

District enjoys ‘wildly successful’ year, Maher says

Annual breakfast event raises more than \$20,000 for education programs

The Sioux Falls School District has enjoyed two “wildly successful” initiatives during the past year, according to Superintendent Brian Maher.

Most notably, voters in the district overwhelmingly approved a \$190 million bond issue to fund building improvements, including the new Jefferson High School and Ben Reifel Middle School. Construction of the two schools is underway.

Voters approved the bond issue in September 2018 by an unprecedented margin of more than 85 percent, said Maher, who was the featured speaker at the Education Foundation’s Innovation In Education Breakfast on Aug. 1 at The Country Club of Sioux Falls.

“I’ve yet to find a bond issue anywhere in the country – and I’ve asked – with greater affirmation of a bond than the one we experienced here last year,” Maher told a breakfast crowd of nearly 200 educators and school supporters.

The other significant step that Maher mentioned was taken by the Education Foundation, which increased its fundraising ambition and community presence by hiring its first, full-time executive director. Allison Struck began her duties in July 2018, with the support of Maher and the School Board as well as the Education Foundation Board.



Superintendent Brian Maher talked to the press Aug. 1 after his speech at the Education Foundation’s annual breakfast event.

The Foundation is a nonprofit organization that is governed by its own Board but is supported and partly financed by the School District. The Foundation raises money from donors to provide grants for faculty members for educational projects not funded by tax dollars.

Maher praised the Foundation for wanting to do more for the school district and for selecting Struck as its first, full-time staffer.

The large and enthusiastic crowd at this year’s breakfast event – Maher’s fifth - was a great indicator of the Foundation’s bold move, he said.

In response to a request for funding help from Board member Anthony Pizer, breakfast attendees pledged more than \$20,000 to support the Foundation’s work. The total far exceeded Board member’s expectations.

The funding will help the Foundation provide more grants for teachers during the grant period for the 2019-20 school year.

Among the next big challenges facing the school district is the

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Coming challenge: Redrawing school attendance boundaries

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need to update and redraw school attendance boundaries, Maher said.

Factors such as increasing enrollment are driving the need for boundaries to be updated. Like during the school bond issue debate in the community, the public will be encouraged to get involved in the discussion, he said.

“We’ll do our very best to apply logic to this incredibly emotional issue. Please wish us well,” Maher said. Among other challenges the district faces is figuring out how to deal with the important societal issue of mental health, which can affect faculty members as well as students, he said.

The next big event hosted by the Foundation will be “Public School Proud ... A Benefit for the Sioux Falls Public Schools Education Foundation.” It will be a reverse raffle and student talent showcase. The inaugural event will be held from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Nov. 7 at Raven Industries in downtown Sioux Falls.

Tickets for Public School Proud will be \$100 per person and will be available through the Foundation.



Board member Anthony Pizer addresses the crowd at breakfast.

Foundation rebrands grant programs

The Education Foundation has rebranded its grant programs to “Public School Proud” to enhance public understanding of what the organization does and to reflect its pride in the school system. Grants formerly were known as Innovation in Education Grants.

“We moved away from the word ‘innovation’ because that caused some confusion. We had some applicants who assumed their grant submissions needed to be related to technology, and that’s not the case,” Executive Director Allison Struck said.

“We want teachers to bring us their next big idea, whether it’s tech-related or not. Our goal is to provide funds so that teachers can give hands-on, immersive experiences to students, whether it’s through musical instruments, robotics kits, or social-emotional learning materials.”

The name change took effect Aug. 12.

Nan Baker is new rep from School Board

Nan Baker, the newest member of the Sioux Falls School Board, also will be contributing expertise to the Education Foundation Board.



Nan Baker

Baker was assigned by Cynthia Mickelson to serve as the School Board representative to the Education Foundation. She succeeds Mickelson, who now chairs the School Board.

Baker is the mother of four children who attend public schools in Sioux Falls.

She formerly worked for CNA Surety and the Sioux Falls Arts Council. She is currently the community director of Youth Roots, a nonprofit organization that empowers young people to make a difference in their community.

She is a former Bush Foundation Fellow and a graduate of Leadership Sioux Falls. She co-chaired the School District’s Facilities Task Force, which last year presented a successful \$190 million bond issue to voters.

Baker said she looks forward to serving on the Education Foundation Board.

“What intrigued me was the potential to impact teachers and students,” she said. “That makes me part of a group of committed people with a vested interest in shaping, expanding and improving educational programs in our community.”





50 first-year teachers awarded grants to help buy supplies for classroom use

Fifty first-time, first-year teachers in Sioux Falls Public Schools each received a \$200 Public School Proud Grant at an Aug. 12 gathering.

Additional grants are expected to be awarded to other new teachers who join the faculty for the 2019-20 school year.

The first round of the grants were distributed at New Teacher Orientation, which was held at Lincoln High School. The annual classroom-assistance grants are funded by the Education Foundation with financial help from the Mary Chilton DAR Foundation. DAR stands for Daughters of the American Revolution.

The grant money is intended to help new teachers buy materials to equip their classrooms. Callie Beisch, who chairs the Education Foundation Board, and Allison Struck, executive director, made the grant presentations. Diane Josephson, who represented DAR, was among guests.

Sammons Financial Group makes \$10,000 donation

Sammons Financial Group in Sioux Falls recently stepped up with a \$10,000 donation to the Education Foundation.

The company was familiar with the Foundation from reviewing the organization's mission in 2015, when it donated \$17,500, and it recently was asked to consider making another contribution, said Tim Reuer, of the Community Involvement Committee at Sammons Financial Group.

"We knew it was a great cause and decided to support it again," said Reuer, who is also Senior Vice President and Corporate Actuary at Sammons Financial Group, which employs about 500 people in Sioux Falls.

