

SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
 Regular Meeting  
 April 6, 2020  
 Virtual Meeting  
 6:30 p.m.  
 Participation will be Virtual  
 Virtually Connect by Going To [meet.google.com/bzx-mcps-foo](https://meet.google.com/bzx-mcps-foo)  
 OR BY CALLING (US)+1 417-647-1150 PIN: 584 195 054#

Approved Minutes

Name	Role/Term	Town Representing	In Attendance
Kris Benway	Director of Special Services	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Pati Beaumont	Board Member	Benson	X-
Rebeckah St. Peter	Board Member	Benson	X
Vacant	Board Member	Benson	-
Toni Lobdell	Board Member	Castleton	X
Tim Smith	Board Chair	Castleton	X
Julie Finnegan	Board Member	Castleton	X
Vacant	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Joshua Hardt	Board Member	Hubbardton	X
Vacant	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Tanya Tolchin	Board Member	West Haven	X
Angela Charron	Board Member	West Haven	-
Vacant	Board Member	West Haven	-
Tara Buxton	Board Clerk	Fair Haven	X
Mike Bache	Board Member	Fair Haven	X
Rick Wilson	Board Member	Fair Haven	X
Peter Stone	Vice Chair	Orwell	X
Glen Cousineau	Board Member	Orwell	X
John Wurzbacher	Board Member	Orwell	X
Brooke Olsen Farrell	Superintendent	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Cheryl Scarzello	Director of Finance	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Chris Cole	Director of Operations	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Casey O'Meara	Director of Curriculum I&A	Slate Valley UUSD	X

**Audience Attending:** None

**Call to Order - 6:30 p.m.:** Tim Smith called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:** Toni made a motion to approve the agenda, this was seconded by Tara Buxton. Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes - March 23, 2020:** Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve with one correction, Julie was still listed as Board Chair; and this was seconded by Peter Stone. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None

**Correspondence:** None

**Committee Reports:**

- Finance Committee: Glen Cousineau was voted as Chair of the Finance Committee. Cheryl noted she had not been able to do any end of year projections at this point due to the Covid situation. She will try to bring a projection to the next meeting. There were two food service bids, the committee will review the RFP's and bring their recommendation to the Finance Committee with the hope of the Finance committee recommending a food vendor to the full Board at the May 4th Board Meeting.
  - Warrants: Total Payments in the amount of \$3,847,188.70
  - Food Service: \$166,021.43
  - Grants: \$63,722.90
  - Glen made a motion to approve the warrants as listed above and this was seconded by Peter Stone; Motion carried by the Full Board.
- Policy Committee
  - A2 Participation of Board Members -Approve to Adopt: Toni Lobdell made a motion to Adopt Policy A2, this was seconded by Peter Stone; Motion was carried by the full Board.

**CIP/CFP:** Casey O'Meara, Curriculum Coordinator shared how he used the money from the CFP monies, primarily for Coaches etc. to engage and improve student outcomes. Casey shared these resources with Board Members prior to the meeting in the Board packet that fully explains the Continuous Improvement Plan and the CFP grant that supports the CIP. Tim Smith asks if we are projecting the same stimulus and/or grant monies for next year. For the 2020 budget the state extended the grant period for two more weeks. They usually only allow 15% to carry forward to the 2021 budget. Because we were not able to spend it all this year given the school closure. So our carryforward will be a bit larger next year. The Cares grant is different from the CFP grant. Brooke stated they are different.

**Alternative Programming Special Education:** Kris Benway sent out two descriptions for the Alternative Special Education Programs, one serves grades K-5, to continue to be housed at CES; and then one serving the 5-8 grade program slated to open at FHGS. Kris mentioned the benefits of housing these programs within our own schools. We have seen lots of growth and progress in these programs and the fact that children are thriving within these programs to the point where they are now once again able to access nearly full time the general education curriculum with some even coming off their IEP's all together. Tim Smith asked for the enrollment in these programs. The programs are generally capped at 6 students, sometimes we can exceed that if the students enrolled are full time. Tim asks if we do take out of district students. Pati Beaumont gave kudos to the program, and said the Board should continue to support this type of programming as it is wonderful that we are able to maintain these students in our own district. Julie Finnegan asked if we are thinking of doing this programming at the H.S. level. We will be growing this at the high school level and Life Skills Programming at the Dutton Ave at the high school level.

