MEXICO SCHOOL DISTRICT #59

SUPERINTENDENTS' REPORT

DR. TROY LENTZ, SUPERINTENDENT
JULIE (LOWER) WELCH, ASST SUPERINTENDENT

February 2026

Community Engagement
On February 9, the district hosted a school finance night. 42 people attended. The response to the event was very positive. Many community groups have been engaged in the last month.

Bond Updates
The fence is being installed around the tennis courts. Additional concrete work on the north side of the courts is being scheduled. The top coat will be red and grey, and it will be applied as weather allows.

Work on the gym floor will begin during spring break. The project is scheduled to be completed before volleyball practices begin.

On February 11, a pre-construction meeting was held for the high school entryway. Bids are due March 3.

Technology
Our tech department will be advertising for bids for Chromebook replacement. The goal is to provide a new device to freshmen and sixth graders, with the expectation that they use it throughout middle and high school. Replacement Chromebooks are also needed each year. New Chromebooks with the licensing could cost up to $400 a piece. Data center construction is driving up the price of electronic devices.

Transportation
The 2026-2027 budget is being developed with the consideration of purchasing two new buses. The cost would likely exceed $300,000 and would be coded to fund 4. To purchase the buses in FY 27, bids would need to be advertised and approved this fiscal year.
The district owns 5 buses that were manufactured in the 1990's, 3 in the 00's, 14 in the 10's, and 7 in the 20's. For purposes of calculating depreciation for state aid, only 11 of our buses are benefiting the district.

Facilities
The following specifications are being developed for resurfacing and repainting the high school student parking lot. The cost of the project could reach $150,000. The cost would be included in the FY 2027 budget. The plan is to advertise for bids in March and present a bid in April. Work would begin in July after summer school concluded.

HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT – 2026: 2-INCH ASPHALT OVERLAY

- MILL 2-INCH DEPTH FOLLOWING AREAS FOR DRAINAGE / TRANSITIONS: NORTH END ALONG SIDEWALK AND IN HANDICAP AREA; NORTHWEST ENTRANCE; TWO SOUTH ENTRANCES (SEE OVERHEAD MAP).

- SWEEP AND PREP LOT.
- INSTALL PETROTAC OVER LARGE CRACKS 2-INCHES AND GREATER. ESTIMATE 1,000 LIN. FT.
- APPLY SS-1 TACK COAT AT RATE OF 0.1 GALLON PER SQ. YD.
- INSTALL 2-INCH AVERAGE HOT MIX ASPHALT IN ONE LIFT.
- STRIPE NEW LAYOUT.
- REMOVE AND RESET EXISTING PARKING BUMPERS. *

Budget Development

Notes:

- The cost of the proposed salary schedule would be approximately $369,170. Increasing the base by $1,000 would be approximately $338,024.
- A 3.5% increase to all certificated salaries (stipends, summer school, substitute teachers, tutoring, administration, etc) totals approximately $621,000.
- A 3.5% increase to non-certificated salaries would be approximately $252,569.
- Our health insurance renewal is 2.9%. Previous models used 6%. Increasing the board commitment would cost $102,000.
- The federal education budget for FY 26 has been passed. Title and special education funding were not slashed.
- MASA and the Joplin school district partnered to develop a calculation tool that allows districts to determine the impact of HB2780, a proposal to reform property taxes. If enacted, Mexico 59 would lose $709,585.
- The impact of the proposal to eliminate Missouri income tax could impact funding of the foundation formula. Income tax provides 60% of funds as the formula is presently constituted.
- On January 29, the district received its first 169-day incentive payment of $83,056.93.
- Formula payments continue to exceed the previous year. The January 2026 payment was $700,743. The January, 2025 payment was $570,758.
- Participants at the recent finance meeting responded that salaries and benefits should be the district's main priority. Support for deficit spending was communicated by stakeholders.

Curriculum & Instruction

Reading Success Plans

The February cycle of RSP core data reporting has been submitted to DESE. RSPs are required for students who score below proficiency in any of the five components of reading measured by the state-approved iReady assessment, administered in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. Each RSP outlines a targeted reading goal, primary intervention strategies, and progress monitoring measures. Students exit an RSP after achieving two consecutive assessment scores above the designated cut score. As of February, the district has 580 Kindergarten through 7th-grade students on RSPs.

Summer School 2026

Planning for Summer School is underway. Assistant Principals from HAW, EF, MMS, and MHS are serving as site administrators and are coordinating with food service, communications, and transportation to prepare for the session. Applications for certified and support staff positions were distributed to all Mexico staff this week.

Site administrators are actively promoting the program to students and families to highlight its academic benefits and enrichment opportunities. All programs will be housed in their regular school buildings, as construction will not interfere this year. The middle school looks forward to returning to its building and anticipates increased enrollment.

Community Drug Prevention Program

Dr. Lentz and I continue to participate in the Audrain County Coalition on Reducing Drugs (ACCORD), which meets monthly at the Audrain County Health Department. The coalition includes representatives from the Juvenile Office, Mexico Public Safety, the Health Department, Compass Health, and the Arthur Center. As part of this partnership, our district will implement the vaping prevention program *Catch My Breath* across multiple grade levels, from upper elementary through high school, to proactively address student health and substance use prevention.

Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (BTAP)

Our district has been approved to host our own BTAP program rather than contracting services through MSTA. This approval is due to the systematic support provided by our instructional coaches and the structured mentoring in place for our 1st- and 2nd-year teachers.

Professional Development

In February, our Professional Development Committee worked with a trainer from the Heart of MO Regional Professional Development Center to learn how effective district-level PD committees can support teachers' growth and development. The PDC will distribute a district-wide Needs Assessment to all certified staff in March to guide planning for the 2026-27 professional development calendar.

Federal Programs

The February cycle of ELL Tiered Monitoring Desk Review has been successfully completed. Currently, the district serves 114 students identified as English Learners. We employ one elementary ELL teacher, based at Hawthorne, and one secondary ELL teacher who serves both the middle and high schools.

The Corrective Action Plan for the December Title I Tiered Monitoring Desk Review is due next week. The plan will outline how the district will support 15 of our elementary paraprofessionals in obtaining the appropriate certification in a timely manner. All support staff serving students in a schoolwide Title I building must hold the required certification for their positions.