



December 17, 2021

Dear Panther Partners,

I encourage you to stay informed of school news, activities, and events by checking the district website, following the district on Facebook and Twitter (@CCSD\_panthers). The Panther Pitch is published around the third week of each month in the Creston News Advertiser and covered by KSIB radio. KSIB radio also conducts a monthly interview around the middle of the month and reports on district business and news. I welcome you to join me at the monthly community coffee on the third Wednesday of the month at local coffee shops (the community coffee schedule is posted on the district website). I encourage you to contact me if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions.

eUpdate:

1. A reminder that winter break is from December 23-January 4. Students return to school on Wednesday, January 5, 2022.
2. The Health & Safety team (includes UCPH) meets every other week and as necessary to review all health-related issues and concerns (primarily COVID). Based on data provided to the district the district-wide positivity rate has not exceeded 2%.
3. The parent-teacher conference survey for parents and staff indicates a strong interest to continue to provide a hybrid model for parent-teacher conferences. With this data, the district will continue to offer a hybrid model for parent-teacher conferences. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey that helped form this decision.
4. The district is working on the budget for the 22-23 school year and addressing the declining enrollment. Due to a larger class that graduated last spring and a smaller kindergarten class this fall, the loss of shared students with Orient Macksburg, and open enrollment, the district experienced a decline of 61 students. This cycle often happens in rural schools as larger class sizes graduate and fewer students begin school. The decline in enrollment was anticipated as the largest classes (130) graduate and the incoming classes are smaller (80-90). The district generates revenue (\$7,227 per student) from each student and that is how the majority of funding is provided to support schools. A loss of students means a loss of revenue and the district will make budget adjustments to align resources and balance the budget. We will keep you informed as we go through the process. It is important to understand that the district has designated accounts that have statutory restrictions on how money can be spent and the money used for facility, transportation, and maintenance upgrades are restricted to that. School finances are a very complicated matter and we will try to educate our community so you can make decisions based on good information.
5. The education and facilities advisory committee has spent several meetings reviewing data prior to meeting with the school board to present its recommendations that include district-wide facility improvements. The recommendations meet the needs of all our children, today, tomorrow, and into the future. The goal is to renovate and construct learning spaces that support our youngest children and all children through graduation. Spaces to support students in academics, fine arts, and activities. The plans are fiscally structured to maintain the current Creston tax levy (Creston \$16.55) that supports children and staff.

Keep in mind, Prescott residents may see an increase in their school tax levy (Prescott \$14.15 to \$16.55 (\$2.40 increase) as they are fully incorporated into the Creston Community District and any new debt.

- a. A group of community members will be circulating a petition in the next couple of weeks that outlines the details for a bond request that would take place in March.
  - b. The proposed bond (debt) is for \$24.9 million to be paid over 20 years. The remainder of the debt for the proposed projects will come from the district's SAVE funds. The district will borrow against future SAVE revenue to fund the remaining \$16.1 million.
  - c. At this point, the district has taken no official action and will engage in a transparent, collaborative, and educational process with our community partners.
  - d. This is a significant decision that is not taken lightly as the work focused on our children, their future, and their impact on our communities.
  - e. Opportunities for staff and public input will be announced shortly.
6. In January, the district plans to transition to a newly designed web page and communication system that is intended to streamline communication, organize information, and provide clarity. The new format includes a mobile app that allows anyone to register for district communication. We will be sending more information as we prepare for this transition.
7. Snow Days/School Closure
- a. Starting with the second school closure, the district intends to provide modified remote instruction to support continuous learning. This would be voluntary for students but highly encouraged. The process would focus on review and recovery.
  - b. Your child's building principal will provide more details but instruction is planned for the morning for students in grades 6-12 with elementary students working on prepared packets.
  - c. If you need a hotspot, please let our IT department know as soon as possible.

Thank you for supporting children, staff, and our schools making them the PRIDE of our community!. Have a safe and enjoyable winter break! As always, please contact me with any questions.

Deron Stender  
#CrestonCares