

Superintendent's Dashboard

November 4, 2016

- We have met with key stakeholders to continue to discuss potential capital project. Joe Kosiorek will be attending the meeting on Tuesday to provide additional information to the Board. He will also be meeting with Leadership Council and the middle school staff during the next several weeks to gather input.

With the recalculation of Building Aid Units (BAU) by SED, we have an opportunity to get the middle school done and do an additional \$10,000,000 of work in the high school and elementary. This could all be done with no increase to the tax levy but it would include expending the entire capital reserve. If the Board chooses this option we would recommend reestablishing a new capital reserve fund so that we would be able to start saving for phase 2 capital project work (primarily elementary).

- The employee involved in the 3020A process has requested a hearing as expected. A hearing officer will be chosen by consensus of counsel or NYSED will appoint.
- At the last meeting the Board decided to eliminate the budget committee and have all budget discussions at board meetings. It was also decided that we would maintain the other committees as they are currently organized.
- We are working with Erie 1 BOCES on a policy review. As soon as that is completed, the policy committee will meet to review and consider the recommendations. Prior to that, the Board will be receiving a revised Code of Conduct to consider.
- We have exchanged proposals for negotiations with the teachers' union and will be scheduling a meeting. Dominic D'Imperio will be attending the meeting on Tuesday and providing an update to the Board on negotiations and the personal day arbitration.

An initial meeting was held and two more are planned for November 17 and 29. Mr. D'Imperio will represent the District during these preliminary meetings.

- Interviews have been conducted for the AP/AD position and unfortunately the person offered the position declined. We will reopen the position and attempt to find a suitable candidate.

We also continue to search for a media specialist and two math teachers.

- Wayne County Sheriff Deputy Terry Pickett commenced as our SRO on Tuesday. Deputy Pickett has worked previously as an SRO in Palmyra Macedon school district.
- Norm Payne, Boces Technology Specialist, will no longer be working in the District. Boces does not have a replacement at this time. Bob and I are recommending we hire a technology coordinator through civil service as an NRW employee.
- The Board workshop will be held on November 29, 6:00 PM in the small cafeteria. Jay Rouscop will present information on our grant programs, we will share any new information as it pertains to capital project planning and members that attended the NYSSBA conference will present information gathered from the conference.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Cinda or me. Also, if you email Cinda or me a questions or request for information, please copy the entire Board as other members may have the same question.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

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|----------|---|
| 11-8-16 | BOE Meeting, 6:00 PM, HS |
| 11-10-16 | USMC Birthday |
| 11-11-16 | Veterans' Day |
| 11-16-16 | Tour of ESM Classrooms, Time TBD |
| 11-23-25 | Thanksgiving Break |
| 11-29-17 | Board Workshop, 6:00 PM, HS small cafeteria |

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Does the classroom of the future look more like a coffee shop?

Posted By *Stephen Noonoo* On October 5, 2016 @ 2:00 am In 21st Century Skills, McClatchy | [No Comments](#)

Peek inside Brittany Horning's second-grade class at L'Ouverture Elementary School, and you'll see kids sprawled on large ottomans, perched atop bouncy seats, lying back on gamer-style recliners and using footstools as makeshift desks.

It looks more like a living room or a neighborhood coffee shop – minus the whirring espresso machine – than a traditional classroom with rows of desks.

"The kids really enjoy being in this environment. It feels comfortable to them," said Janelle Roland, who oversees the school's teacher training and behavior plan.

"It's been a really interesting and fun and exciting thing to put into place."

L'Ouverture, a computer and technology magnet school near 13th and Mosley, is experimenting with flexible seating – long benches, standing desks, bouncy chairs and wedge cushions – in the hopes of encouraging creativity and collaboration.

Horning and fifth-grade teacher Candice Ulbrich ditched their stash of desks and tables this fall in favor of classroom furniture designed for lounges and common areas. This spring, the other 16 classrooms at L'Ouverture will undergo similar transformations.

The idea: Flexible seating arrangements better reflect modern, 21st-century learning styles.

Students with iPads or laptops work together more easily on a big cushion in the middle of a room than at individual desks. They talk, peer over shoulders, ask questions, share discoveries.

"They're able to sit and actually have conversations with each other about their work," said Ulbrich.

