



## District to test notification system

**By Alyssa Sunkin / The Citizen**

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AUBURN - More than 5,000 parents and legal guardians who have children in the Auburn Enlarged City School District will receive automated phone calls on March 3.

On Monday, the school district will test School Messenger, its new parent notification solutions that would place phone calls to both landlines and cell phones and send e-mails to parents in emergencies.

Sandy Wagner, technology coordinator and administrative intern, updated the Auburn board of education Tuesday on the status of the notification system and when it would be placed online.

Wagner, who first approached the board about installing a notification system in October, said the system will be fully operational to notify parents and guardians in emergencies immediately following the March 3 test.

School Messenger - which has agreements in place with phone companies to ensure phone calls receive the top priority - will place about 5,000 phone calls in 15 minutes during the test launch, Wagner said. Besides seeing first-hand how School Messenger will work in the district, officials will also find out how many contact numbers are incorrect and have to be updated.

District officials are preparing for heavy call volume on March 4 from parents who did not receive a phone call, he said.

Wagner also sees School Messenger being used for contacting parents when students are absent from school as well as communicating lunch account balances. This is the next piece, he said, "and will come in very quickly."

By next year, he would like to see School Messenger be used at the building level as well as district wide.

"If there is any kind of crisis or emergency, we can get information out very quickly," he said.

In other news:

\* District Business Administrator Marianne O'Connor presented a year-to-date budget report to the board.

As of Jan. 31, the district has expended or encumbered nearly all of its total budget, leaving an available budget of about \$1.4 million, O'Connor said.

Just a few months ago, health insurance costs had been an area of concern, O'Connor said, with average monthly insurance claims running 16.8 percent higher for the first five months of the fiscal year - compared to last year. However, claims have decreased to 13.6 percent these past three months, she said, which are closer to the projected trend line.

Revenues are expected to meet or exceed budgeted levels.

\* The board's Long Range Planning Committee will hold a meeting at 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 28 at the Harriet Tubman Administrative Building, 78 Thornton Ave., Auburn, to discuss the proposed capital project.

\* The next board meeting will be at 7 p.m., March 11 at the Auburn High School library.