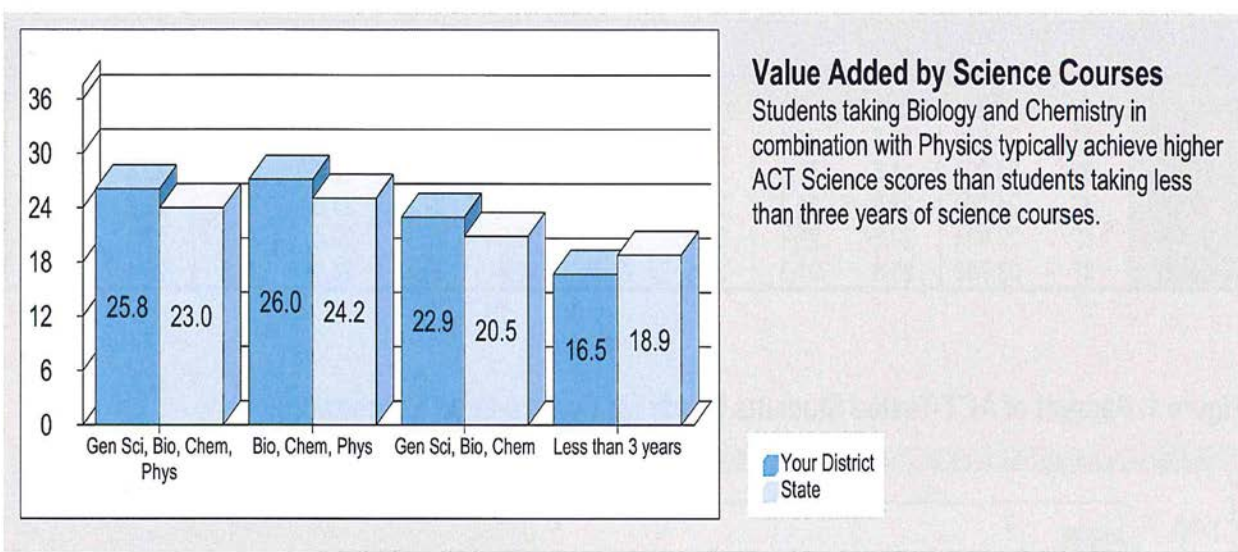


Figure 3. Average ACT Science Scores by Course Sequence



Counseling Services

Students in the two buildings are provided with guidance counseling services. HES counseling was reduced to 3/5 time in 2014 as requested by the HES counselor who is nearing retirement. Hillsboro Middle/High School hired a new student support services coordinator to replace a retiring counselor. This is the first year for our new position. This position is taking coursework to obtain a counseling degree. Counseling services provide social, emotional, and academic support to children and families. Counselors have a significant impact on student performance, both academically and socially. With the emphasis on college and career readiness, it is important for our schools to invest in quality counseling services for our students. When budgets improve, counseling services are one of the first areas the district needs to look at for expansion.

Parents as Teachers

The Parents as Teachers program is a collaborative effort among the Marion County school districts. Currently, over 100 families are served annually by four part-time parent educators). PAT serves

approximately 45 families annually in USD 410. There continue to be a significant number of families on the waiting list in USD 410. The program has been partially funded from grants acquired from FACT. Other funding sources include local district assessments, a KSDE grant, and SDAC funding. Additionally, donations to the Early Childhood Education Fund through the Hillsboro Community Foundation will enable the district to serve five additional families for the next three years. PAT monthly service numbers vary slightly due to the number of children enrolled per family served and the number of families that are served twice monthly.

Pre-School

The pre-school has been in operation at Hillsboro Elementary school since 2005-06. The program is a collaborative effort among USD 410, McPherson/Marion County Head Start, Marion County Special Education, and Prairie View, Inc. The pre-school serves children that qualify for Head Start, Special Education, or a 4-year old at-risk program, as well as serving other 4-year old children who do not meet the previously listed qualifying criteria. USD 410 provides funding for the program with contributions from the General Fund, Head Start, 4 Year Old At Risk, and Special Education.

All Day Kindergarten

Hillsboro Elementary implemented all-day Kindergarten for all families who chose that option beginning in 2014-15. Some families wanted the choice of a half-day kindergarten option and the district obliges those requests by allowing parental choice for half day or whole day. We have very few parents choosing the half-day option. The goal of a full-day kindergarten program for parents was sought by previous board members and administration for many years in USD 410. It is quite an accomplishment that our district now offers such a program in spite of extreme challenges with school funding.

