



NOTICE OF A TOWN HALL FORUM OF THE  
WILLIAMS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2 GOVERNING BOARD  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020



**COLLEGE, CAREER, AND COMMUNITY READY**

Roll Call:

Board Members:

Carla Dent, President – Present  
Ann Wells, Vice President – Present  
Leah Payne – Present  
Herman Nixon – Present  
Michael Fleishman – Absent

Administration:

Rick Honsinger, Superintendent - Present  
Eric Evans, WHS Principal – Present  
Carissa Morrison, WEMS Principal – Present  
Jessica Guzman, Special Education Director – Present  
Joyce McNelly, Business Manager - Present  
Brianna Ford, Admin. Asst./Minutes – Present  
Guests: 47

In compliance with Governor Ducey's executive order 2020-51 and WUSD Policy KI-RB, "All persons, including, but not limited to, staff, students, vendors, visitors, and volunteers, shall wear a cloth face covering while on any District property." **All persons attending the meeting must wear a face covering.**

This is a Town Hall Forum.

The WUSD Governing Board is seeking input from the community on the following topics.

Discussion Items that may be covered:

- Online/remote learning
- School opening in brick and mortar buildings
- School operations in brick and mortar buildings
- Face coverings
- COVID in the schools
- Athletics/clubs/extra-curricular activities
- Food service
- Transportation
- Personnel issues
- Expectations of parents and students during remote learning and during brick and mortar learning.
- Waiver to attend school in brick and mortar buildings
  
- **Mrs. Dent called the meeting to order at 6:26 pm**
- **Mr. Nixon stated that he had asked for this meeting in order to communicate with Parents in the community. He reminded the attendees that there are certain rules that have to be followed. He stated that people are not to be talked about, personally. If this happens, the person speaking will be stopped. The board and administration wants kids back in school. We have a great staff that want kids back in school. Mr. Nixon stated that he isn't currently wearing a mask because he is able to social distance. We need to follow the mask policy in schools in order to keep school opened. He also reminded the attendees that there would be no personal attacks made to anyone on the board or administration. He also asked that there be no repetitive questions.**
- **Mr. Honsinger stated that if anyone wants to speak, please come to the podium and state your name. People on ZOOM can get Gabi's attention. She will be reading comments as they are posted, if they are not covered already. He asked the attendees to remember that the board and administration cannot break opened meeting laws. The Board cannot discuss things that were not posted less than 24 hours ago. There may be some limitations to what can be talked about.**
- **Mrs. Wells suggested that Mr. Honsinger read the list of subjects posted for the forum.**
- **Mr. Honsinger read the discussion items as listed. He then opened up the discussion to the public.**
- **Tangie Rodriguez: I would just like to thank the board for the vote tonight of letting students return to brick and mortar school. It's good to get some normalcy back into these kids life. She also stated that she feels the staff has done a tremendous job for online learning this year. She is a teacher and knows how hard it is. Thank you for the work all the work you've done from March until now.**
- **Mr. Honsinger thanked her for the comment. He stated that our people are working hard. Administrators have been working tirelessly. Teachers are stressed about doing a good job.**
- **ZOOM: Earlier it was requested to have a forum to discuss the opening of school. It sounds like the board already made that decision.**
- **Mr. Honsinger confirmed that the board has voted to re-open school on August 17<sup>th</sup>.**
- **Tanner Logan: What the board did tonight is exactly what it should have done. Especially for the kids mental health. I understand the COVID is a real thing. I think that our kids mental health is more important than COVID. I think the board probably saved a few lives by opening up school. This is about the kids. We need to leave politics and personal feelings out of it.**
- **David Rigo: I am a State Police Officer. I was very against online school. That being said, I've been very impressed about what's being done. That being said, I can't take my kids to work with me. My wife and I both work and I don't know how we would have been able to juggle it. Thanks for opening the school up.**