**Food Service RFP Timeline:** Cheryl received two bids for the food service management contract, one from Abby Group and one from Cafe Services. The committee will review these bids and make a recommendation to the Finance Committee to bring to the Board to the May 4, 2020 meeting.

**Adjustment to Leave of Absence:** One of our School Counselors is now able to work in a full time capacity, she originally asked for Part time. Glen Cousineau made a motion for this person to return to full time status, this was seconded by Peter Stone. Tim Smith asked if this is within our budget, and secondly is this opportunistic to work from home at this time. Brooke is fully supportive of this as is Jason Rasco. Julie thanks her for taking this on. Motion carried by the full Board.

**Last Day of School:** Traditionally at this time of year Brooke sends a memo asking the Board to approve the last day of school. Legally we are required to have 175 student days we have 188 built into our calendar, 5 snow days to date. The period of time from March 18-April 10 is being waived by the state. The true remote learning will start on 4/20/20. Brooke is recommending the last student day would be 6/19/20, and the last teacher day would be June 23, 2020, with the last day for Benson Teacher's being June 24, 2020. Brooke spoke of needing to allow teachers planning time for next school year and she would like to recommend the last student day to be June 15, 2020 and the last school days would be used for teacher professional development. The June 15 last student day allows students to have served 176 days. Colleagues need time to process where students are leaving off due to this remote learning and they would need time to connect on next years planning with these folks. Brooke also mentioned that it has been past practice to give the last teacher day in lieu of parent conferences. Brooke will bring this to the next meeting for a motion. The Board was in support of this.

### **Central Office Report:**

#### Superintendent's Report

Wow! It feels like an entirely different world in the last 3 weeks! Our staff is working harder than ever to make sure kids are fed, safe, essential workers have childcare and planning for remote learning. I am so proud of the work that our staff has put into such a drastic shift in just a couple of weeks. I feel incredibly lucky to be part of the Slate Valley District.

The implementation of a remote learning plan is a hugely complex endeavor. We still have many families that do not have internet access and we have challenges in getting them supplies that they need for remote learning. In addition, parents at home are trying to navigate providing for their family's basic needs such as food, housing, childcare, etc and at the same time trying to connect with school staff. This is not going to be perfect. In fact, this is a huge equity issue. I have told my staff that our primary objective is to help to ensure the safety and well-being of our kids/staff. As such, to the extent possible our staff is working remotely with a plan in place to stagger on-site office work as needed.

As I write this report (March 30th), we are preparing to respond to the Agency of Education's request for Continuity of Learning Plans. The template that has been provided thus far is unrealistic and we are working to develop a realistic Continuity of Learning Plan for our students. On April 6th we are planning on holding a district staff meeting remotely to address any questions or concerns that staff may have moving forward.

#### Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

The closure of Slate Valley schools has educators and administrators working to partner with students and parents/guardians in facilitation of meaningful curricula, instruction, and assessments. Over the past weeks I have worked with administrators, instructional coaches and educators on a plan to facilitate how students and parents/guardians will participate in distance/remote learning in Slate Valley. A plan for the Continuity of Education from March 15th is in action throughout Slate Valley. I am monitoring our current work as we look to improve our remote/distance learning structures and systems, to correspond with redefined our roles and responsibilities, in anticipation of information about the duration of school closures on April 6, 2020.

#### Director of Operations

The Operations Department has been focused on addressing the COVID-19 school closure on two equally important fronts over the last several weeks. First, the maintenance staff has been continuing to make it a priority to ensure they are making every effort possible to regularly disinfect high traffic public areas. Additionally, in order to comply with Governor Scott's directive around social distancing we've been coordinating with building level administration in order to put in place measures that look to strike a balance between the need to socially distance ourselves while acknowledging that in order to continue to provide educational opportunities staff have required limited access to the buildings to gather needed materials.

