

NOSD to add associate principals

Written by MARK JAEGER
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New positions will free administrators to spend more time to evaluate classroom performance

Citing the need for more classroom time by principals because of the commitment to a performance-based teacher evaluation program, the Northern Ozaukee School Board has approved hiring associate principals for the next school year.

One of the associate principals would work at the elementary school level, primarily coordinating the Response to Intervention plan that monitors students in need of special assistance.

The second associate principal will be assigned to the middle school and high school, with a focus on attendance and discipline. Professional staff development will be another responsibility of the new position.

The hirings reverse a district trend of reducing administrative positions, underlined by the decision to have a single principal in charge of the middle school and high school.

Supt. Blake Peuse said the change of direction is necessary because the district is committed to participating in the Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System, a labor-intensive process that will be used to determine how well teachers are performing in the classroom.

“To implement this system effectively, we must have our administrators in classrooms at least 50% of their day,” Peuse said.

Currently, he said principals squeeze about 10% of classroom observation time into their busy days.

“If we truly would like to move to a performance-based pay system, we will need to have a highly aligned process to ensure that we are making employment decisions based on good data.”

The district must also make the switch to the state-mandate Smarter/Balanced Assessment System during the 2014-15 school year, which is expected to require additional administrative time to coordinate.

The administrative positions are expected to be filled by existing staff, and will cost approximately \$34,000.

The positions were included in a series of personnel moves recommended by the Personnel and Finance/Building committees.

The district will also be adding a special-education teacher to help handle the growing number of students who need additional academic assistance at the middle and high schools.

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A half-time technology teacher will also be hired, with a primary focus in engineering and career readiness.

All of the district's retiring teachers will also be replaced.

Noting anticipated savings from the retirement of several veteran teachers, Peuse said the personnel moves would cost the district a net \$125,202 for salaries and benefits.

The School Board approved the hiring plan, with Kendall Thistle casting the lone dissenting vote.

Thistle said he opposed creating the associate principal positions.