

Jackson County School District

Press Release – September 14, 2021

Superintendent: Dr. John D. Strycker



JCSD Board Pleased with Numbers and Reports

Last evening, the Jackson County Board of Education met for the September regular board meeting in Vancleave. Highlighting the meeting was a presentation regarding the return-to-school COVID numbers, curriculum update, and finance report.

Superintendent Dr. John Strycker presented the latest daily COVID report to the board. He highlighted the data as of Monday morning, September 13, 2021:

1. There were 13 students and 3 staff out of school with COVID on Monday.
2. Less than 1% of the student body was out of school in a two-week time period, down from 1.87% last week, 4.21% two-weeks ago, and 6.42% three weeks ago.
3. Only 7 staff members have been out of school in a two-week time period out of approximately 1,300 staff in the district.
4. Student attendance was up to 93% with only 15 students receiving their education through virtual means with enrollment climbing just shy of 9,000 students.

“We are truly blessed to have 93% of our 9,000 students in school today with only under 1% out with COVID,” said Strycker of the report. Nonetheless, I am very saddened over the losses we have experienced in our school community as a result of the COVID disease, so it is with mixed emotions that I present this data,” he said.

The board also heard a curriculum update from Director of Curriculum and Administration, Dr. Penny Westfaul. Dr. Westfaul presented recently released US History test data from the state. “I am happy to report that as a district our students’ US History scores have remained consistent as last reported two years ago. This speaks well for our school staff, parents, and students considering the pandemic,” she said.

Additionally, the board heard a solid finance report with the district maintenance fund balance (fund reserve) at 15%. “We are pleased to have such a healthy fund balance amidst the COVID pandemic,” said District Business Manager, Ryan Earley. However, both Earley and Strycker cautioned the board that balancing the budget next year may be challenging with the decrease in federal ESSER funds.

Following the finance report, the board received a facility update from Director of Operations and Support, David Besancon. Mr. Besancon presented an update on the several facility projects taking place throughout the district. “We have many projects going on simultaneously due to ESSER federal funding; therefore, a board/community facility workshop may be beneficial in the near future,” said Besancon.

District booster club funding was also discussed by the board during the meeting. A policy recommendation to more closely regulate booster funds was presented to the board by administration. However, the board made it clear that booster clubs are independent organizations, and it is not the place of the district to regulate or direct them. The board further expressed appreciation for what the booster parents and community do for our children. “The board understands that the administration had good intentions with the policy recommendation and reiterated that the purpose of the policy is to simply help ensure booster clubs are properly managed and registered. Boosters are an integral part to our extracurricular programs. The board feels strongly that we trust

our booster parents and supporters and want to maintain the current working partnership that we share with the boosters,” said Board of Education President, Troy Frisbie.

Prior to last night’s board meeting, the board members recognized teachers and administrators who participated in JCSD’s Professional Learning Academy, as well as St. Martin High School swimmer Conner Diamond for his gold medal at the state swim meet and Nathaniel Bryan for winning the national trophy competition for Career and Technical Education. “We are incredibly proud of our staff and students and are happy to recognize them for their efforts and accomplishments,” said Strycker.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding this press release, please contact Superintendent John Strycker at 228-283-3000.