

A budget framework for the 2024-25 school year that includes a 4 percent salary increase for staff members and the pre-authorization for several summer construction projects was approved by the Neenah Joint School District Board of Education at its March 5 meeting. The Board also reviewed the staffing recommendation for 2024-25.

The budget is in very early stages with many variables that are difficult to predict, however, the framework provides an overview of the plan for 2024-25. The District plans to increase starting salaries to \$48,000, which would be the highest in the Fox Valley. All employees would also receive a 4 percent salary increase. Those at the top of their salary range would receive a 2 percent increase aligned with range increases in all employee groups. A pool of dollars would be reserved for stipends should the District exceed expectations on state report cards.

The summer maintenance projects consist primarily of parking lots and playgrounds. Tullar, Lakeview and the middle school would get new playground surfaces and parking lots would be upgraded at Lakeview and the middle school near the pool. The plan also includes an additional lot at the high school to help with overflow parking for large events.

The staffing proposal reduces the overall staffing for 2024-25 by 2.35 full-time equivalency (FTE). The reductions are due to the closure of Hoover Elementary School and the loss of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding from the pandemic. Due to the ESSER grants expiring, 4.0 FTE of math and literacy support will no longer be funded, though all employees will have an assignment due to retirements and resignations. Additionally, the District plans for the addition of three full-time special education teachers as well as the addition of instructors in family and consumer studies and the English Learners program.

The Board approved the strategic plan that was developed last summer. Administrators from several schools shared how their school and staff have incorporated the plan into their instruction and staff development this year.

In other action, the hire of Natalie Shea as the high school work-based and community outreach coordinator was approved. Resignations were approved for Horace Mann teacher Gabrielle Oblak at the end of the school year and middle school educational assistant Lonnie O'Bryant, effective March 1.

The Board honored senior Zach Olson for his second place finish at the state bowling championships over the weekend.