**Incoming Spencer County Board of Education Members**

**Quick Reference Sheet January 22, 2015**

**I. New Elementary School**

Now that the McAllister Property has been selected as the future site of our new elementary school, this board will have the distinct honor of moving into a major construction project. Currently, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is in the process of reviewing a long list of contingencies found in 702 KAR 4:050 before the purchase of the property becomes official. In the very near future, a site visit will be scheduled by our architects to review and tour other elementary schools designed by this firm to begin the discussion of building design. As the Board of Education considers systems and blueprints, TES will be assembling an Ad-Hoc Committee of stakeholders to consider day-to-day needs of an efficient learning environment. Although a progressive goal, if we can break ground in the spring, the building should be ready for occupation by the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

**II. Technology**

In response to the TELL Survey of 2 years ago (TELL is a mandated stakeholder survey of working conditions by staff completed every 2 years; due again this spring), a technology management audit was performed earlier in the fall to identify specific issues with efficiency, user friendliness, and productivity as a viable instructional resource. Key findings suggest Spencer County does in fact have adequate hardware, but not necessarily the infrastructure to properly utilize the hardware. In short, bandwidth has been addressed to produce more opportunities for streaming, a new website will launch at the end of the month to create a more effective tool for all users (including parents), the Technology Department has been readjusted to define specific roles at the district and school levels, and as a bonus, I attended a mandatory seminar by the Kentucky Center for School Safety which gives us permissions to utilize their on-line bullying prevention tool which can be accessed from the main page of the new website by entering the S.T.O.P. icon.

**III. College and Career Readiness**

As a primary point of emphasis with Senate Bill 1, we have been working diligently to provide dual credit opportunities and expand CTE services at the high school by adding health services 2 years ago as a career pathway. More recently, we have added educational technology as another pathway and created a position of a College and Career Readiness Coach to track the success and maximize the opportunities available for all SCHS students prior to graduation. This has been accomplished by recognizing the value and supporting the recommend initiatives from general fund expenditures above and beyond the staffing allocation to aggressively address the need for a career and technical identity for students not wishing to pursue a traditional, 4-year higher education degree. As the identity and rapid success of SCHS has grown in recent years, so has the enrollment as membership stands at 847 which includes several non-resident students who have requested permission to attend SCHS from bordering districts because of the various educational initiatives in place.

**IV. Finance**

The single most important component as a Board of Education member is that of an advocate for student needs and resources by assuming the role as gate-keeper of taxpayer dollars. That said, finance affects every component of the district in one way or another. For all practical purposes, there are three separate budgeting cycles that we work through. The first is the draft budget which no longer needs formal action by statute, but is merely a snapshot review of receipts and expenditures; an item prepared for review in January. Recognizing that legislation later in the spring usually affects district budgets, the draft budget cycle is simply a review of receipts and expenditures based on the prior year. The next formal cycle is that of the tentative working budget which is due by May 30th. As the General Assembly has now finished their business in Frankfort and laws affecting district budgets are known at this time, as well as the adoption of staffing allocations for the upcoming year (which is roughly 80% of the district budget) now complete, this cycle provides more direction because we now have critical information impacting the budget. The third and last cycle is the working budget which is due September 30th and reflects the final product. Information that isn’t known during the tentative budget such as federal grants, increase/decrease in student enrollment, and adoption of tax rates are now figured in to make the budget cycle complete.

Each month, financial statements are prepared for your review and action. Because of the accounting software utilized and the restrictions to it, if you have specific questions as to receipts or expenditures by the district, schools, or even a sport or organization associated with the schools, it is best to call or e-mail ahead of time for clarification as there is no access to the MUNIS software at the meeting sites. As it relates to general process and protocol, as long as the budget “code” reflects the proper amount to cover cost, the Superintendent has the authority as the executive officer of the board to make purchases up to $20,000 without additional action. However, because of the need for appropriate checks and balances, I have made it a point of order the past eight years to bring any new general fund purchase exceeding $5,000 to the board for approval. Furthermore, all of my Program Director’s must abide by this as well since adopted protocol for purchase orders require my signature on any purchase throughout the district exceeding $5,000.

