

## School board hires eight new teachers

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 13 March 2014 14:17 -

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Superintendent talks about high teacher turnover.

Growing pains or growing possibilities?

It's all in how you view the situation.

District 20 superintendent Dr. Mike Teahon views the replacement of seven teachers and the addition of two staff members as unusual and also as an exciting time.

Eight new teachers were hired Monday at the school board meeting (see box) and the district still seeks an additional elementary position.

On average, Teahon said about two to three certificated staff members resign each year.

Four teachers, who, are retiring at the end of the school year, have 25-plus years in the district.

“We will miss the experience but it can also be a chance to remake our culture,” Teahon said. “New people bring in a balance.”

Teahon said the district plans to pare down the number of students in elementary class sections (20 is ideal) so an additional teacher was hired.

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Two new staff members will be added in the secondary building.

With the most opportunities for jobs in Nebraska in health care, agriculture, natural resources and transportation, he said the district wants to offer curriculum that would help students fill those jobs.

As a result, the district is examining career and technical education offerings and will likely change curriculum.

Teahon said the positions that were advertised included a combination of skills such as language arts, industrial arts, agriculture, science, Spanish, physical education, music and library science.

Expansion of programs allows the district to find people and fit their skills with the needs of the district, he said.

“We look at the best person possible,” Teahon said. “Flexibility within our existing staff allows us to utilize the strengths of the entire staff for the benefit of the students.”

Earlier this year, the board approved six resignations and retirements and positions for new staff were advertised.

As applications came into the central office, they were organized.

References were checked and documents evaluated. Building administrators then interviewed applicants.

Administrator and counselors decided on candidates who then received board approval.

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Teahon said building administrators interviewed more than 20 applicants.

Teahon noted that secondary openings are typically more difficult to fill and they didn't receive as many applications for elementary positions as they usually do.

The process takes time and district officials take it seriously, he said.

"We're never better than our teachers so we want to get the best people," Teahon said.

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