- Dr. Morrison stated that if we do get into a situation again where we have to close again, whether ordered by the state or county, there is a provision that we do have to provide onsite care. If there are families like you with both parents working, there will be a safe place for your children to go. It won't be in-school instruction. It will be more like a safe place for them to do online learning. It's a place where they will be safe and will get fed.
- Mr. Honsinger stated that we are going back to school on the 17<sup>th</sup>. My goal is to stay in school. We need to do our part to prevent an outbreak. The staff is on board. I hope parents are on board. We need to get kids on board. Don't send kids to school with any symptoms. We need to avoid spreading this disease. We have a Dept. Head meeting for tomorrow morning to make sure that we are ready on Monday. I want to stay in school. We need support from parents. We need to get kids on board with masks.
- Tanner Logan: I hope that there isn't going to be nit picking on social distancing between students. Nobody outside with a tape measure.
- Mr. Honsinger replied that it is mostly just going to be reminder for students to have their masks on when they can't social distance. If a student is just being defiant, that's a totally different scenario. We are going to define the expectation for students and parent. Most kids are great about following expectations.
- Mrs. Wells stated that she has two grandsons who would love to go to school with an mask on. That is not an option for them. Our students are very lucky. There are many students who don't have the opportunity.
- Mr. Nixon stated that the last thing any of us want to see is our staff being the mask police. I think the parents and students need to get on board and we all need to work together to keep the school opened. A few weeks ago, there was a large group of kids playing fugitive around town. When I talked to them, they stated that they all wanted to come back to school. I never thought I would have high school kids begging to go back to school. We need to do what we can to keep school opened. This thing isn't going away. Help us keep schools opened. We care about the community and care about your kids. We'll get through it.
- ZOOM: Are masks required at recess?
- Dr. Morrison stated that as the guideline is written, masks will not be required at recess. This is something that could change if cases get worse.
- ZOOM: How will teachers be safe?
- Mr. Honsinger stated that there is risk in coming back to school. There is risk for both staff and kids. There is risk in just leaving your house. We're trying to keep our distance from each other. There is extra cleaning. We're doing the best we can.
- Patti Jackson: We have a pretty good plan in place for students. What is in place for visitors?
- Mrs. Wells stated that parents can come to the front office where they can get their temperature checked and they will be required to wear a mask too. We also have Plexi glass barrier in the front offices. Parents need to understand that they are only allowed in the front office. That's in our plan.
- Deniz Chavez: I want parents to understand that we as staff are doing these things as well. We're not asking parents to do anything that we are not doing ourselves.
- Jenni Rigo: I want to comment on the exposure and everybody being scared. I run a retail store in Flagstaff. Since March we have had about 175,000 people through the store. That's just the paying customers. We've been successful in my store with not having one of my 54 employees coming down with COVID. The mental health and normalcy in my children's life scares me more than this virus.
- Mr. Honsinger stated that was great news to hear. It's good to hear stories like that. Generally there are a lot of stories like that in Williams. There are people who are scared. We need to be respectful of each other. We are making the best decision that we can.
- Patti Jackson: I think I'm a very good teacher. In the past three days I have figured out that I cannot be a good teacher online. In spite of anyone's concerns about COVID, we have to do what we can to stay in school.
- Mr. Honsinger stated that we are going to school on Monday. The next goal will be to go to school on Tuesday. The next goal will be to go back to school on Wednesday.
- Patti Jackson: We feel for parents too. In spite of any of my COVID concerns, and I do have them, I'm glad that we're going back to school.
- ZOOM: Can you clarify what Superintendent Hoffman said.
- Mr. Honsinger stated that Superintendent Hoffman and the Department of Health came up with three benchmarks for schools to meet. The rate of existing COVID cases in your area per 100,000. Either be under 100 for two weeks in a row, or declining two weeks in a row. The next one is the positivity yield. It can be hard in a small town because if one person tests positive it increases the numbers significantly. Two weeks ago we were at 7%. Last week we bumped up to 17%. Then the third one is hospitalization percent. We want to be below 10%. We don't have local data on that, but county wide we have been below 10% for the past two weeks.
- ZOOM: Multiple comments with concerns about the school opening.
- Mrs. Wells stated that parents or community members with concerns could have called the school at any time to voice concerns. Be specific with your concerns.
- Mr. Nixon stated that he thinks that part of the concern is based on personal opinions. We can't make everyone happy. The cases in our community seemed to have peaked a couple of weeks ago. It's possible that schools could shut down again. The Board felt that at this time, it is safe for schools to be opened. Parents can choose the online option if they are concerned about their students being on campus.
- ZOOM: Who will teach online only students?
  - Why can't some students choose in school learning while others continue to do online learning?
  - Some district have chosen to only open their campus' to children with special needs.
  - Why have a Forum if you've already made your decision?
- Dr. Morrison stated that there is an option for students to choose either in school or online learning.
- Mr. Honsinger stated that the better education will be the on campus option. We are asking teachers to do double duty this year and the main focus will be at school. We're going to do our best to do our best to do both well.
- ZOOM: You would have had enough staff to do both if you wouldn't have pushed them out.

