

Board of Education Regular Meeting

Monday, November 14, 2022 7:00 PM

Blair Public Library
2233 Civic Drive
Blair, NE 68008

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Information concerning the Open Meeting Law, Chapter 84, Article 14 of Nebraska State Statutes, is posted in the meeting room at a location accessible to members of the public and attached to the online agenda.

Mrs. Kari Loseke, Board President, will call the Board of Education Regular meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

The Board Secretary will conduct roll call attendance.

3. Approval of Absent Board Members

4. Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Gilson will lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Approval of Emergency Additions to the Agenda

6. Call for Removal of Consent Agenda Items

7. Approval of the Consent Agenda

7.1. Waiver of reading minutes from previous meeting

7.2. Acceptance of minutes of the previous meeting as published

- October 10, 2022 Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes

7.3. Receipt of Communications

7.4. Treasurer's Report

- General Fund
- Building Fund and Savings & Depreciation

7.5. Audit of Claims

- Activity Fund / Student Fees Fund
- General Fund / Bond Fund / Lunch Fund / Building Fund / Depreciation Fund

8. Business

8.1. Items removed from Consent Agenda

8.2. Recognitions

8.2.1. Blair Wrestling Club

The Blair Wrestling Club has purchased software called Mat Boss for the Blair High School Girls Wrestling Program. The value of the software was less than \$1,000 and does not require Board approval but we thank them for their continued support.

8.3. Acceptance of Gifts

8.3.1. Blair Wrestling Club

The Blair Community Schools Foundation is donating \$2,466.55 on behalf of the Blair Wrestling Club to help offset hotel expenses for the Blair High School Wrestling team this 2022-23 wrestling season.

The administration is recommending the approval of this donation to help offset hotel expenses for the 2022-23 wrestling season.

8.3.2. Dollar General Literacy Grant

Otte Blair Middle School, with the assistance of Board Member Ginger Fredericksen, received the Dollar General Literacy Foundation grant in the amount of \$4,000. Through the grant investments in local schools, nonprofits and libraries, they support teachers, librarians and nonprofit leaders as they help individuals of all ages learn to read and prepare for the high school equivalency test or learn English.

8.4. Consideration of Communications

8.5. Comments From The Public

This is the portion of the meeting when members of the public may address the board about matters of public concern.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO WISH TO SPEAK:

1. Getting started: When you have been recognized, please stand and state your name.
2. Time Limit: The board has the discretion to limit the amount of time set aside for public participation and unless stated otherwise, will employ a time limit of 5 minutes or less.

3. Personnel or Student Topic: If you are planning to speak about a personnel or student matter involving an individual, please understand that our policies require you to follow the district's complaint procedure before addressing the board. Board members will generally not respond to any questions or comments you make about individual staff members or students. Please remember that slanderous comments will not be tolerated.
4. General Rules: This is a public meeting for the conduct of business. Comments from within the audience while others are speaking will not be tolerated. Offensive language, personal attacks, and hostile conduct will not be tolerated.
5. No action by the Board: The Board will not act on any matter unless it is on the published agenda.

8.6. Committee Reports

8.6.1. Policy Committee

The Policy Committee met on Monday, October 24, 2022 at 12:00pm. Meeting minutes are attached.

8.6.2. BG&T Committee

The Buildings, Grounds, and Transportation Committee met on Tuesday, November 1, 2022. Meeting minutes are attached.

8.6.3. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met on Tuesday, November 8, 2022. Meeting minutes are attached.

8.7. Assistant Girl's Wrestling Coach

29 girls are planning to participate in Girls Wrestling in Blair's first ever year of competition. The administration is recommending adding an Assistant Girls Wrestling coach. [Please select here to view the Coaches per student document for 2022.](#) Also, attached.

The average coach per student for all activities is 11.3. Girls Wrestling would begin with one coach per 29 students. If an Assistant Coach is added, the girls would begin with a 14.5 ratio. Boy's Wrestling is at 15 coach for each student/athlete.

The administration is recommending the following motion:

I move to approve the Blair School Administration to hire an Assistant Girls Wrestling coach for the 2022-23 season.

8.8. K-5 Configuration

For the past year and a half, two (2) Ad Hoc Committees have been formed to recommend a five-year plan for the most effective use of educational programming, personnel, and facilities to support current and projected increases in student enrollment. ([select here for a link to presentation](#)). The first Ad Hoc team met for one year and was composed primarily of K-5 teachers and administrators. The second team has met to review the recommendations of the K-5 Ad Hoc team and to begin planning for the needs of grades 6-12. The goal of the Ad Hoc Committee was to develop a recommendation the school board could discuss and take action on in November 2022.

Both Ad Hoc teams determined that the enrollment is likely to increase due to the following facts. There has been an average of 50 new housing permits issued within the Blair city limits for the past three years. Blair is forecasted to continue to build 50 new houses per year. 59 houses per year equal about 2% growth or two new students per grade per year.

