

# Let's Talk



## Monthly Updates from Your Superintendent

December 1, 2010

The first snow has fallen and the students at Belding Area Schools (BAS) have wrapped up the first trimester of the 2010-2011 school year. As we are now in the holiday season, I feel compelled to share how grateful I am for the children we serve that come to us each day ready to learn and do their best. I am also grateful for a wonderful staff that put the needs of our children at the forefront of their thoughts and actions each day. I am confident and appreciative that the entire BAS family works each day to make sure our students get the skills they need to prosper in an ever-changing world. Each and every one of us - parents, students and staff alike are working tremendously hard to ensure success of our kids.

### Extra-Curriculars

Congratulations to the Marching Redskins for a wonderful performance at Ford Field. They finished 3rd in the state in Flight IV. Lots of hard work went into this accomplishment. The crowd was in awe of our masked musicians. Congratulations also to our students involved in the fall drama production of The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood. The audience was treated to a very entertaining production. Lastly, congratulations to the girls volleyball team for earning Team Academic All-State Honors.

### The Bond

Please drive by Woodview and see the progress. We are getting closer to ironing out plans for the high school and athletic fields. That project should be bid about March and work will begin near spring break. It is looking like part of our initial "growing pains" will include not having home softball; baseball or soccer contests this spring so that work can begin. We know we will lose use of facilities at some point and our construction manager would rather lose use early in hopes that we can have full use for next year rather than wait and potentially lose more than one season. Graduation will also likely need to be held in the gym (this is always the back up plan in case of rain anyhow) so that plaza work at that site can commence. In January, site visits will take place so that we may begin plans for construction and renovations at Ellis. The Middle School and Early Childhood Center will move into planning stages soon after Ellis.

### The Budget

Not much has changed with the budget since last month. We are still waiting for the Edu-Jobs money to be allocated by the state. As soon as it is actually allocated and final legislation is passed, we will include that in our budget. That will help with the million dollar plus deficit we currently have for this year. We are once again trimming down administrative expense as we will move to a shared teacher/athletic director position and eliminate the full-time athletic director. We anticipate that total cost (salary, benefits of full time position minus cost of shared position) we can save about \$41,000 yet this year and about \$99,000 next year by making this move. Our intent is to have this position filled by Christmas Break.

State Bulletin 1014 uses data relating to our audited expenditures and per-pupil revenues. Schools are funded per-pupil so this report tracks and ranks expenditures that way. For 2008-2009 (the most recent report available), Belding ranked 579th out of 775 schools for administrative and business expenses per pupil. This means 578 out of 775 schools spent more than we did on administration and business expenses and 196 spent less per-pupil on these type expenses. On the same report Belding ranked 300th out of 775 for instructional expense. This means 299 schools spent more on instructional expense per pupil than we did and that 475 spent less. For operation and maintenance, Belding ranked 556th out of 775 per-pupil.

Our annual audit (conducted by an outside agency per law) was presented to the Board of Education at the November meeting. It was a clean audit which means our finances and reporting are in good order. The audit showed that we spent down fund equity by \$507,266 last year (this means our expenses exceeded our revenues by that much for the 2009-2010 school year). The audit shows our year end fund equity to be just under 15 percent undesignated (available to spend) for the current year. We currently plan to spend this down by approximately \$600,000 this year assuming the Edu-Jobs money is allocated. We also anticipate that we will need to borrow money next fall to meet payroll for the first time in many years.

It only takes a brief visit to any one of our buildings to notice the great things that are happening at Belding Area Schools. We are charging forward in spite of the difficulties facing education in the State of Michigan. Let's keep our focus on the kids and all that they can achieve with our help – the results will be amazing. Belding Area Schools continues to be, "The right size. The right choice."

Sincerely,  
Leslie Mount  
Superintendent

 **Belding Area Schools**  
The right size. The right choice.