



March 11, 2022

Dear Panther Partners,

As we head into spring break, this is a good time for our children to relax and enjoy time with family and friends. I am proud of the focus our staff has on connecting with and supporting all children and the progress that has been made through difficult times. I am equally proud of the support from our parents and community as we work together to provide quality education. Please see the key points below and as always, contact me to share any questions or concerns.

eUpdate:

1. General Obligation Bond

While the GO Bond did not pass, the majority of voters supported the education and facilities plan for our children, staff, and schools. Unfortunately, we needed a supermajority and missed the mark by 4% or about 50 votes (no to yes). The board will consider the next steps and address district needs within the fiscal limitations.

In order to seek another GO Bond vote, the entire process starts over with community members petitioning to get signatures, presenting the petition to the school board, verifying signatures, calling for an election, and planning for the election.

I appreciate the work and time of many people who stepped forward to lead the campaign, a campaign that supported children, staff, our schools, and the community.

2. District Budget 2022-2023

- a. Over the course of this past year, I have shared with you that based on the state student count conducted on October 1, 2021, the district has 60 fewer students and enrollment is declining.
- b. While students come and go, the most significant impact is that the graduating classes have 120 students and the incoming Kindergarten is between 80-90 on average. Sadly, we have fewer children in our district.
- c. Districts generate revenue based on the Supplement State Aid (SSA) of \$7,413 per student for the 2022-2023 school year. As a result of the declining enrollment, the district is short \$444,780 (60 fewer students * \$7,413). The impact of declining enrollment is no one's fault but a reality for many rural schools across Iowa and the country. The solution is to increase enrollment and unfortunately, as much as we promote the quality instruction and opportunities available at our schools, enrollment is largely out of our control.
- d. Administration has been meeting for weeks and considering options that have the least impact on children and the classroom. This is a very difficult process as every decision and action has a negative impact. Ultimately, we are considering the best options for children, staff, and the community.
- e. Please take note, that with the help of ESSER funds (reallocating funds from projects to personnel), we do not anticipate needing to make staff reductions for the 2022-2023 school year (we may not fill every vacated position as a result of fewer students and there may be some realignment of staff). It is important

to keep in mind that ESSER funds are one-time dollars and will not be available to support programs and staff for the 2023-2024 school year. For the most part, the 2022-2023 school year will look the same as this year.

- f. Given the discussions on social media, I encourage people to contact me to get the facts so we can work together and make informed decisions. Again, staff will not lose their job and plans are not final.

3. Community Coffee

Parents and community members are invited to join me for the monthly Community Coffee on Wednesday, March 23 at Adams Street Espresso from 7:30-8:30. I make myself available to community members as an opportunity to meet you and discuss any questions or concerns you may have. As a perk, I pay for your coffee and get to know you better.

The board, administration, and staff care about children, our families, our schools, and our communities.. I encourage patience, understanding, and collaboration as we work together and do what Creston does best #CrestonCares! Thank you for supporting children, staff, and our schools making them the PRIDE of our community! As always, please contact me at dstender@crestonschools.org.

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#CrestonCares