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J-P correspondent

- Illini West High School board accepted the resignation of Principal Scott Schneider at their regular meeting Wednesday, March 17.
  1. Schneider joined the district as principal in July 2016. He will remain through the end of this school year. Superintendent Kim Schilson said the search for a new principal would begin internally before other avenues were used.
- Schilson is retiring at the end of the school year as well. Her successor, Jay Harnack, currently of Pinedale, Wyo., was present at the meeting and will lead the search for a new principal.
- Outreach liaison, Grant Surprenant, explained his role, and how he has worked with student contact and truancy this year. He explained how teachers contact him about students with problems and that their referral sheet is working well.
  - 1) To date he has met with students 642 times to discuss attendance, mental health issues and other concerns. Multiple contacts with the same student are each counted into that total.
  - 2) Dean of students, Jim Short, said Surprenant is used as an intermediary, to diffuse some situations before active discipline is needed. He works to help reintegrate students who have been on out-of-school suspension.
  - 3) With remote learning he has driven around the district, delivering Chromebooks, taking or picking up homework, making lunch deliveries for students who have chosen remote learning. This also gives time for face to face contact with students or parents to work on attendance success plans.
  - 4) The outreach liaison position was created in the 2017-18 school year. The district has seen a drop in truancy from 12 percent that year to 7 percent in 2019-20, with a spike upward this year due to remote learning.
  - 5) He works to help first generation college students, homebound and homeless students, and those having classes in the learning center.
  - 6) His salary is paid by the Every Student Succeeds Act program.
  - 7) Schneider praised the program and how Surprenant is managing it.
  - 8) “Anytime we have a need or an idea, I run it by him and he comes up with a plan,” Schneider said. “Students respond positively to Grant. He has a way to get them to settle down. It is another resource for our students along with Jim Short and Ryan Bliss.”
- Principal Schneider said the IW spring homecoming week was successful, and he discussed what graduation would look like.
  - 1) It will be held indoors with graduates having a limited number of tickets to admit family members. That number was not set, because it could change depending on what occupancy limits are on May16.
- There was discussion of students who had become ineligible for athletics because of grades.
- Schneider said there is no written policy for teachers to inform parents when a student has failing grades. However many do especially at midterm.
  - 1) “If you’re an athlete, it is up to you to be sure you are eligible.” Schneider said. “Parents can go on line at any time and find that out.”
  - 2) John Huston echoed that thought: “Grades are checked every week for athletic eligibility, and the students are fully aware of that. That is a discussion between the athletic department and the student.”
- The board discussed the need for two new buses, and whether those should be diesel or gas. They discussed whether to trade-in the buses to be retired, or keep them as spare buses. No decision was made.

- Rusty Willey resigned as a paid assistant football coach. He has been with the program for over 20 years. Zack Burling was hired as assistant football coach.
- Deb Murphy, already retired, resigned from her part-time position as math teacher.
- Mattison Penfield resigned as special education teacher.