

Superintendent's Report

January 19, 2017

Each year at this time I would like to provide a Superintendent's Report that will include a review of the school report card, review of the curriculum and instructional services, and recommendations based upon the information presented. The school report card link is on the website and I ask that you review the information individually. Please remember that the school report card has information from the last school year and financial information is from the 2014-2015 school year. If you have any questions, please call or stop by the office.

As Superintendent of this district I believe that January is a great time to provide some useful information to you in regards to the operations of our district for the current school year. Tonight I want to share with you where we are, celebrate many, many good things that we have experienced over the first half of the year (but will not be able to share everything due to time), and then discuss some challenges we foresee for the future. I can assure you we are working diligently to provide more for your students daily!

The district currently has 1,355 (which is down from 1,370 on August 31, 2016) students enrolled. We have 44 children in preschool and Early Childhood. We have 92 in Kindergarten at Ste. Marie, 541 first through sixth grade at Newton Elementary, 200 students at Jasper County Junior High, and 456 students at Newton Community High School.

We have 7 Board members elected by the community to set policy and direction for the district. Employees of the district include 6 administrators, 80.5 certified teachers, and 89.5 classified staff including bus chaperones, bus drivers, cooks, custodians, lunch supervisors, maintenance, nurses, secretaries, and teachers aides. The district covers 462 square miles and is the largest geographical school district in the state.

Parental contact with the school district is very good and we encourage that to continue. We are fortunate to see many of our parents attending back to school night events, school programs, interscholastic events, and various education nights such as parent - teacher nights. The second year of the Parent Ed Camp was offered this past Fall, attendance was not very good - so we are looking into different options to increase attendance for this event. We believe it will be very beneficial for the community and our staff puts a lot of time and effort into the event.

Our students receive instruction in Mathematics, Science, English / Language Arts, Social Science, Art, Music, Physical Education, Vocational Education and more! Our teachers are all highly qualified and over 60% of them hold a Master's Degree or above. Salaries for teachers and administrators are below the state average. Another area to brag about is that our teachers are absent fewer than 10 days a year percentage is 98.4% compared to the state average of 76.5%.

The following reflects an estimated comparison from FY16 to FY17 budgets:

	July 30, 2016:	July 30, 2017 (estimate)
Educational	-\$85,387	\$446,852
O & M	\$1,322,881	\$724,565
Debt	\$187,602	\$252,867
Transportation	-\$104,954	-\$221,808
Social Security	\$833,727	\$642,944
Capital Projects	0	0
Working Cash	\$409,363	\$503,263
Tort	\$184,001	\$93,619
Fire Prevention	\$ 52,545	\$117,267
TOTAL	\$2,799,778	\$2,559,559 (-\$240,219)
Big 4 Funds	\$1,541,903	\$1,452,872 (-\$89,031)

** Please keep in mind that we made a \$303,000 payment to the County for our portion of the Dynegy payment - this payment was made in November.

With the Dynegy payment and savings - we reduced the expenditures from 15'-16' to 16'-17' was approximately \$540,000.00.

** We received in December \$277,020.70 of overdue money from the state for FY16 (they still owe us \$7,874.91 for FY16 budget). (This is AMAZING and Diane says almost never happens!!!)- this number changed from the Board Meeting on December 15, 2016 due to payments from the state after that meeting and prior to January 1, 2017.

** We received in December \$359,356.35 for the FY17 budget (the state still owes us \$465,094.23 for the FY17 budget). - this number changed from the Board Meeting on December 15, 2016 due to payments from the state after that meeting and prior to January 1, 2017.

We are very fortunate to have a projected balanced budget at the end of this school year. This is very difficult to do without the help of our staff and taxpayers. Thank you taxpayers and community for continuing to support our schools. We spend an immense amount of time trying to create a budget that will provide us with the funds to educate our students in a manner that is very pleasing to our community. We meet with Mark Mullen with ISBE to utilize his expertise when setting the levy. A continued concern for our budget is the proration of funds from the state in the transportation line

item. We will receive 69% of the foundation level for transportation. This accounts for a -\$221,000.00 budget for transportation this year. We will again need to borrow from other funds at the end of this fiscal year as we cannot show a deficit in this account. The State is certainly not doing us any favors in this area. We are the largest geographic student transported school district in the State!

