



AUSD promotes positivity, hears about new program for English language learners

By: Tricia Caspers of the Auburn Journal

The code of conduct – It's how school staff expects its students to behave, as well as the consequences if those expectations aren't met. Each year, schools in the district are required to present their codes of conduct to the Auburn Union School District trustees for approval, and the 2016-17 codes of conduct were approved at the last district meeting. There are some significant differences between the schools' expectations, according to Trustee Julann Brown.

"I'm happy to see that there's a movement away from taking recess away," Brown said. "I encourage that to continue.

"Rock Creek and Auburn Elementary schools were praised by the trustee for their use of positive language and expectations.

The district would like to see each school move away from "don't do this and don't do that," said Superintendent Wendy Neade. "Of course there are going to be consequences" when students make poor choices. District staff will approach schools with suggestions for positive expectations, Neade said. "Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support is how we set up kids to be successful," Neade said. "(The idea is) to catch them before they fall." Schools will also be asked to create Spanish versions of their codes of conduct as well.

In other items

· Rock Creek Elementary School is piloting a new program for English language learners. Principal Suzanne Flint and English language development teacher, Cathy Sale, presented the program to the trustees.

Because English language learners were not progressing into English fluency at a very high rate, Sale now goes into the students' classrooms and acts as a coach to each teacher. She, the teacher, and a few aides also work with students in small groups based on academic level.

In the past, the students were pulled out of class and went into Sale's classroom. With the new model, students learn that speaking English isn't something that happens separately from the other subjects they're learning, Sale said. It's required for science, math and social studies, too. Plus, the teacher learns new teaching tools. Rock Creek is piloting the program for the district because 70 percent of its population is currently learning English. The 30 percent of the students who are native English speakers benefit from the program, too, Sale said. "Strategies for teaching English learners are strategies that benefit all students," Neade agreed.

This school year, 25 students have been promoted out of the ELL program, Sale said. The district hopes to hire more ELL coaches for other schools in the future.

· Trustees approved the refinancing of \$6 million in debt at an interest rate of less than 2.5 percent, down from an average of more than 4 percent. The district refinanced \$15 million in 2015, but was unable to refinance the current \$6 million at that time. The district was required to pay refinance fees, including a \$10,000 fee to lock in the low interest rate. The new loan will save the district \$800,000 in the long run.

· The 2016-17 calendar was approved after much collaboration.

· Vacant seats for clerk Woody Hoffman and President Sandra Scott will be placed on the November ballot.

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