On the technology front, district staff worked to get devices ready for students to take home with them prior to our district closure for all students in grades two through twelve. We've continued to identify resources and methods to help facilitate our ongoing transition to online learning opportunities for students. We are actively working to identify the availability of resources in order to provide devices to students in the younger grades based on identified needs.

Finally, to provide an update in regards to some of our previously discussed upcoming projects, please know that there is a great deal of uncertainty around whether or not our previously discussed timelines will be feasible at this time. In working with many of our contractors we have been notified that in response to the COVID-19 pandemic they are either limiting or eliminating site visits except for emergency

situations or other essential services as outlined in the governor's directive. As a result, many of our planned summer projects are now likely going to have to be either delayed or rescheduled indefinitely as the situation continues to evolve.

#### Director of Special Services

Here is the [SV Letter to Parents of IEP students](#) that was distributed to families electronically and via snail mail this week. The guidance from the federal and state level for special education is still unfolding but what is clear is that all of the compliance regulations remain in effect. The special education team is busy assessing what students need, as well as what resources and supports are available for each student and their families so that we can begin to formulate plans to be implemented after April 6 in the event that we are in a situation that calls for a longer term closer or dismissal of our schools. I have been impressed by the level of connection of our special education providers and the creative solutions that are being explored to address these complex challenges in an unprecedented situation. I am thankful for the instructional support personnel, teachers, and administrators that have been working tirelessly to find solutions to these novel situations.

#### Director of Finance

For the last 2 weeks the Business Office staff have been adjusting to working remotely to the extent that they are able and to staggering time in the office. My intent is that for all critical functions such as payroll and account payable, we are cross trained 3 deep. I have always had at least one other person in the office cross trained, but adding a third became a bit more challenging as we ran out of time when we could be in the office together. Next week I will cross train with Ann on payroll. I would be the third after Barb. As I have said to Ann, I need to know enough so that if I had to do payroll I could be on the phone with PowerSchool support and get through it. It might not be pretty, but everyone would get paid which is our number one priority during these most difficult times.

We are staying on track with our timeline for implementation of FrontLine Time and Attendance by May 3rd. Given the current circumstances we may end up with a very small group actually using the system in May, but that will at least give us a chance to become familiar with how it works before rolling it out to all hourly staff in the fall.

I have been coordinating with The Abbey Group and STA/Betcha Transportation to provide meals to all the students in our district while school is closed. It was a bit of a scramble as we needed to complete our Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) application about 4 weeks ahead of schedule. The National School Lunch Programs has a number of different programs with different requirements. The summer program allows for the greatest amount of flexibility for serving meals when school is closed in the summer or other times of school closure. Initially with the summer program all our towns except for Castleton met the federal requirement that would allow meals to be distributed to anyone age 18 year old or younger. Today (Monday), the AOE announced that they had obtained a waiver to allow ALL school districts to provide meals to children 18 years old and younger. With that news we are looking at changing the Fair Haven Union High School meal pick-up location to Castleton Elementary School. As of Friday, March 27th approximately 4,500 meals have been distributed. I am particularly thankful for all the school district staff that have been volunteering to help distribute meals throughout the district. The need is great and everyone has been generous with their time.

**Other Business:** Discussion around remote learning was in progress when I was able to rejoin the meeting.

**Executive Session - If Needed:** Not needed this evening

**Adjournment:** Peter stone made a motion to adjourn at 7:42 p.m., this was seconded by Tara Buxton. Motion was carried by the full Board.

SVUUSD Board Meeting - April 20, 2020 - Virtual Meeting - 6:30 p.m.

Building & Grounds/Policy Committee Meetings - April 20, 2020 - Virtual Meetings - 5:30 p.m.

March 23, 2020

Dear Parents,

Guardians and Families;

First and foremost, I hope this communication finds you healthy and adjusting to the call for social distancing and all of the other health precautions that have been deemed necessary. To say that this has been disruptive to your lives and the lives of your children is an understatement. We understand that these unexpected events have placed a great deal of stress on everyone, but especially our most vulnerable populations of students (those with disabilities) and their families. Your educational administrators and teachers are working hard to come up with solutions to the challenges that are now before us for providing quality special education services to our students on IEP's during this time of school closure and an uncertain timeline for return to school.