Our district focus is Student Achievement!

Ste. Marie Elementary

Ste. Marie Elementary provides our prek and kindergarten students with the ideal start to their educational careers. The size of the school building provides a warm and inviting environment that helps our youngest students feel comfortable and excited about learning. The staff at Ste. Marie Elementary is supportive and skilled. The staff works together as a team to help all students be successful. Teachers share ideas and resources among one another on a regular basis. Ste. Marie Elementary is thankful to have a full time Title I teacher this school year, as compared to a half-time Title I teacher as in years past. Classroom teachers are observant of the positive impact these full-time services have had on student achievement. The teaching staff is also thankful for the research based reading and math curriculums that this district has adopted over the recent years. These curriculums help to provide a solid foundation for our kindergarten students.

Ste. Marie Elementary implemented a school wide positive behavioral system this school year to help create a feeling of community, pride and respect. The students have learned throughout the school year about green choices vs. red choices. Green choices are choices that we like our students to make in regards to being kind and working hard. Red choices are choices that we prefer our students not make. The students have embraced this school wide initiative. Students and staff share this common vocabulary which aids in helping our students to learn how to become good role models.

The learning possibilities for our students are endless at Ste. Marie Elementary. Students are happy and eager to learn and the staff at Ste. Marie Elementary is happy and eager to help them learn!

Newton Elementary

Students in first grade through sixth grade attend Newton Elementary. Newton Elementary mission statement is: Newton Elementary Eagles work hard, are brave, are kind and have fun. Staff and students work and learn by this mission statement.

Newton Elementary students and staff work hard. This year we have several classes where general education and special education teachers are co teaching. Reading and Math curriculum are aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards and work is currently in progress to align science with the Next Generation Science Standards. Student effort is recognized and cultivated at Newton Elementary and a growth mindset is emphasized. PTO works hard to provide resources for our students and staff. Through Title I fund, laptops computers were purchased for each 5th and 6th grade homerooms, which allow each student access to a computer throughout the entire day. Students and staff are both working to learn new ways to integrate technology into daily work.

Newton Elementary students and staff are brave. Newton Elementary staff involve students in leadership roles whenever possible. Staff believes that students have a voice and that voice deserves to be heard. Students have leadership roles within their classrooms and also have school wide roles such as giving morning announcements, passing out notes at the end of the day, raising and lowering the flag, helping in the library and cafeteria, being reading buddies to lower elementary students, escorting lower elementary students at the end of the day, etc. Building confidence in students by encouraging taking risks and having a leadership role is a daily focus at Newton Elementary.

Newton Elementary students and staff are kind. Each grade level at Newton Elementary is working on a community service project this year. So far students have visited and sang for Holly Brook residents, made decorations for the nursing home and have made Christmas cards that were included in food distribution at Master's Hands. Newton Elementary sixth graders are also encouraged to join the Newton Elementary Care Club. This club is dedicated to helping out in different ways in the building. They are responsible for projects such as distributing Blessings in a Backpack to homerooms each week and raised over \$2,000.00 for St. Jude Children's Hospital. They also coordinated the canned food drive for the Ministerial Association at Christmas in which over 3,000 cans of food were donated.

Newton Elementary students have fun. Students and staff make it a goal to have fun each day at Newton Elementary. Students and staff participated in a Kiss the Pig contest. The Strong Girls program was implemented in the spring of 2016 and will again be offered in the spring of 2017. This year is the first year of the Lego Robotics Lunch Club and we had a successful year with Team Quest.

Newton Elementary staff understands and believe that no significant learning can occur without a significant relationship with students. Working hard, being kind, being brave and having fun are all focused around building positive relationships with students.

