

**DISCLAIMER:** *This is a summary of the referenced meeting of the Hamilton School District Board of Trustees (“the Board”) and is based on the written notes and memory of individuals in attendance. The notes are intended to capture only the main points made during the meeting and they reflect a subjective work-in-progress. The notes do not imply a specific opinion or commitment on the part of any individual or organization represented at the meeting. This summary is neither an official transcript, nor should it be relied upon for any official purpose. This summary is not intended to replace, or in any way affect, the official Minutes of the Board.*

**Special Board Meeting  
Notes on Agenda Items  
December 1, 2020**

**Meeting Held Via Zoom & Facebook Live**

Board Members Present:  
Heidi Apedaile

Board Members Not Present:  
Drew Blankenbaker

Tim Campbell  
Patrick Hanley  
Jeni Seifert  
Rebecca Stamp  
Seth Gale Wyrick

**District Business:**

**1. Consideration of BinaxNOW Antigen Testing Program for Educational Institutions from MT DPHHS (Information/Action)**

Superintendent Korst updated the Board on issues relating to the possibility of offering the BinaxNOW rapid Covid-19 test including: liability, school nursing staff, union considerations, testing eligibility, PPE availability, and Ravalli Public Health Department / Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital coordination. Based on these concerns, Superintendent Korst recommended starting a voluntary testing program for asymptomatic staff.

Board Chair Hanley welcomed Ravalli Public Health Department (“RPHD”) Nurse, Tiffany Webber, who along with RPHD employee, Cara Bushmaker, provided information concerning the benefits and limitations of the BinaxNOW test. Ms. Webber indicated concern regarding the impact of false positive test results in symptomatic individuals. Nurse Webber also shared that her research found that the BinaxNOW test is not primarily intended for use with asymptomatic individuals. Board Chair Hanley stated that while the BinaxNOW test seems to show a lower sensitivity for detecting COVID-19 in asymptomatic adult carriers, he supports testing and would like to support RPHD.

Board member Gale Wyrick addressed the issue of false negative test results and their implications for returning to work. Superintendent Korst discussed the relatively low numbers of District staff and students affected by isolation quarantine. Superintendent Korst also shared that District staff are choosing to be responsible and remain at home when they experience any symptoms of illness this year. Daly Elementary Principal, Ericka Dowd, agreed that her staff is staying home when they are not feeling well.

Superintendent Korst advised the Board that testing symptomatic individuals would put District nursing staff at risk and that it would be difficult to replace our nurses who are needed to carry out student health plans and perform general school nursing duties as well as support RPHD through contact tracing. RPHD Nurse Webber expressed appreciation for the District's support with RPHD's contact tracing.

In response to Board member Gale Wyrick's question regarding self collection for the BinaxNOW test, RPHD Nurses Webber and Bushmaker indicated that they discourage self collection. Board member Apedaile added that symptomatic individuals should not be coming to the District for testing. Board Chair Hanley, Board member Gale Wyrick, and Superintendent Korst discussed issues concerning potential testing locations and criteria for determining eligibility for testing.

Board member Apedaile moved to recommend that Superintendent Korst determine guidelines for voluntary testing of District staff. The Board approved this Action Item.

### **Public Comments**

With what frequency is the District considering staff testing? Superintendent Korst stated that testing would be a voluntary service offered by the District as a convenience to employees. If the District later decides to pursue community surveillance, it would need guidance from RPHD regarding the frequency of testing.

Is it possible to offer testing for self-collection at home? Superintendent Korst advised that testing should be conducted under the care and supervision of a medical professional. Board Chair Hanley stated that the tests need to be stored correctly under particular conditions. Legal & HR Specialist Lewanski added that because the BinaxNOW program requires daily reporting to MT DPHHS, tests need to remain with the District.

Will it be possible to offer drive-through testing? Superintendent Korst stated that we will start with a scalable voluntary option for staff and develop the program from there based on nursing resources.

Has there been a large problem with the staff testing positive for COVID-19 and, if so, why isn't the District moving to virtual instruction? Superintendent Korst stated that the District has not had a large problem with staff testing positive for Covid-19. He added that the District's mitigation efforts have led to a relatively low quarantine/isolation impact among the District community.

Would testing include all staff, including seasonal employees? Superintendent Korst stated that testing would be open to all current staff on a voluntary basis.

## **2. First Reading – Revision of Policy 2085 – High School Graduation (Action)**

Superintendent Korst proposed lowering the current graduation requirement of 7 semesters to 6 semesters to accommodate students who are able to complete the required credits within that time. Superintendent Korst stated that ANB funding would continue to be available for students who graduate after their 6<sup>th</sup> semester. Both Superintendent Korst and Hamilton High School Principal Wells indicated that they do not anticipate a large number of students qualifying to graduate in 6 semesters. However, particularly due to transformational learning, this change would greatly benefit some students. Board Chair Hanley stated that this is the first reading for this matter. No Board action was taken.

**General Announcement:** Board member Gale Wyrick announced that the City of Hamilton would like to coordinate with the District concerning holiday safety messaging for which the City has received a \$75,000 grant. Board Chair Hanley recommended that Superintendent Korst look into this issue and report back to the Board.

The next regular Board Meeting will be held on December 8, 2020