"Teachers do a great job, but if we can help them be more effective in educating and impacting students, that's something we're excited to support," he said.

"We also saw this as an opportunity to impact many of employees and their families," he said.

Education Foundation Board members were thrilled by the contribution, which will help fund the organization's grant programs.

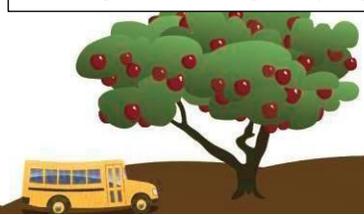
Gifts to Foundation help fund grants

Tax-deductible contributions to the Education Foundation from individuals, businesses and organizations fund grants for educational projects that benefit teachers and students in Sioux Falls Public Schools.

In addition, the Education Foundation partners with the Daughters of the American Revolution Foundation to give first-time teachers \$200 to help buy classroom supplies.

More information about the Education Foundation, its programs and how to contribute is available at the website SFEducationFoundation.org.

Questions about donation options can be directed to Allison Struck, the Foundation's executive director. She can be reached by phone at (605) 367-4484 or by email at Allison.Struck@k12.sd.us.



Teacher Swap Meet draws more than 400 people



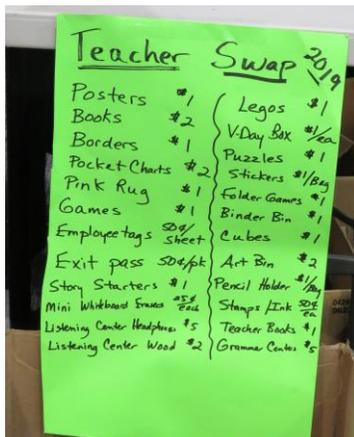
A crowd gathered early and filled a large meeting area in the Convention Center.

More than 400 teachers and shoppers from throughout the region gathered July 26 at the Sioux Falls Convention Center for the Fourth Annual Teacher Swap Meet.

The Teacher Swap Meet provides a forum for teachers to sell personal educational materials they no longer need, and it offers bargains for other teachers and shoppers.

The Swap Meet, which lasted four hours, was sponsored by Avera and hosted by the Education Foundation.

“It’s going pretty good. It’s fun,” said Christina Berger, one of the sellers. She is a third-grade teacher at Harrisburg.



Typical signage at a sales table.



Shoppers found deals on items ranging from posters to games and books.



Rhonda Wilson, a junior kindergarten teacher in Sioux Falls, was a first-time seller. She had attended prior meets as a shopper.



Jackie Lackas, a second-grade teacher from Parker, looked for bargains on nonfiction books.



Pizer brings financial expertise and experience to Board

Anthony Pizer, one of the newest members of the Education Foundation Board, looks forward to helping Sioux Falls build a better workforce for the future.

“We’re at a crossroads right now as a community. We need workforce, and a dynamic future workforce at that. So that’s where I see the work we’re doing as a Board impacting the community for years to come,” Pizer said. “We’re really building that dynamic workforce from kindergarten on. That’s something I’m really excited to be part of.”

Pizer is a financial advisor at Thrivent Financial in Sioux Falls. He joined the Education Foundation Board in May. He is a Wisconsin native and a graduate of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

He’s married to Jessica Aguilar, whose mother helped fuel Pizer’s interest in education. Sue Aguilar is a past member of the Sioux Falls School Board and is the current president of the South Dakota Board of Education Standards.

Pizer and his wife have two children: a 6-year-old son and a 3-year-old daughter. Anthony attended public schools until college and believes good local schools can change people and communities for the better.

“I just believe in the power of education to help people advance themselves and to help our community advance as a whole,” he said.

Pizer’s Education Foundation colleagues are excited about the expertise he brings to the organization.

“We are thrilled that Anthony has joined our Board,” said Allison Struck, executive director of the Education Foundation. “He’s a recent graduate of Leadership Sioux Falls, he’s made connections throughout the community, and he enjoys fundraising. As soon as we welcomed him on the Board, he was already helping us make inroads with local supporters.”

Callie Beisch, Board chair, said Pizer’s expertise and community connections will be valuable resources for the Fund Development Committee and the organization as a whole.

“We appreciate his willingness to volunteer and fundraise, and we will certainly use his many talents to support the Education Foundation’s growth plans,” Beisch said.

Fundraising will be Pizer’s priority. “My No. 1 priority is not only building the spendable funds but also the endowment,”



Anthony Pizer

he said. “I think there’s a great opportunity there.”

Raising money for grants to help first-time teachers buy classroom supplies and to fund innovative educational projects for teachers is the primary objective of the Education Foundation.

In the long run, increasing funding for the organization’s programs will help the community bridge economic-based disparities not only between schools but within the student bodies of various schools, Pizer said.

“I feel the board can really foster some public-private partnerships in order to help fill some of those gaps,” he said.

Our Board and Mission

The Education Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization endorsed by the Sioux Falls School District. It is governed by a Board of volunteers. Members are: Carrie Aaron (secretary), Reece Almond (vice chair), Nan Baker, Peggy Baney, Callie Beisch (chair), Rich Brenneman, Jackie Dumansky (treasurer), Stephanie Gongopoulos (past chair), Addie Graham-Kramer, Nancy Hagen, DeeAnn Konrad, Deb Koski, Kiki Nelsen and Anthony Pizer.

Allison Struck is the full-time executive director. Rob Swenson assists part time with the newsletter and media.

Our Mission: We champion teachers and students by encouraging, promoting and funding creative and innovative teaching strategies in order to enhance and enrich education in all Sioux Falls Public Schools.

Our Niche: We raise funds to support teachers and their impact on students.