Jasper County Junior High

JCJH is the "Learning Home" to 200 - 7th & 8th grade students. They change classes in a 9 period day, are asked to take more responsibility for their daily approaches as well as being challenged to grow daily by a highly qualified staff that believe having strong positive relationships with students is the basis of all learning and growth in education. All academics are based around the Common Core, as well as having the opportunity for self-selected elective classes of: Intro to Spanish, Intro to Sign-Language, Hands on Science, Current Events, Yearbook, Life Math, Intro to Agriculture, Fitness Concepts and RtI in Reading and Math. The Chorus & Band program continue to have the highest quality of performances you will ever see and hear from a Jr. High. This year the Band finished Grand Champion of the Jr. High division at the Oblong Spooktacular Parade. The 8th Grade Team Quest team finished 1st place (first time in school history) at the ROE #12 sponsored competition. The Science Fair in the spring for all 7th & 8th grade students always shows great ideas from students and is well attended by the community. The 8th Grade Reading Rocks program, also in the spring, does a tremendous job of connecting a student with an adult partner, a truly outstanding community reading program. Learning focus is tied to Learning Targets/Goals in every classroom. We are in the 2nd Year of having Behavior/Effort on the report card which communicates more information to parents on the progress of their child. This year the Behavior/Effort has been morphed to combine with our PBIS (Positive Behavior Incentives System) to reward students for meeting the JCJH School-wide Expectations in behavior.

JCJH offers 10 different extra-curricular activities throughout the year which on an average over 70% of the students take part in at some point throughout a school year. JCJH belongs to the Illinois Elementary School Association, which oversees all the requirements/guidelines and state series competitions, where success as teams and individuals continue. JCJH was recognized as the IESA Region "N" Sportsmanship Award in 2013-14 and this award remains a high honor for our student/athletes, coaches, parents, fans and administration. The students and coaches work hard at all facets of their activities learning life lessons beyond the classroom.

Mr. Wyatt believes the following adapted statement from Joan L. Herman & Ronald Dietel in a CRESST article, sums up what we believe JCJH is all about: "...This is our home. These are all our kids. We love this school. We have a school spirit here that cannot be equal to any other., anywhere else. We're not perfect...But we try all the time, each and every day, to keep growing and keep learning. And in the face of any type of obstacle, we've always stuck together. We've laughed together. We've cried together. But the bottom line is, we love these kids, we love this school, and there is nothing we won't do to make it a success."

Newton Community High School

Newton Community High School is the home of 457 Eagles this year, freshmen through seniors. At NCHS, we all strive to be our best every day and prepare students for whatever path they choose in life. The Student Advisory Team along with the teachers have been working on a list of goals they developed together. One of those goals was implementing 1:1 to allow unlimited learning opportunities for all students. After two years of researching, many hours of professional development, and with the help of our community and some grants, we have been able to issue all juniors a Chromebook and in the next couple of weeks, sophomores will also be receiving them. Over the next few months, we hope to raise enough money to supply all students at the high school with Chromebooks next year.

Another goal this year at NCHS was finding time to educate all students on soft skills, focus on careers, building relationships and teach those life skills that are sometimes taken for granted or are unable to be taught due to time constraints. To meet that goal, we have implemented RtI Monday, where teachers team teach and invite community members into our school to discuss specific topics, raise awareness of important issues and work on team building skills. Many great things have resulted from RtI Monday.

As far as academics and class offerings at the high school, we continue to offer many dual credit courses to prepare students for postsecondary education and to help families financially. This year, we added yet another dual credit course in our vocational department. We were excited to announce there were 8 Illinois State Scholars from NCHS this year. Our CEO program continues to grow each year. Currently, we have 19 outstanding students enrolled. Some of these students have already started their individual businesses that has opened up some doors for them and the class managed to sell 200 tickets for their upcoming class business, a murder mystery dinner, "Murder on the Disoriented Express". They will once again host an annual Trade Show in late April. Our Fine Arts department continues to excel. The Marching Eagles had a very successful season, the Pop's Concert

displayed endless talent, the Yearbook club continues to win numerous awards, and the art classes are busting at the seams. Students have already begun rehearsals for this year's musical, "The Little Mermaid".