Next page: The real cost of the change

"It's just easier for them to rotate around and get another kid's point of view and to be able to explain what they're thinking."

The furniture isn't cheap. Outfitting one average classroom with pieces from School Specialty^[1], a Wisconsin-based school supply company, costs about \$10,000, Roland said.

L'Ouverture is using money from a federal grant^[2] designed to broaden appeal and boost enrollment at schools with predominantly minority student populations. Teachers said the total cost – about \$180,000 – is an investment that will pay off for students.

"It's been a game changer in my classroom," Ulbrich said. "The kids absolutely love it. It's changed their behavior, their attitudes toward learning.

"They come in very excited, ready to learn every day."

Starbucks-style seating

Flexible seating has been a part of some classrooms for several years. Reading nooks with couches, loveseats, bean bags or other seating are common in elementary school classrooms.

Last fall, in a column^[3] titled "Why the 21st Century Classroom May Remind You of Starbucks," North Dakota teacher Kayla Delzer said she re-imagined her second-grade classroom after thinking about how and why so many people choose to work at coffee shops.

"You get to choose where you sit. No one checks you in and directs you to a spot, telling you that you must sit there for the remainder of the day to do your work," Kelzer wrote.

"If you need to get up, walk around, or choose a different seat, you are free to do so. ... I looked around and thought – why can't my classroom look like this?"

Wichita district officials say more schools seem to be implementing the strategy this year. The trend reflects what's happening in many modern workplaces, which are ditching cubicles in favor of standing desks and treadmill workstations^[4].

Much of it has to do with integrating technology. At L'Ouverture, where each student has an iPad and uses it daily, teachers say traditional seating arrangements didn't work very well.

"We started noticing that our kids were becoming really isolated on the iPads, and they weren't working together," Roland said.

"We wanted to create an environment that would encourage not only the kids but also the teachers to start thinking about how we could get them to work together with the technology."

Changing the culture

At most schools, teachers add flexible furniture to their classrooms bit by bit, using their own money or repurposing pieces from friends, family members and yard sales.

Melissa Weigant, a second-grade teacher at McLean Elementary in north Wichita, said she tried a few pieces last year for students who tended to fidget in their seats. This fall, she and her teaching partner decided to take the concept classroom-wide.

They said it has been popular with students and their families.

"Parents agreed that they would have been so much more successful in school if they had had this option," Weigant said. "It's all about giving the students choices and allowing them to learn where they work best."

Elisha Schlesselman, a McLean second-grader, said she doesn't miss desks and chairs.

"We have an awesome classroom," she said. "It has a lot of fun ways to sit."

Zoe Hollinger said she likes exercise balls instead of chairs "because you can bounce on them a little.

"They are squishy, and you can move them around the room where you want," she said.

"Your body can be flexible, and you can move around while you work," added student Talyn Thul.

In Horning's classroom at L'Ouverture, a morning reading lesson sounds pretty typical.

"How do we change 'hop' to 'mop'?" the teacher asks, pointing to a list of words on the smart board.

But the flurry of eager hands comes from various directions – the floor, two tables, several curved-cushion recliners.

One girl, hopping up and down on a mushroom-shaped stool, says, "Get rid of the 'h' and add an 'm.' "

"That's right," Horning says with a smile and writes "mop" on the projector.

Roland said L'Ouverture has learned some valuable lessons from the two classrooms piloting the flexible furniture this fall. For example, vinyl coverings wear better and clean more easily than fabric, she said.

Overall, though, teachers are excited to give the new furniture arrangements a try, she said.

"It has changed our building's culture," Roland said.

"We have fewer students who are absent, fewer who are tardy. We have kids that are staying in the classrooms instead of needing to be removed from the classrooms because of behavior" problems, she said.

"So for us, in this building, it has changed our culture dramatically."

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URLs in this post:

[1] School Specialty: <http://www.schoolspecialty.com/>

[2] money from a federal grant: <http://www.kansas.com/news/article1124372.html>

[3] column: <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2015-10-01-why-the-21st-century-classroom-may-remind-you-of-starbucks>

[4] standing desks and treadmill workstations: <http://www.kansas.com/living/health-fitness/article1144097.html>

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