There has also been considerable new housing development throughout Washington County and there has been 25-45 new housing permits issued per year. Plus, growth in existing and new industry gives reason for the Ad Hoc committees to believe there will be a steady increase of about 2% in enrollment per year. In fact, it may be possible for Blair to receive additional growth beyond 2% some years. For example, between 2021 and 2022 BCS had a 5% increase or about 4.8 more students per grade level. This resulted in BCS adding an 8th section of K-2.

The Ad Hoc Committee shared many positive educational advantages to switching from a K-2 to a K-5. First, siblings only get to remain together in the same building for a short period of time making transportation and planning difficult for families. Educationally, the K-2 buildings have not had a counselor or principal in each building. Specials teachers and Special Education teachers have to travel shortening the time they can work directly with students. K-2 schedules are determined by specials schedules and travel availability of support staff instead of based on students educational needs.

The gyms at North and South also must be used as cafeterias, so it forces specials times to occur during prime time reading and math instructional times. This shortens the time students get the opportunity for reading, literacy, and math instruction. The K-2 teachers also do not have daily planning time together due to having staff at three buildings.

Another benefit of having a K-5 configuration is that there would be a full-time principal, counselor, and high abilities teacher in each building. Plus, special education staff and reading specialists will be available on site. Also, the school personnel would get to know students more deeply because students would remain with their same school from kindergarten through 5th grade.

The committee studied the most efficient and effective grade level configurations and found only six similar size school districts (Falls City, Waverly, Noris, Nebraska City, Alliance, and Chadron) shared a K-2 configuration. These districts spent more per student \$13,743 than students in a K-5 configuration (\$13,146). The K-5 configuration was the most common for Nebraska schools of similar size. The cost per pupil in Blair for all schools in the 2020-21 school year was \$12,008 per student overall, but in K-2 it was (\$14,316).

The Committee determined that BCS could save as much as \$800,000 in certified staff and \$220,000 in classified staff annually if it were to move from a K-2 to a K-5 configuration. At a recent joint public meeting between the school district, county, and city agencies. 133 taxpayers attended and were firm in asking the school district to ‘tighten their belts’ and search for creative ways to control spending. The savings could be reinvested in the needs students have and can be used to reduce property taxes.

The Arbor Park building would house four sections of K-5 for all students who have attended North and South Elementary school. The Deerfield building would serve as a K-5 building for all students who have or will attend Deerfield.

The Ad Hoc committee also learned that there is a community-wide need for expanded early childhood education opportunities. The South building is ideal for allowing BCS to offer the same and expand on early childhood and preschool opportunities. The North Building would house the district's program to support students with behavioral and social needs. These students have been contracted outside the district from \$30,000 - \$40,000 per student. North would also house district office staff and some special education staff.

New playground equipment is necessary at Deerfield and Arbor Park. Preschool playground equipment would be added at South Elementary. The district also would look at adding restrooms for kindergarten classrooms at Arbor Park.

There are currently 65 third grade students at Arbor Park who attended Deerfield and 57 fourth graders. If a proposal is passed by the school board to convert from a K-2 to K-5 configuration, these students would return to Deerfield to make up three sections at each grade level. All students attending North and South would attend K-5 at Arbor Park.

Please select here to view Building assignments.

[Arbor Park](#)

[Deerfield](#)

[South](#)

[North](#)

The School Board will discuss the Ad Hoc Recommendation and determine if more time and investigation is needed. [Here is a link to an informational press release and questionnaire.](#)

[Please select here to complete Questionnaire:](#)

Below are the questions will will be asking.

Please share benefits in having a K-5 elementary school.

What questions or concerns would you like to have addressed if Blair Community Schools changes from a K-2 to a K-5 configuration and uses Deerfield for all students who have

attended there and Arbor Park for all students who have or will attend North and South Primary?

Please share benefits in having a K-5 elementary school.

Please share benefits of expanding space for preschool and early childhood at South.

The school board could also decide to make a motion to take action to initiate the recommendation. Here is a possible motion.

I make a motion for Blair Community Schools to change the elementary grade level configuration from a K-2 to K-5 and designate Arbor Park and Deerfield to be K-5 buildings, South be an Early Childhood Center and Preschool to address expanding preschool needs, and for the District Office and Skills Academy be at North to support students with behavioral needs effective during the _____ school year.

If growth is to occur in the future, four additional classrooms will be built at Deerfield using the building fund. This would provide four sections at each grade level.

8.9. Approval of New Teachers

8.10. Acceptance of Resignations

A letter of resignation has been received from Dr. Ryan O'Grady, Director of Special Education and Student Services, effective November 14, 2022.

8.11. Strategic Plans & District Goals

Strategic Plan Update & District Goals Update

8.12. Superintendent Report

8.13. Informational Items

Monthly Board Report

- Blair High School
- Otte Middle School
- Arbor Park Intermediate
- K-2 Primary Schools

9. Adjournment