

THE CHARGER

Superintendent announces retirement at end of year

Emma Alderman | editor in chief

Superintendent Brad Starnes announced his resignation in an email to district employees last week.

"Prior to the November 8th BOE agenda becoming public I wanted to let you know of my retirement/resignation effective at the end of this 21-22 contract year. It has been my distinct pleasure for the past 7 years to serve as your USD 329 Wabaunsee superintendent. Together we have accomplished many good things," Starnes wrote in the email.

The hope is to have a replacement named in either December or January, with the new superintendent to begin service on July 1, 2022.

"I will cherish the friendships I've been fortunate to make at Wabaunsee. God-speed, continued prayers & direction as we all move forward. Here's to a strong finish!" Starnes wrote.

Monday night at the November board of education meeting, the board decided to use KASB to search for a new superintendent after accepting Starnes's resignation.

"Thank you for everything you have done for our district, everything you brought to our district and most of all for putting the investment in our kids and putting first things first," board member Justin Frank said.

View notes from Monday's board meeting at whscharger.com.

We the Students...

Government class proposes bills to improve school

Lauren Schutter, Eli McDaniel | sports editor, social media editor

Senior government students have proposed changes to the bell schedule, excused absences and improvements to the parking lot and volleyball equipment.

Annually, Jess Rutledge's government classes work to create bills to improve the school.

These bills are made with the idea of improving the school building, fixing or modifying school policies, or maybe proposing something new altogether. "It gives the kids an idea of what congress is like, and gives students an opportunity to change something in the school for the better," Rutledge said.

Previous year's bills have included driving during open lunch, changes to the dress code, renovations of the concession stand and changes to the student handbook.

Each government student submitted three bill ideas, then the classes' separate lists were compiled. After removing duplicates, the list for each class totaled more than 30 proposals. After about two weeks of discussions and debates among classmates, the list was narrowed down to three bills per class. Proposals that died in committee included a hybrid schedule, eliminating or moving AB, repairing air conditioning and many others.

The final six bills were sent to

principal Jan Hutley for comment at the conclusion of the project.

"I love the drop-down volleyball nets and outdoor seating," Hutley said. "I think they all had some good-spirited reasons behind them. I would love to be able to get some nicer seating.

As for the next step, Hutley said she would review the proposals and decide how to use the student's suggestions. "I take them seriously and join in on the classes. So I will go through them and consider what's possible. Some things may not be possible but I'm going to be serious about them."

RESERVED PARKING SPACES

The 2nd-hour bills focused mostly on school improvement and new ideas. The first bill proposed was that of "Reserved Parking Spaces/Decorating Spaces". Seniors first, then juniors would (in theory) have their names drawn to pick a parking spot and decorate it with paint. These stalls would be power-washed at the end of the year.

DROP-DOWN VOLLEYBALL NETS

The second bill 2nd-hour proposed was "Drop-Down Volleyball Nets". They would cost approximately \$18,000 per unit, but this price would not be without benefit. This would provide an easier setup and taking down of the nets, and also allow volleyball players or community members to play/practice year-round.

LONGER ADVISOR BASE

The final bill proposed was "Longer AB". The initial plan was to reduce each of the seven class periods by 2 minutes in order to

add 14 minutes to AB, but after a quick discussion with principal Jan Hutley it was decided to reduce the proposed time to 1 minute. Hutley worried that the lunch period would be messed with too much as the food delivery trucks are on a set schedule.

MENTAL HEALTH DAYS

The 5th-hour class had bills that revolved more around the students and their well-being. The first bill proposed was "Mental Health Days." One main reason behind this bill was to raise awareness of mental health issues and to give students a chance to take some time to de-stress or get some help.

TEACHER EVALUATIONS

The second bill the class had to offer was Teacher Evaluations. This proposal would give the students a chance to share things about teachers or classes, positive or negative. 5th-hour Government student Justin Carlson said, "I think teacher evaluations would be beneficial, also I could tell teachers how to better teach me."

UPDATE OUTDOOR SEATING

5th-hour last bill submitted was "Update Outdoor Seating". This bill would involve adding six new picnic tables along with revamping the table under the "awning" out at the front of the school. Along with that, they would like to put some sort of cover over it to give it a purpose.

Listen to seniors discuss their bills Friday on the Snioritis podcast, available at whscharger.com.

Football season ends in regionals; team sets school offensive records

The Charger football season ended Friday evening with a 33-44 loss to Lyndon in regionals. Here is a by-the-numbers story of an incredible season.

7 — Number of wins (with 3 losses). The Chargers have only surpassed the current season's win total twice in school history. The win total surpasses the combined total from the previous three seasons.

24 — Years between winning seasons. WHS hasn't won more than it lost since 1997, several years before any of the current players, and some coaches, were born.

301 — Points scored this season. This includes 42 touchdowns. "I don't know the last time we scored that many points in the season. We definitely had a lot of growth on the offensive side of the ball," coach Rutledge said.

1927 — Passing yards by Cade Oliver, just shy of the

school record of 2083, set by Oliver last season. Oliver, a four-year starter at quarterback, racked up 5424 career passing yards, also a school record. Oliver stated "It always feels good to get some of those passing records in my time here at Wabaunsee but that was never what I cared about. I've always cared a lot more about just going out there every game and playing with my teammates and doing everything we can to win games."

5 — Graduating seniors: Cade Oliver, Brayden Meseke, Aiden Boeckman, Caden Yonke and Jackson Havenstein. "I have a lot of love and respect for those guys because they came in at the same time I did as head coach. This season was a big pay off for them and their hard work, showing future players and future teams that we can win at Wabaunsee and they helped establish that standard,"

Rutledge said.

26 — Passing Touchdowns by Cade Oliver, who also added 6 rushing touchdowns this season. He found the endzone 79 times as a Charger, with 62 career TD passes and 17 rushing touchdowns.

12 — Receiving TDs by Eli Oliver "It felt like a good season. It was cool because it was my brother throwing them. I would have had more receptions if I didn't score TDs all the time," Oliver said.

474 — Rushing yards by sophomore Zach Frank. Senior Aiden Boeckman was a close second with 352. "Good offensive line obviously and hard work in the off season," Frank said.

830 — receiving yards by Brayden Meseke, who also led in total receptions with 47. Meseke pulled in 69 career receptions for 1178 yards. "I put in a lot of work in the sum-

mer working on my hands and focusing on catching the ball. I have to thank my coaches for giving me the confidence and putting me in situations where I can get open to get the ball and as well as Cade for having the confidence in me to throw me the ball."

146 — Points allowed this season. With more than half of the points coming from two games, it's clear the Charger defense was tough. The stingy defense also had three shutouts (Mission Valley, Horton and Northern Heights), including the largest margin of victory in school history in the 68-0 win over Northern Heights.

118 — Tackles by sophomore Tate Deever. Tate's approach to defense: "Let God have mercy on my enemies, because I won't. I go out there and play my game and do what I do," Deever said. "I think we can be even better next season

as lots of players step into their roles." Junior Maverick Havenstein led the team with 4 sacks.

11 — Pancake blocks by both junior Maverick Havenstein and sophomore Alex Beggs. "We did a lot better this year as a line. Our chemistry was on point. I played OK, but I know there's always room for improvement," Havenstein said.

∞ — Years since WHS or one of the original Wabaunsee County schools has won more than one playoff game in a season. After winning playoff games in consecutive seasons for the first time in school history, coach Rutledge said that's the next thing the team has in its sights. "We should have a good team coming back. We have a lot of experience and a lot of guys who were key instruments on this year's team. We are looking to continue to build off of what we were able to accomplish this year."