SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS: NOAH STRAWHACKER

The board recognized Fishers Junior High student Noah Strawhacker on Wednesday. Strawhacker is a talented eighth grader who plays cello in the FJH strings orchestra. In addition to playing, he also composes music. Strawhacker was recently recognized by the Indiana Music Educators Association at their annual IMEA conference in Ft. Wayne, IN. His composition, "Astrea," was the winning submission in the Middle School String Orchestra category. His piece was selected out of 75 other submissions, and Strawhacker was one of three statewide winners. Strawhacker told the board this was the first time his work had been recognized, but Fishers Junior High Music Teacher Amanda Cornet adds "it won't be the last." Click here to listen to his composition.

NEW FHS FOOTBALL COACH

Fishers High School has a new Head Varsity Football Coach. The appointment was made official on Wednesday. Curt Funk will replace Rick Wimmer, who announced his retirement from the position in early December. Funk has spent the past 10 seasons as the Head Coach for Mississinewa High School in Gas City, IN. During that time, Funk led the Indians to a 77-36 record and won the 4A Sectional Championship in 2017 and 2019. Funk served as the Defensive Coordinator for the 2017 North All-Star team. In addition, Funk has been the Head Wrestling Coach for Mississinewa for the past four seasons. Prior to Mississinewa, Funk was a teacher and assistant coach at Mooresville High School (‘06-’10), Muncie Southside High School (‘05-’06), and Bluffton High School (‘03-’05). Funk is a 2003 graduate of Purdue University with a BS in Industrial Technology Education and holds a K-12 certification in physical education. Funk will teach in the physical education department at FHS."With a winning record over the past nine (cont.)
High School Rental Device

Director of Educational Technology Jeff Harrison presented a recommendation to the board for new high school rental devices starting in the 2020-21 school year. Right now, high school students can either BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) or rent a laptop from the district for $90 per year. According to Harrison, the current laptops have slow processors and it’s becoming increasingly difficult to find replacement parts for the aging devices. On average, the district spent $193 per device in repairs in the past year. With keeping the rental cost at the same amount, Harrison recommended the district offer iPads with external keyboards to high school students instead of a laptop. A pilot study was conducted with 91 students. Harrison surveyed the participants after four-weeks and 85% of the students chose to stay with the iPad instead of switching back to a laptop rental. The board had several questions regarding both devices. No vote was taken and Harrison was asked to bring more information on the cost of upgrading the district’s current laptop rentals to the March 11 meeting.

SCHOOL START TIMES

Superintendent Dr. Allen Bourff presented two different start time options at the Board’s request. After a lengthy discussion, board members voted to implement the Option 2 schedule for School Year ‘20-‘21 only. Rather than commit to a “flipped” schedule for School Year ‘21-‘22, the board approved the creation of a study committee to review data from other school districts already using a “flipped” schedule, explore other options such as walking zones and attendance clusters; and examine alternative grade level assignments for buses. The work of that study committee will inform a recommendation that Bourff will bring to the board in October. This recommendation, supportive of the research on sleep patterns and needs for youth, will be for school year ‘21-‘22.

The start times for the next school year will be the following:

- **High School** 7:30 AM – 2:30 PM
- **Intermediate/Jr. High** 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
- **Elementary** 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

With this schedule, HSE will implement a three-tier transportation system that includes the following advantages:
- Provides a consistent student day with no need for early release.
- Provides professional development time for teachers and staff and eases the need for substitutes.
- Relieves demands of the bus drivers required to transport students and allows for direct bussing for Student Choice at the high schools.

Please monitor the HSE Schools website and school newsletters for more information on this topic in the coming months. (Click here for a detailed look at the options presented to the school board.)

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FJH UPDATES CONTINUE

Bids have been received for Phase 3 of the academic corridor at Fishers Junior High. The board approved awarding the contract to SCS Construction Services, Inc., as the lowest responsible qualified bidder. The total cost for this project will be $368,300.
NEW PARTNERSHIP

Hamilton Southeastern Schools is preparing to expand its offerings to students through a partnership with Hub & Spoke and Purdue Polytechnic. Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Dr. Jan Combs updated board members on Wednesday. Combs explained that while Purdue Polytechnic is a charter school sponsored by Purdue University, Hamilton Southeastern Schools does NOT plan to use it as charter school opportunity but rather as a program that serves students from both high schools and is housed at Hub & Spoke. She added that this is NOT a new high school, but a program for students at both FHS and HHS, serving freshman only for the 2020-21 school year. A grade cohort will be added each year until 9-12 is represented.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Dr. Allen Bourff went over several matters with board members during Wednesday's meeting, which included:

- A team from Teaching and Learning is currently at a conference learning about methods of assessment for areas that don't get normally get examined. The teachings will be put to use in forming the assessment piece of Portrait of a Graduate.
- The board will be reviewing the MOU with Purdue University at its February 18 Board Work Session.
- Board members are invited to attend a Central Office safety training since they spend many hours in the building following the Board Work Session.
- Fishers High School is hosting its annual Black Heritage Celebration. This year's theme is 'Black is...' It starts at 6:30 PM with the formal program getting underway at 7:30 PM.
- The HSSF Game Day at Conner Prairie is on Friday, Feb. 21 at 6:00 PM.