

1. Hello Black River Falls Community! This is Dr. Shelly Severson, Superintendent of the School District of Black River Falls, and I'm here to share this week's Spotlight on Schools! This week I want to highlight some of the ways we have shifted in order to engage more families into their child's education!

Last evening, Red Creek hosted students and families at Cain's Apple Orchard in Hixton. Cain's is the perfect place to spend a fall evening and we greatly appreciate their hospitality! There were wagon rides, snacks, activities, and of course delicious apples. Why do we spend the time and energy putting events like this together? Because we are working really hard to build a sense of community not only among our students during the day, but among all of our families throughout the community! I've said this hundreds of times over the years and it is still just as true as it was the first time; schools exist to serve the communities that support them. AND...we know that kids excel and achieve more when their parents make it a priority to work in partnership with schools!

Last school year we had three large family events that we are hoping have become traditions within our schools and community. The apple orchard is one, in the winter there was a fantastic night of sledding, hot chocolate, snow sculpture, snow snake, and families visiting and engaging together. In the spring we held the carnival type event that was outdoors between Red Creek and Forrest Street. There were hot dogs for dinner, bounce houses, lacrosse, raffle baskets, face painting, bean bag toss games, and other quick simple games. Again, our staff is working to give students and their families an opportunity to get to know one another and to see the staff in a different light. Strong communities create strong schools - and vice versa! We appreciate our staff investing the additional time to put these happenings together and we hope that you do as well.

This year we are also trying something a bit new with our Student Success, or Parent Teacher Conferences. The elementary schools have made a shift from all conferences being in the evening, to also offering conferences in the morning as some parents have been requesting. Our first round of elementary conferences are scheduled for Thursday, October 26th from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. They are highlighting agricultural educational activities by having stations set

up in the commons area during conferences. Parents can drop their child off in either Red Creek or Forrest Street's commons area while they attend conferences with the teacher and stop back to pick up after their scheduled time with the teacher.

The Middle School and High School are both doing a combination of things in an attempt to connect with all families and share their child's progress. They will hold traditional conferences in the schools on October 12th, then during the second trimester they will hold conferences at the D1 Center of the Ho-Chunk Nation. Their final round of conferences for the year will be a combination of meetings, phone calls, and virtual meetings throughout a week in April. Once again, our goal is to continuously work to meet our parents in whatever way works for them!

As I shared in the beginning of the school year, all of these conversations will also reinforce the critical importance of ATTENDANCE! Just getting kids to school more often will make a significant difference!

Finally, for any parents still looking for ways to get involved, the TCO, or Tiger Community Organization, is really making things happen! There are ways to volunteer in a way that is sure to fit around your schedule. One event that they launched this year was a picnic for all of our incoming 4K families! What a great way for families to connect as their children are just starting their educational journey together.

In closing, today is a professional development day in the District, which means all staff are focused on learning new skills to be able to better serve our students and families. I had the privilege of sharing some time and conversations this morning that just reinforces how many amazing educators we have on our team! I am filled with gratitude for those that choose to be a part of the Tiger Team!

As always, if you have any questions about this or anything else within the District, please don't hesitate to reach out. Thanks for all you do to support our kids and let's show our Tiger Pride in all that we do!

2. Hello Black River Falls Community! This is Dr. Shelly Severson, Superintendent of the School District of Black River Falls, and I'm here to share this week's Spotlight on Schools. This coming week we celebrate School Boards around the state of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Association of School Boards, or WASB, has designated Oct. 1-7 as Wisconsin School Board Week as a time to build awareness and understanding of the vital function an elected board of education plays in our communities. The School District of Black River Falls is joining all public school districts across the state to celebrate Wisconsin School Board Week to honor local board members for their commitment to Black River Falls and its children. It takes strong schools to build a strong community, and these individuals devote hours of their time to ensure our schools are fulfilling the mission of helping all students reach their potential!

The National School Board Association has identified several areas as the key works of school boards;

1. Vision - the work of the Board around creating and articulating the type of school district they are working to create, is foundational to the work within the organization. Boards are more successful working on the vision when they engage community partners in this work!
2. Accountability - includes things like focusing on student results, measuring success by improved student achievement; both progress and outcomes, constructing high standards, informs instruction but does not drive it, and ensures multiple measures to determine student progress.
3. Policy - there is a quote that says, "Vision without action is a dream, and action without vision is aimless...board policies represent the intersection of vision and accountability." The policy work of the Board is one of its most critical functions. Through policy, the Board communicates key pieces of district leadership and direction.
4. Community Leadership - As Board Members, those serving in this role are expected to build public support for public education, promote the SDBRF, make decisions based on fact and data - not on advocacy from individuals, and above all else,

collaborate with the staff and the public to strengthen those relationships.

5. Relationships - the leadership roles between the Board of Education and the Superintendent are significantly interconnected. Boards hire and evaluate the superintendent as well as work to provide clear direction and expectations. Boards make policies and Superintendents administer policy. The goals between these two entities should be the same and our work is overlapping.

If you have ever considered serving our community as a member of the Board of Education, please know that the timeline comes up very quickly! December is the time to stop in to the District Office and pick up your candidacy forms and they are due back the first Tuesday in January in order to be on the ballot for the April election.

Even though we make a special effort to show our appreciation in October, their contribution is certainly a year-round commitment! We appreciate the service of our elected officials!

Our current Board of Education Members are:

- Brad Dobbs, Board President - Member since 2021
- Tom Epps, Vice President - Member since 2021
- Nick Helstad, Treasurer - Member since 2022
- Mary Jo Radcliffe, Clerk - Member since 2012
- Mary Jo Rozmenoski - Member since 2008
- Jenette Simonson - Member since 2023
- Ifikhar Memon - Member since 2023

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