Extracurricular is another area where our Newton Eagles exceed expectations. Around 85% of our student body is involved in some type of extracurricular activity or sport! We had a very successful fall in all sports! The Volleyball team won the Conference and made it all the way to the Super Sectionals. The Football team created an electric atmosphere on Friday nights, won the conference and made it to the 3rd round of the playoffs. The girls and boys basketball teams are having successful seasons and one of our Lady Eagles scored her 1,000th point. As for our athletes, what I find more impressive than their performance on the court is their time spent out in the community and their dedication to help others. However, the spirit of volunteerism extends throughout the entire student body and staff. Whether it be packing bags for Blessings in a Backpack, visiting care centers, tutoring elementary kids, collecting food, or organizing coat and gift drives, the students at NCHS are proud to give back to a community that does so much for them.

NCHS has amazing teachers that put students first, a dedicated staff that works very hard, and a student body that has a limitless future.

Special Education Department

The special needs department continues to focus on providing individualized instruction and support to meet the needs of our students. Parent input and support is valued as we know that it takes everyone working together to obtain the best outcomes for our students. The teachers work diligently at communicating with parents but also teachers and support staff. Collaboration is a key to student success. A focus this year, is working towards improving and increasing our co-teaching efforts within the general education environment. The inclusionary services have increased throughout all grade levels this school year. Peer role models, friendships, greater skill acquisition and higher expectations are some of the many benefits of inclusionary services. Our district has a talented and dedicated group of special needs teachers and speech-language pathologists that strive to help our students reach their maximum potential.

As educators of students with special needs, we work to foster an environment that is collaborative among parents, students, teachers and school personnel. As a department, we communicate closely with the general education staff for the benefit of our students. We pride ourselves in our efforts to involve parents in the planning and execution of their child's educational needs.

The Special Needs Department provides a rich learning environment. Our staff of twelve highly qualified teachers and trained paraprofessionals work to achieve the highest level of education and emotional stability for our students. Instructional decisions are based upon student data and individual growth. Student progress is regularly monitored in order to ensure the proper supports and services are being delivered to reach each child. Thus, the support goes beyond the child and touches the lives of the entire family.

What is the State of the District?

Jasper County Community Unit District #1 continues to focus on student achievement! Many of our administrators, staff and coaches have emphasized community service this year as well. We are putting students first. Our students are learners, leaders, and our best hope for this community, state, and country. They are excelling because of excellent administrators and faculty, an outstanding classified staff, parents who are involved in their lives, and a community that values and supports them. It takes a village to raise a child and we have many elements in this village to promote the success of our students. We feel our TEAM, which has been listed here is topnotch!

Specific things we have been working on this year are:

- Promoting trust amongst everyone.
- Hiring a new bookkeeper to replace Diane whom has blessed this district for 39 years.
- We are continually looking at what programs we should be offering to provide our students with the best education possible.
- We are looking at a huge expense to get the Ste. Marie Elementary School up to the HLS codes within the next four years, so we are going to look at the best options for this building.
- 1-1 Chromebook initiative for all high schoolers - hope to have this in place by the start of next school year.
- We are 1-1 at the elementary school in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.
- Continue to sustain a school culture and instructional programs with less dollars than the year before.
- Enjoying the opportunity to support, lead, listen, learn, care, and make a positive difference.

Some real challenges looking us in the face are:

- An aging bus fleet - we need to purchase new buses or at least newer buses soon.
- A huge expense to get Ste. Marie up to code within the next four years.
- A track that is going to need work done to it soon.
- Tennis courts that need work done soon as well.

After eight months as the Superintendent of this fine district, I can honestly say we have great students, staff and community members. I have felt very supported from many within the district and the community. I do feel we have work to do in the coming years with creating a more cohesive bond between each other and between our education system and our community. The future of our educational institution weighs heavily on you as a community. Education is going to change in the coming years and we must be ready to embrace these changes. We will also encounter more financial crisis with the effects from the closing of one stack to the power plant. We are also still encountering declining enrollment throughout the district. We will continue to be transparent from our standpoint with what our needs will be and options of how to attain those needs. We again appreciate your support for our systems as we are only as good as you help us be!!

As 2017 rolls in, it is a very exciting time for all of us as we are very blessed to have a district full of staff that care about students and are willing to spend much time helping them explore the future. We have a community that supports the educational process for their children. With these two combinations our students are destined to SUCCEED over the next five months. I ask that you communicate with your child's school on a regular basis so you can help us Make a Difference - One Child at A Time!!!