Special Education

Staff members believe special education programs can have a positive impact on student learning. The MCSEC staff is excellent. Paraprofessionals play an integral and essential role in providing special education services to students.

Schools in the MCSEC continue to have high numbers of students identified for special education programs and a high per student cost for services. I believe these higher levels of service are one of the reasons USD 410 students perform well in school.

In 2013-14, the MCSEC Coop moved its Life Skills program to Hillsboro Middle/High School from the "Hill Building" in Marion. Having this program in the same facility as our PAES program has greatly reduced travel time for students attending both programs. As a result, instructional time has increased. While hosting these programs does put a strain on our administrative and nursing support, indications are this move has been successful.

The Oasis program continues to operate in the MCSEC building in Marion.

FACT

Families and Communities Together continues to encourage programs that support children and families outside the traditional school setting. USD 410 provides office space and support for this organization as well as an annual contribution. We have also set up a payroll deduction plan for our employees to give to FACT. In the past two years, USD 410 staff donate nearly \$3,500 annually in contributions to FACT through the payroll deduction option.

FACT is undergoing a change in leadership. Recently, the FACT board approved the hiring of a new director who will begin serving our county in January, 2016.

Hillsboro Community Foundation

The board of education entered into an agreement with the Hillsboro Community Foundation (HCF) in 2011 that allows the foundation to serve as our agency for scholarships and grants. The district has moved all of their scholarship funds to HCF. The board also established an “Early Childhood Education Fund” to support the continued efforts of our PAT program. Currently, PAT serves five additional families in USD 410 because of the additional money from the HCF early childhood fund.

Extracurricular Activities

The district offers a wide variety of student activities that are presently meeting the needs of students and the community. Participation rates in middle school and high school activities continue to be high. The district has an excellent coaching staff that values the importance of extracurricular activities in the character building aspect of student development. Our level of competitiveness is unmatched, especially in our girls’ sports. Student athletes perform well in the classroom. District administrators strive to keep a balance between academics and activities. Loss of instructional time for activities is monitored. In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to find individuals to serve in some of the coaching positions.

Instructional Staff

A “People First” mentality continues to be one of the major strengths of the district. USD 410 staff consistently demonstrates a caring attitude toward young people. Teachers are willing to be innovative, make changes designed to improve the learning environment, and to adjust instruction to meet the individual needs of students.

Smaller class sizes, especially in the K-1 classrooms are optimal. The district continues to place an emphasis on keeping these class sizes below 20. Because the kindergarten class is smaller for 2015-16, that grade level was reduced from three sections to two. This is manageable with para assistance, and veteran teachers who excel at their craft.

As enrollment numbers at the middle school and high school decline, it is necessary to continue to adjust staffing levels to reflect lower student numbers. Reducing staff is a difficult and complicated process often resulting in the loss of excellent staff members. Efforts to combine our MS and HS schedules have resulted in our ability to maximize our teaching staff while reducing some positions in grades 6 – 12.

In an effort to continue to maximize our efficiencies in the MS/HS building, we merged these two buildings into one beginning with the 2014-15 school year. By “closing a building,” we now operate as a 6 – 12 facility. Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, the building is operating with a principal, an assistant principal / AD, three secretaries, and one student support coordinator.

Numbers at our 6-12 facility are nearing their low point. Because of higher numbers beginning in 7th grade and continuing on down into the elementary school, it is very likely the enrollment will begin to increase at HMHS during each of the next several years.

Leadership Team/Administrative Staff

Presently, our administrative positions include the following: Superintendent, Business Manager / Board Clerk, Technology Director, Middle/High School Principal; Middle/ High School Assistant Principal and Activities’ Director; Elementary Principal.

Effective leadership is extremely important in schools that demonstrate a significant amount of success in their educational efforts. USD 410 is fortunate to have such leadership in the building administrative positions.

The current level of administrative staffing is sufficient to effectively meet the needs of the district. Effective schools are highly dependent upon the instructional leadership provided by building level administrators. As enrollment levels fluctuate, it will be necessary to continue evaluating staffing numbers and configurations.

Classified/Support Staff

The quality of our classified employees continues to be outstanding. One of the district's best connections to the public is through our classified staff members. Classified staff members interact positively with students and the community.

During the past three years, the district has been successful in providing a more competitive salary for classified employees. In 2012-13, the board committed to setting the "floor" for classified salaries at \$9.00. In order to continue to attract quality people, it is imperative that the district offer an attractive employment package. The majority of the classified staff receive the district defined benefit, which is a substantial fringe benefit.

