

PARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 6
Special Board Meeting
September 7, 2021

The Board of Education of Park County School District No. 6 met on September 7, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Westside Annex Board Room. Chair Nelson called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Board members present: Jessica Case, Tom Keegan, Brandi Nelson, Cathy Roes, Sheri Schutzman and Karen Schipfmann. Trustee Bell joined via Zoom. Administrators present: Tim Foley. Directors present: Chynna Singer.

Chair Nelson called for approval of the agenda.

On motion by Karen Schipfmann, seconded by Cathy Roes and carried, the agenda was approved.

Chair Nelson called for the presentation on the 2021 Summative WY-TOPP results.

Mr. Foley shared and discussed spring 2021 WY-TOPP English Language Arts and Mathematics results for grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, as well as Science results for grades 4, 8 and 10. He stated that he had not had an opportunity to do an extensive review of the data, however he did notice some anomalies. In language arts, three areas stood out: vocabulary acquisition and use, analyzing text (poetry), and reading and analyzing informational text. In math, three areas also stood out: geometry, probability/statistics, and algebraic thinking. In science, the weak area appeared to be life science. Trustee Bell shared that watching the scheduling at Cody High School may reveal trends. Mr. Foley stated the next assessment would be the winter interim WY-TOPP and that he hopes to share more data at the October special board meeting.

Chair Nelson called for discussion and review of Policy JH – Student Absences and Excuses/Truancy.

As Chair of the Academic Support Committee, Trustee Bell explained that this version of Policy JH consisted of the inclusion of language from Policy JHB – Truancy, and that the policy had been reviewed by legal counsel. Trustee Keegan questioned the statutory requirement to define unexcused absence and that he would like to allow for some discretion for administrators. Trustees discussed at length whether or not to define unexcused absence or whether by defining excused absence, all other absences would then be considered unexcused. Chair Nelson asked for additional clarification on the statute and agreed to some additional language. After further discussion, Trustee Keegan asked to have student handbooks available so policy and handbook language is consistent.

Chair Nelson called for discussion regarding consideration of COVID leave for school year 2021/2022.

Mr. Foley stated that most all districts are having the same discussion and shared the data that had been gathered from superintendents around the state. He offered three options for possible leave consideration.

Mrs. Singer shared information on COVID leave absences for school year 2020/2021 adding that it has been much harder to track so far this year as most COVID-related absences have been entered as sick leave. Discussion of the monetary impact was discussed and whether ESSER funds could be used. Mr. Foley said he was fairly certain they could be used. Mrs. Singer went on to suggest the idea of a COVID bank, which is what Billings schools are doing, and possibly having staff use all other available leave before applying ~ much like the sick leave bank. Trustee Keegan stated his concern that staff are mandated to quarantine, therefore they should not be forced to use their sick leave. Most trustees supported the idea of a COVID bank, but no decision was made.

Chair Nelson called for Mr. Foley to share a COVID update.

Mr. Foley reviewed the results of the elementary school parent survey and elementary staff survey. Of the 918 elementary students, 708 parents responded to the survey. The question about whether parents would support mask wearing if it meant keeping their student from being quarantined, 54% voted Yes and 46% voted No. The question of whether they support personal choice or if all students should wear a mask, 66% - support personal choice and 34% - all students should wear masks. Elementary staff were also surveyed. Of the 86 responses, 60% supported all students wearing masks. He stated he had spoken with Cody Regional Health leadership, and that today had been their most difficult day yet as they were not able to transfer two patients anywhere. Hospitalizations have so far been adult patients, not pediatric, but they gave no indication on the use of masks. Trustees expressed frustration over wanting

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students in person vs. being taught online and receiving no indication from healthcare officials. Trustee Nelson stated that with increasing quarantine numbers it would very likely push the district to online learning. Trustee Roes shared concern over sending kids home without the resources they need such as food, computers, books, etc. Trustee Keegan shared his concern about the burden that quarantining puts on the teachers. Trustee Case asked if testing was part of the plan. Mr. Foley answered that public health was to drop off 350 rapid test kits, but they had not yet been delivered. He also shared that legal counsel had forwarded an updated policy on communicable disease, which had been forwarded to the academic support committee for review. Mr. Foley also shared the protocol that schools in the state of Utah are using allows a student who has had close contact and who is asymptomatic to return to school wearing a mask for ten days. A lengthy discussion took place.

Mr. Foley shared that he was notified of money available from Wyoming Department of Health. A form was sent that he completed and he in return, he learned the district had received \$50,000 to be used for contact tracing, nursing, testing, etc. This will be an action item on September 21 to accept the funds and then request permission to advertise for contact tracer(s). He will also be asking for consideration to add a part/time nurse at Cody High School. This is in place of the substitute status that was used last year.

Chair Nelson summarized for trustees, the following two things to consider:

1 – COVID Leave – A decision would need to be made on September 21st (or sooner, if a special meeting is scheduled) to move forward with what the Board wishes to do with COVID leave. Trustees weighed in and agreed some type of leave is warranted and a COVID bank might serve employees best. Additional information will be forthcoming from Mrs. Singer. Trustee Bell also asked about allowing paraeducators the opportunity to become certified substitutes. Mr. Foley said the cost would be \$5,500 and this is a viable option.

2 – COVID Guidelines – Trustees supported following a similar protocol like Utah schools are using, but cautioned that the district may have to be prepared to mandate masks or close schools if warranted. Chair Nelson stated she wants confirmation that this would take board action to implement. She agreed that encouraging the uses of masks to keep kids in school (unless they are vaccinated) is a good practice, but also their duty as trustees to listen to parents.

Chair Nelson stated that an executive session had been scheduled, but was no longer necessary, and called for a motion to adjourn.

On motion by Tom Keegan, seconded by Cathy Roes and carried, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Chairman of the Board

Date

Clerk

Date