As we are determining the most appropriate steps to ensure student and staff safety, we want to take this time to provide guidance relating to supporting students with disabilities and their services, as a result of closures and dismissals related to COVID-19. From the time period of March 18, 2020 through April 6, 2020 the schools of Slate Valley are closed. During this time period, we are implementing plans for special education students to help maintain the skills addressed in the IEP's and ensure access to the materials provided through general education to students. This is being accomplished in varying ways for different students and includes such means as providing packets of supplemental materials to prevent the loss of learning or loss of skills, distance learning activities, computer based intervention programs, teacher made videos, google classroom assignments, phone calls, email and phone check-ins, and consultation and support to parents.

At this time, we are following the guidance and recommendations from the Department of Health, the Agency of Education and our directives from the Governor of Vermont. Therefore, between now and April 6, 2020, we will not be providing 1:1 services, direct behavioral intervention services, or in-person contact by our providers of special education. We will assess going forward how we might provide these services if the closure or school dismissal were to continue beyond April 6, 2020 or if some form of compensatory services would need to be put in place later, in absence of the services.

As we move forward and we receive new guidance from the Governor of Vermont and the Agency of Education, our district will provide all opportunities to the greatest extent possible for students with disabilities to have equal access to the same opportunities that general education students have. Additionally, we will be reaching out to you to discuss potential options for services and supports in the event that a school closure or dismissal is deemed necessary beyond April 6, 2020.

If you need to reach your child's case manager or service provider you can access them by email or by leaving a message on the schools general mailbox so that it can be forwarded to the individual teacher. Below you will also find guidance offered by the Vermont Agency of Education pertaining to the provision of special education.

If you have any specific questions about the contents of this email or other matters pertaining to your child's special education program, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by email at [kbenway@svuvt.org](mailto:kbenway@svuvt.org) or by calling 802-265-4905 ext 2551.

Thank you for your continued support. I hope you all remain healthy and well. I look forward to greeting your children again soon. Please say hello from all our staff.

Sincerely,

Kris Benway  
Director of Special Services

**Questions and Answers from the Vermont Agency of Education  
on Special Education**

**What will happen to my child's services when school is closed for all students due to COVID-19?**

1. If a school closure causes educational services for all students to stop, then the school/district is generally not required to provide services to students eligible for special education services during that same period of time. This is especially true in cases where the school district will still provide the required minimum of school days, after school is reinstated.
2. During the period of school closure, a school district may provide supplemental enrichment materials to prevent loss of learning or loss of skills. However, any such supplemental enrichment materials must be made accessible for students with disabilities. These enrichment materials are optional for parents to use.

3. After an extended closure, districts are responsible for reviewing how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services to students eligible for special education services. Schools may be required to provide additional services or extended school year services to make up missed services.
4. If annual IEP reviews or eligibility reviews are due during a school closure, please work with your school closely to meet as soon as school is back in session, or through alternate means during a closure, such as video or audio conference calls.

**What will happen to my child's services when a school is dismissed but educational services continue to be provided to all students through remote methods?**

1. If a school district has dismissed on-site educational services but continues to provide educational services to all students through the provision of educational packets or remote learning opportunities, the district will remain responsible for ensuring the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) of its students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP), during the dismissal period.
2. All districts should be communicating with parents and guardians prior to, during, and after a school dismissal regarding modifications and accommodations to support the continuation of their child's IEP services. LEAs should work to ensure that all students continue to receive services to the most appropriate extent possible.
3. Although special education or related services may need to be adjusted, IEP teams should work to ensure that a student on an IEP receives services comparable to all other students. Services might include schoolwork packets, online learning, or some other learning adapted to the student's needs and location.
4. After an extended closure or dismissal, districts are responsible for reviewing how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services to students eligible for special education services. Schools may need to provide additional services or extended school year services to make up missed services.
5. If annual IEP reviews or eligibility reviews are due during this time, please work closely with the district to meet as soon as school is back in session or through alternate means during a dismissal, such as video or audio conference calls.