Additional background information that might be helpful to you is that through the expectation of efficient spending, as well as an established process for extended requests beyond regular and mandated allocations submitted to SBDM, we have gone from a $650,000 contingency in 2006 before my arrival to a contingency of 3.1 million currently. Because of the recession, unfunded mandates, and the various financial challenges from both the state and federal government that have been passed down for local districts to absorb, previous boards have done an outstanding job in providing revenue streams while advocating for student resources. Through efficient spending, effective monitoring, and sometimes unpopular actions, we are currently able to withstand the reductions and absorb costs without adversely affecting the overall product; student achievement. As a final point of emphasis in consideration of our new elementary school project, current bonding potential is now at 18 million.

**V. Athletic Trainer**

Throughout the fall semester, we have entertained discussions on various occasions regarding the need of an Athletic Trainer for SCHS student/athletes. Currently, both physical therapy companies in Spencer County have provided limited services upon requests free of charge. Discussions about choosing one for paid, contractual services were met with innuendos of litigation from the other. At the heart of the claim was “services below market value,” offered primarily because the athletic trainer would have the first available option of funneling student-athletes to the physical therapy location of his or her employment, thus leaving the other without the possibility of attracting business. Although legal counsel isn’t overly concerned with litigation since much of the concern revolved around Medicaid and federal reimbursement, he did remind me that anyone can present a legal claim that will ultimately take district funds to defend. Therefore, I have been working with the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB) to properly identify a certification that will serve dual purposes of creating yet another Career Pathway for our technical students at SCHS (Sports Medicine), while retaining the ability to serve as an athletic trainer for the district beyond the afternoon classroom bell. My recommendation will not be to consider contractual services at this time from either physical therapy entity in hopes that we can consider the alternate scenario described above for the 2015-2016 school year.

**VI. SPGES**

Although you will be hearing more about this in the near future, allow me to quickly summarize. This is the new Superintendent Professional Growth and Effectiveness System; in short, the tool for Superintendent Evaluation. This is the first year of SPGES use in Spencer County after development at the state level to streamline the evaluation process of teachers, principals, other administrators, and Superintendents. This process is designed at all levels to look at fewer components, but a much deeper, more intentional emphasis on indicators defining highly effective personnel to use as an ongoing plan of professional growth.

**VII. Academics**

1) K-Prep – This is the new assessment system mandated by Senate Bill 1 based on a national curriculum rather than a standardized, “Kentucky only” curriculum that now measures growth individually, as well as collectively on a norm-referenced scale. There are various components to the K-Prep system and the spring of 2012 was the first time it was utilized across the state. As a result, the only two districts in the entire OVEC region, as well as surrounding counties not in OVEC to score Proficient were Spencer and Oldham County. The current cycle of testing in 2014 once again represented an area-best performance for Oldham and Spencer Counties with a state percentile rank of 89%; 1 percentage point away from distinguished distinction.

2) Summer Enrichment – This began three years ago as a result of the SBDM and BOE collaborative meeting emphasizing academic achievement. A primary problem that was identified was retention of vital information; especially by our “at-risk” population of students. The plan was to establish a 4-week course during the summer to help some of our lowest performing and/or “at-risk” students to sharpen their skills in both math and reading. Done as invitation only, the elementary schools have a very good turn-out with positive results, while SCMS is now being funded for similar strategies by the federal 21st Century Grant.

3) PLC’s - Professional Learning Communities based on grade level or departmentalized areas of the school. This common planning time for teachers revolves around student performance data and how to strategically provide opportunities for all students to master the concepts of the curriculum as dictated by age-appropriate, Common Core Curriculum documents.

4) New Teacher Cadre – Provides support for our newest teachers on a variety of “best-practice” ideas. This initiative has since been expanded to include second year teachers once per quarter as opposed to once per month like first year teachers.

5) Race to the Top (RTT)- This is a 42 million dollar federal grant that was applied for and received by various districts within the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC) and the Green River Educational Cooperative (GREC). Spencer County is one of the districts within OVEC that took advantage of this financial opportunity in order to launch an educational initiative that emphasizes student leadership and empowerment of their learning environment. This is a district-wide initiative that includes all schools and we are currently in our second year.