

SUPERINTENDENT'S POST, JUNE 2017

By Chuck McCauley | Bartlesville Public Schools

As June nears its end, so does the fiscal year for Bartlesville Public Schools. It has been an interesting year in Oklahoma with all of the turmoil and last minute changes made at the state level for this fiscal year and budgeting for next fiscal year.

However, with the reductions we made to our 2016-2017 budget, we should finish the year at a 7% fund balance, the safe minimum. A year ago we finished below a 6% fund balance, and our goal for this year was to bring that to 9%. We would have hit our target this year, except we collected almost \$700,000 less in state aid than we did in the 2015-2016 year.



Our budget priorities for 2017-2018 are to rebuild the district fund balance, protect existing programs, expand STEM curricula into the elementary schools, expand use of instructional technology, maintain class sizes, provide salary increases, and improve school culture.

With no control over the state's budget, local control is essential. When our community votes to pass bond issues, it gives us the opportunity to use those funds where the state fails us.

Bond dollars are helping Bartlesville schools pay for things such as carpet and HVAC upgrades, the expansion of STEM courses, Chromebooks for secondary school students, repurposing spaces for music programs, replacing the Doornbos track and old tennis courts, building a new softball locker room, replacing our decrepit bus fleet, and many other updates throughout the district.

However, bond funds do have restrictions, such as how they cannot pay salaries. It is increasingly difficult to attract and retain teachers with the low salaries in our state. Our legislators and governor promised a teacher pay raise and put forward multiple pay raise plans during this year's legislative session, ranging from \$500 per year for 10 years to a single raise of \$10,000. Yet, not one included a viable means for funding the raises.

Community support in Bartlesville this year was yet again integral to our success. With the Bartlesville Public School Foundation's recent Challenge Grant and a supplemental donation of \$35,000 from ConocoPhillips, we will be able to bring STEM learning to all elementary school classes through Project Lead the Way (PLTW) modules, which include the use of iPad applications.

Enrollment in STEM courses continues to rise. In the 2015-2016 school year, there were about 600 students enrolled in STEM courses in middle school and high school. The next year, we added a new STEM course at the high school level and doubled our middle school STEM offerings, which also more than doubled the STEM enrollment to 1,373 students for 2016-2017. For 2017-2018, there will be two new courses at the high school and expanded offerings at the middle schools. We project this will boost the district's STEM enrollment to 2,273 students.

In August, every high school freshman will receive a Chromebook during registration when a parent or guardian is present. This is the beginning of a multi-year rollout plan, funded by the most recent bond issue.

The Bartlesville Public School District puts value in educating and enriching lives, and we couldn't do it without the Bartlesville community.

Go Bruins!

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