

# FLORENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT 14-1

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Mitch Reed, SUPERINTENDENT · Travis Schmidt, PRINCIPAL · Sherri Sumner, BUSINESS MANAGER

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## Dear Parents and Community Members,

I would like to share several key highlights and outcomes from our most recent School Board meeting. These discussions and decisions reflect our continued commitment to long-term planning, fiscal responsibility, and providing meaningful opportunities for our students.

### Facilities Planning and Building Improvements

The Board engaged in an in-depth discussion regarding CO-OP Architecture master planning and future building needs. Our architect from CO-OP joined us to review preliminary plans and potential directions related to HVAC improvements and overall facility upgrades. As part of this discussion, we reviewed Certificates of Obligation options in the amounts of approximately \$400,000 and \$1.3 million. Ultimately, the Board approved moving forward with HVAC replacement, two new elementary classrooms, and a connecting hallway—an important investment in the comfort, safety, and capacity of our school facilities. The board feels that this addition is needed to maintain our students' educational experience, not to foster further growth in our district. These two classrooms would already be used if they were available.

### Transportation Update

We continue working toward hiring an additional bus driver. The candidate is currently completing testing and required training, with the goal of being on route by February 1. In addition, the district can purchase a minibus from Duenwald Transportation at a very good price. This bus would provide added flexibility in daily routes and substitute coverage, while coming in well below the typical market value. The Board decided this opportunity is a cost-effective improvement to our transportation fleet.

### Legislative Matters

The Board discussed current legislative proposals, including the Governor's proposed 0% increase and several bills that may impact school funding. These include potential changes to property tax levies, revisions to state aid and special education funding formulas, and tax considerations related to data centers. We will continue monitoring these discussions closely, as they may have long-term implications for school districts across the state.

### Enrollment and Financial Update

We are encouraged by recent enrollment interest, with several new families touring the school across multiple grade levels. From a financial standpoint, the Board received an update on unbudgeted revenues and expenditures. To date, the district has received approximately \$178,000 in additional revenues and invested roughly \$110,000 in building improvements, staffing, and other needs. Much of this spending is non-recurring and positions the district positively for the upcoming budget cycle. Much of that money will be obligated next year for the new building project, which will cost approximately \$100,000 over the next 20 years.

### Dual Credit, Home School, and Online Learning Policies

The Board acknowledged updates to our Dual Credit policy, allowing students enrolled in dual credit courses to leave campus on Thursdays and Fridays during their scheduled dual credit periods. This does not include other online students who are taking them within the building. We also discussed updates to eligibility language to ensure clarity and consistency. Additionally, the Board recognized the evolving landscape of homeschool and

online student participation. Given the limited statewide guidance, Florence School District will continue to establish policies and procedures to ensure fairness and opportunity for all. Mr. Schmidt and I will draft proposed policies related to participation and student recognition for further review next month.

**Board and Community Governance**

The Board set the joint School Board and Town Council election date of June 2<sup>nd</sup> and appointed election officials. Terms for Cory Rislov and Scott Maag will be expiring.

Thank you for your continued support of the Florence School District. We appreciate the trust you place in our Board, staff, and administration as we work together to serve our students and community.

Sincerely,

Mitch Reed  
Superintendent  
Florence School District