



From: Adam Larsen, Assistant Superintendent

To: Board of Education

Cc: Thomas Mahoney, Superintendent

Re: April 2020 Board Report

Learning Management System Selection

After sales calls, demos, review, and planning, we have selected Schoology for our learning management system. We believe this will bring us the tightest integration with PowerSchool, along with a full set of learning and assessment features. We are excited to begin the work to implement it.

In a normal school year, we would probably have some on-site training at the end of the year so teachers could experiment and plan with the system over the summer. We had also considered training a small group of teachers this spring so they could serve as local experts during full implementation in the fall. During the school closure, and with the likelihood that we will not be returning to school, this training will shift online. Our current intention is to work with the vendor to create an online training schedule for teachers to complete prior to the end of the year. This will provide a base level of familiarity for all teachers on a bit of a stretched timeline. For most teachers, the increased flexibility in how time is spent should make it easier to participate in self-led training.

We are at the very beginning of the onboarding process and still making early decisions on how the system will be implemented. An update provided in May will have more details on the exact timing and pace of our launch.

Remote School

We have faced many challenges in having the buildings closed and the learning moved to online. For much of the work, we have been diving into our data to answer specific questions about who needs what, where it needs to be, and when to deliver. At first, our attention was directed toward providing lunches to our students who receive free or reduced lunch when on campus. We geocoded our students and placed an overlay of these students onto a map. While no discernible patterns emerged (with nearly 50% of students on free/reduced lunch, they are scattered all over the district's boundaries), it did help us identify that we should have multiple locations for meal pickup. For all of our distribution, we have staged items at OES, DLR, Mt. Morris Estates Lot 12, and Chana Education center. Everyone involved in this project has performed admirably—building principals, foodservice, transportation, and our paraprofessional staff who are packing meals. Families have reported appreciation to us for providing these 5-day meal packs since they started.

After meal service details were ironed out, we have turned attention toward Internet availability, devices, and learning materials. Our Department of Technology staff prepared hundreds of Chromebooks for distribution, which involved pairing devices with chargers, enhancing our device tracking system, and communicating with all involved parties for smooth delivery and record keeping. One of our biggest concerns has been access for families who have limited Internet options available to them. This was an interesting question to answer because our prevailing belief has been that those without Internet lived in the areas of the district that are not served by good providers. This turned out not to be the case. When we pulled our Internet service survey data from summer registration and overlaid this on a map, we found that 63 of the 83 students who reported no Internet service available, actually lived within the limits of



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Oregon or Mt. Morris. These students would all live in the service area of Comcast, the terrestrial cable provider in our area. During the stay-at-home order, Comcast has taken two significant steps to bring Internet to people who need it. The first is making an Internet Essentials package very low-cost for a couple of months. The second is opening Xfinity access points to anyone, not just other Xfinity customers. In normal operation, the Xfinity network allows customers to sign into other access points on a sheltered wi-fi network. This permits usage when at a coffee shop or in a park with a nearby wireless signal. During the emergency, however, this access is available to anyone. Between these two options, that means that probably only 20 students live in a place where they are not able to access the Internet for free or with a low-cost subscription. In response to that finding, we placed an order with Verizon for 50 inactivated hotspots. We have the ability to turn these on when needed. These will likely arrive in the next few days, and then we will develop a plan for making them available to the families who need them.

For a rural school, we are actually positioned quite well to teach during this remote learning period. Our infrastructure, device pool, and tracking systems have all been developed over the past several years to bring us to a point where we could respond quickly and decisively to keep connected with our students. If this had occurred even five years ago, it would have been difficult or impossible to continue with any learning. We should feel a great measure of pride in how ready we were for such an event, even though we had never explicitly planned for this type of closure to occur.

Respectfully Submitted,

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