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School Board hears curriculum reports by BECKY BELL, Special to Banner-News |

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Magnolia School District Board of Education members are recognized for their volunteerism by State Rep. David Fielding (middle left) of Magnolia. Pictured (L-R) are board members Roger Loper, William Watson, Mike Waters, Steven Souter, and Lysandra Curry. - Photo by Becky Bell

Magnolia School Board members heard three curriculum reports from staff Monday on varying topics. Sonya Russell, mathematics coordinator, told board members the district is rich in data and this is an improvement over when she used to teach fourth-grade and something was just either right or wrong. This is no longer the case as data is broken down in variety of ways that help teachers know what students need.

“As a teacher I can promise we have never looked at data anymore than we are looking at it today,” she said. “Any given day if you want to come and join a meeting, I guarantee there is a group meeting and they are talking about data.”

Russell said as a mathematics coordinator, it is positive for her to see how the teachers are using the data that is being gleaned.

“It does your heart good when you walk in and they are talking about scores and strategies and making their next moves on what they saw in formative assessments. I think we are using data in a very positive way.”

Penny Talley, curriculum director, spoke about the Magnolia Reads and off-shoot of Arkansas Reads One Book. The program encourages kindergarten through sixth grade to read one book and last year the book that was chosen was “The Toothpaste Millionaire.”

Not only does the program help promote literacy and encourage parents to read to children, but it also helps expose children to financial literacy terms. The district is working in collaboration with Economics Arkansas. She said the program has shown children can pick up financial terms as early as kindergarten rather than say high school.

Kim Wyrick, curriculum coordinator talked about updates on Walker Pre-K, Mulerider Kids College and Teen College and August Professional Development.

She said one tool that is making it easy for the district and school’s to get the word out about events is the thrillshare tool. This tool allows items to be shared on the Website, the district ap, Facebook and Twitter all at one time.

She said on April 7 and April 14 there would be an open house at the Walker Pre-K Center. She said there will be an Arkansas Children’s Week from April 13-17 with a family fun day on April 17.

Mulerider Kids College and Teen College is being taken advantage of by Magnolia School District, she said. Of the 543 signed up for the program, 305 are from Magnolia. Registration for the popular classes were on March 4 beginning at 6 a.m. She said she has heard from many parents they were at their computer by that time of the morning to ensure their child got a chance to join the program.

As for August professional development, Wyrick said Gerry Brooks will be coming to the district for professional development on Aug.12. As of this morning on the district Website, 801 had signed up.

Representative David Fielding (D) of Magnolia recognized board members for their volunteerism on the board at the beginning of the meeting. Fielding presented each one with a certificate.

*This article was edited from its original version. It previously contained incorrect information regarding school bond issues, according to Magnolia Schools.*