District maintenance staff members perform a variety of technical and specialized services such as plumbing, wiring, and HVAC maintenance. This provides a substantial monetary savings to the district. Over the past few years, we have cut our maintenance department by two full positions and re-structured some of the duties. This is creating challenges for our district to continue to maintain our facilities in a way that our public expects.

It is important for the district to study the options of moving to a wage schedule for classified staff. This move would likely result in initial cost increases to the district due largely to the need to increase wages for our hourly workers. Setting a wage schedule for classified staff mitigates the concerns about wage freezes or minimal wage increases over time. Increases are based on steps for experience with occasional overall increases to the entire wage schedule.

Technology

The district has a high level of technology available to students and staff. Our Technology Director is able to provide effective support in all areas of IT support. We are fortunate to have a Hillsboro High School Alumni working in our IT department. This person is a great asset to our operation; yet, challenges for IT support remain.

The district made a significant commitment to move to a 1-1 district for all students in grades 6 – 12. While this is proving to be a tremendous educational advantage for our students, it demanded the district add support staff to minimize disruption to the learning environment. The board approved adding an Assistant to our Technology Director to keep up with demand. The administration is first looking at starting an IT Apprenticeship program or OJT program with cooperation with Tabor College. Once that is explored thoroughly, we will move toward the direction of a full time addition to our IT support team. More and more emphasis is being placed on computer use for academic learning and student performance. Our teachers are growing tremendously in their instructional practices using technology as part of the learning process in all classes.

iPads are being integrated more and more at our elementary school. This is also an effective way for our teachers to allow these students much needed individual instructional time. The iPad allows the students to work independently with highly effective educational apps for the iPad. Students are highly engaged as they utilize these instructional tools for learning.

The district technology director has implemented an off-site back-up system that is working effectively as our disaster recovery database. This ensures our data is secure in the event of local failure or Act of God.

A comprehensive district technology plan has been developed in the past few years with the input of the district technology committee. This committee now meets at least three times per year to discuss technology needs and professional development opportunities. The district has implemented the Level of Technology Implementation survey annually to gauge our teacher's comfort and progress in using technology in the classroom for students.

Our district has transitioned to a "default digital" district. This means that the vast majority of our communication is done electronically. The past four years, we have moved to direct deposit for payroll, online enrollment, electronic grade cards, electronic progress reports and D & F lists, and general staff and parent email communication. We also have continued to utilize our online student gradebook feature for parents to see the latest update to their child's grades.

Our Facebook page currently has over 700 "likes" and our district web page is consistently up to date with the latest district information and activity scheduling.

The district web page is a reliable place for accurate information. All of the links are active and the page is easy to navigate. The district employs a district website facilitator who oversees all content posted to the website. This position also is a teacher in the district. This teacher has a web page design class that assists with web content. The district technology team should discuss ways to incorporate a more inviting online presence. Using flash and pictures of students, staff, and parents would provide our online visitors with a better understanding of our "People First" philosophy.

Master Contract/Employee Benefits

The district has successfully used the Interest-Based Bargaining process in teacher negotiations. The process has resulted in a positive climate during contract negotiations. During these past several years of difficult budget times, the board has been able to either increase salaries and/or decrease the number of work days for teachers. Teachers have been gracious also in allowing the district to expand the duty day from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. which actually increased the total number of instructional hours for our students. Efforts to provide competitive salaries to our teaching staff must be a high priority. Salaries must be competitive both within and outside the field of education.

Providing employees with a health insurance program that provides adequate coverage and is reasonably priced continues to be a major challenge. Over the past five years, increases in health insurance premiums have been manageable; however, this is an ongoing concern due to the unpredictability of costs from year to year. Continuing to offer full health benefits to qualified employees will continue to be a big funding challenge for the board as we move forward over the next few years.

Facilities

Through the goal setting process, the board has identified several facilities projects that are needed. Funding will dictate how much, if any, of these projects can be completed. The facility projects identified for our attention are listed in the board goals near the beginning of this report. Much of the projects have been completed and one of the projects is currently underway.

We have begun the work on improving our networking infrastructure in all of our buildings to accommodate not only internet and network access but to install a new VOIP phone system. Our current phone system is outdated and replacement parts are hard to obtain since they are no longer manufactured. The purpose of the VOIP phone project is to improve our phone systems. This project also includes updating our phone connections to our intercom systems.

The district has also been studying the possibilities of controlled access doors. This would move our buildings from keyed entrances to keyless entry. The purpose of this project is to better secure our buildings. It also improves our ability to restrict access and install “permission access” points in our buildings. We have had three vendors provide quotes for consideration. Beginning in the spring, the board will begin reviewing our access control options.