

Larry B. Hammond, Superintendent
Board Report
October 19, 2021

Gallatin, like the remainder of the state and nation, appears to be on a positive course with the COVID numbers. With 10 active student cases, 40 students quarantined and 3 active staff cases, we are better than anticipated after fall break. The “Test-to-Stay Program” has been effective. Mrs. Beatty and her assistants are doing a tremendous job testing, tracking and notifying parents with the unpleasant news. Ms. McCaughan, Dana and Michelle also provide assistance, with the early morning effort. Overall, parents and caregivers have been receptive to our delivery of service, to keep students in schools for in person learning opportunities. Anyone on staff may receive the brunt of the many issues weighing heavily on parents, any given day. The skill of dealing with such actions, results from a combination of training and experience in dealing with the public. Compassion for others grows with time. Gallatin staff does a GOOD job with this challenge. You can never forecast when you will interact with someone having a “bad hair day”.

The opportunity to determine whether or not to utilize some of the ARP ESSER funding for facility upgrades, is a once in a lifetime (hopefully) opportunity, resulting from the unfortunate COVID issue. Brad Beatty seems to have prepared the RFP invitation in a manner that directed both CMTA and Trane to approach the task in a somewhat similar fashion. Both have a low end/basic option followed by a more extensive approach to the upgrade through the guaranteed energy savings concept. The development of the proposals likely cost each company a few thousand dollars, due to the expertise required in acquiring and compiling the information. Due to the cost, each company has a sincere interest in meeting the needs. The primary focus has been the high school with some differentiation in the overall scope of the project. We received \$3,301,423.00 and are allowed 16.81% indirect cost which amounts to \$475,104.19 being directed to the general fund. The ESSER Committee committed \$300,000.00 to internet services with the county and approximately 20% must be spent toward direct services to address learning loss due to COVID. This leaves approximately 2.3 million for consideration. Continuation with representatives of the board, as a committee to meet with the two companies for their presentation and discussion would be appropriate. Mrs. Burgett and Hargis were members of the ESSER Committee and would be good candidates to represent the board and bring back a recommendation. Upon selection of a firm to provide service, the board would negotiate the details for approval. The project could be minimal or expanded to meet the approval of the board. In the absence of using some of the funds to mitigate COVID, the 2.3 million would be redirected toward learning loss with a life span through 2023.

The projected contingency at the close of the school year is 1.5 – 1.6 million inclusive of the indirect cost amount of \$475,104.19. This will be of major benefit due to the tax rate and recent salary increases for bus drivers, custodians and food service staff. I have taken the liberty to inform principals that I am working with Kelley and Linda to compile

current staffing data, for in depth review to ensure staffing numbers meet the need as well as efficiency requirements of the district. I sent the following email to principals in an effort to communicate with staff regarding your plans for salary adjustments. (I am working with Kelley and Linda to gather data for review as we plan for salary schedules in the spring. The board is not expected to approve any more individual salary increases this year. I am sharing this message for your knowledge and possibly for you to share with anyone or group that may be planning to approach the board at a meeting, for the purpose of requesting an increase. The board plans to adjust the salaries to make the district more competitive through this analysis and ensuring efficient use of personnel and funds. The board is NOT planning to provide staffing allocations based on the maximum class size permitted. The members understand each school/grade level has specific needs and the necessity of evaluating the needs. Some of the verbiage previously used, may have been a little harsh or not received appropriately. Thanks for your steadfastness in leading your school toward academic achievement.)

Speed and Shelly are striving to get the three drivers trained. We have 2 ready for the written test this Friday. If they pass the written test, they can take the driving test November 8 and be ready to drive at that time. The third driver is scheduled for corrective eye surgery mid-November and will follow with the testing process thereafter. We have one additional driver candidate to train as soon as the records check is returned. I cannot compliment the drivers enough for their efforts to be in attendance every day. They realize the need to ensure students have a way to school. Commitment/attendance seems to have improved dramatically. Parents have been most understanding in the adjustments made to routes. The first route that will be changed will be 1405. Currently 1405 is running of the morning only with parents transporting children in the afternoon. The change to the food services and custodial salaries has not made the same impact as the increase for transportation. We have not received any new applicants and have actually lost one person due to personal choice for a different job. The lack of substitute teachers remains a challenge. Today we have 10 absences with 3 unfilled, tomorrow 11 absences with 3 unfilled, Thursday 13 absences with 4 unfilled and Friday 12 absences with 4 unfilled. Keep in mind the numbers typically increase as the day approaches so we typically have more than what's projected because some staff members get sick/children get sick or unexpected events occur.

Academic improvements are in the process. Systems are being developed/improved by Mr. Jury in particular, as well as other district staff. Principals are also on the task of accelerating the learning process for our students. As noted from the email I shared earlier this morning from KDE, accelerated learning is our primary focus as we refine our MTSS and PBIS models. The OVEC support staff assisting, continue meeting with us on a monthly basis as a whole. Individual meetings are also occurring with each

principal. WE are not where we belong but hand in hand everyone is focused on ensuring student needs are met and performance is increased. Please be complimentary of staff at every opportunity. They will appreciate the gratitude and work even harder as a result.