

Board impressed by technology

One of the highlights of Tuesday's board meeting was a presentation by Tammra Niederhauser on ways that she uses technology to enhance learning in her second grade classroom at Mountain Green Elementary School. Niederhauser's presentation included a number of learning activities that were displayed on her "Smart Board" as well as testimonials by several other teachers on the value of technology in their classrooms. During the presentation, Mrs. Niederhauser also used the audio enhancement equipment designed to help each student clearly hear the teacher's voice.

Principals Laraine Whitear, Tom McFarland, Ken Adams, and Assistant Principal Terry Allen presented their school's School Land Trust Fund proposals. Each school in the state is given an allocation of funds that is then used to meet core academic priorities as set by the community councils in each respective building. The allocations are determined by combining a guaranteed minimum with the school's student enrollment. The amount of money available to public education is based on the revenues gained from the School Land Trust program including the interest on various investments. For the 2010 – 2011 school year, Morgan School District schools are scheduled to receive a total of \$131,456. The individual school allocations range from a low of \$24,177 at Mountain Green Elementary School to a high of \$39,302 at Morgan High School. Individual plans that include the details on how the funds will be spent are available at each school, the district office, or on line at www.schoollandtrust.org.

Superintendent Wolff and D'Lynn Poll provided the Board with an update on various bills that have been passed or are still being considered during the current legislative session. They both indicated that the legislative session has turned out to be far better than expected. Although the funding will be slightly less than what public education received during the current year, it will be far better than what has been anticipated. They noted that a key issue will be how the available funds are distributed, sighting the fact that although current year funding remained as budgeted, the district lost \$56,143 when various funds were recently adjusted.

Wolff gave a great deal of credit to Representative Mel Brown for being a strong advocate for public education and doing a significant amount of work helping future public employees avoid significant cuts in their retirement program. He also indicated that most of the major education bills that remain were originated in the House and are currently in the Senate where Senator Allen Christensen's vote is extremely important. Wolff indicated that he is in regular contact with Senator Christensen.

The Board held a work session before the regular meeting and then returned to the work session following the end of the regular meeting to discuss another topic. Members of the community attended and participated in both work sessions. The Board also reviewed their work session discussions during the regular board meeting.

During the work session, the Board saw pictures of potential school sites along Morgan Valley Drive. Since the last article in the *Standard-Examiner*, two additional landowners have indicated an interest in selling a portion of their land for a school site. Board members and Karen Sunday from the Morgan County Council discussed the possibility of creating a recreation district. During the regular meeting, action was taken to support this concept.

Also during the work session, the Board discussed the moratorium on out-of-state travel (for students) that has been in place during the 2009-2010 school year. The moratorium is scheduled to sunset on May 28. Superintendent Wolff had requested a discussion on this topic due to the fact that requests for the 2010-2011 school year can be heard during the April board meeting. Although no action was taken, only board member Neil Carrigan questioned the wisdom of allowing the moratorium to sunset. If the moratorium does sunset, groups will again be able to travel out-of-state following the district's established policy. Those groups, who would have been able to travel during the current school year if the moratorium hadn't been implemented, will be considered first. During the "Citizen Participation" section of the regular meeting, Kathy Garfield and Jann Farris spoke in favor of lifting the moratorium for all activities at the high school.

D'Lynn Poll discussed the need to continue the process of installing a fire suppression system at Morgan High School. She will begin the process of obtaining bids immediately.

Also during the work session, Board Member Ken Durrant questioned why the issue regarding the location of the prom had never been brought back to the Board for approval. The 2008 prom was the first to be held outside of Morgan. It was approved on a one-time basis. Since then, the 2009 and 2010 proms have been held in Ogden. Durrant asked that this issue be placed on the agenda for the April meeting. A discussion regarding the site for graduation, after the Class of 2010, will also be on April's agenda. Last summer, Board Member Earl Ericksen expressed concerns regarding the ability of the high school facility to continue to host the ceremony as graduation classes continue to grow. Principal Adams indicated there are a number of people who raise this question each year.

The Board scheduled a work session for Monday, March 29 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of discussing priorities in several different areas of personnel as well as potential funding sources for each area. The work session deals with the 2010-2011 school year and is open to the public. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held on April 13.