- Dr. Morrison clarified that no one has been pushed out. We do have some staff that may not be able to return due to their own health reasons. We are honoring all signed contracts.
- Mr. Honsinger stated that we would not have had the staff to teach both regardless of staff choosing to leave or not. Not even close.
- ZOOM: Will sport resume?
- Mr. Echeverria stated that the 1A just had a meeting and practice for Volleyball will start on 8/31, Football practice will start officially on 9/8, Spirit Line can start tryouts on 8/17. Competitions for Volleyball will start on 9/22, Football 10/2. For Junior High sports we have 3-4 schools interested in playing us for soccer this year. Cross country will be postponed until spring. For football we will start practice on 8/24. We'll be playing most of the 1A schools around us. JH Cheer can start on 8/24. If you had a physical last year you will not be required to get a new one this year. If you are new to sports this year, you will need one.
- Tangie Rodriguez: Are the other 1A schools still in our conference?
- Mr. Echeverria stated that they redid the regions this year. We lost 4 schools for football. We lost 12 schools for Volleyball. Schedules for Volleyball will not be released until 9/4, for Football 9/11. Again, AIA is a living thing. If the AIA allows us to play, we will play.
- Mr. Honsinger stated that what we are talking about now is the August 12<sup>th</sup> plan. Tomorrow we will be talking about the August 13<sup>th</sup> plan. We will be quick to act. We have to be ready to go online within 12 hours if we are required to go back to remote learning.
- Lisa Rogel: What is the plan for the school if one student tests positive?
- Mr. Honsinger stated that we would call the county health department and get direction from them. Every case is different. We do have some guidelines for someone who has been around another person that has tested positive. We do have some protocols in place. I don't have them in my head right now but we do have them.
- Susie Daly: What about students who have documented allergies?
- Mr. Honsinger stated that those things will be considered.
- Susie Daly: My son does not like to wear masks. I told him that he had to make a choice, to go to school with a mask, or stay home. We found the buffs that go around his neck and he's ok with those.
- Mr. Honsinger stated that we have those for every student in the school.
- Amber Runston: My kids hate masks also, but we'll deal with it. I plan on sending my kids back to the school. You commented that the primary focus when kids go back to brick and mortar will be on the kids in the school. That's hard to hear. I homeschooled for a lot of years. If I would have had packets, text books, short videos, it would have made a huge difference in homeschooling.
- Mr. Honsinger stated that Amber kind of hit the nail on the head. Those are all things that we are going to try to do for our online learners. We are not going to ignore online learners by any means, but the better education will be in the school.
- Cami Grantham: I wanted to thank the board for making the decision to open schools. As a staff member, everyone seems to be on board to keep kids in school. My son is anxious to be back in school and grateful to have the opportunity to play sports. I'm glad to hear that the school is opening.
- Mrs. Wells stated that one of the things that people need to realize is that teachers have spent years perfecting their teaching in the classroom. Teachers are now just learning how to teach online. It is going to take some time to switch our focus to online. I think that our teachers have made huge strides in online teaching.
- Amber Runston: Has anyone reached out to online learning platforms that have already been established?
- Mrs. Wells stated that most of those platforms are extremely expensive.
- ZOOM: What is the contingency plan if children contract COVID prior to school reopening?
- Mr. Honsinger reiterated that we would act as quickly as possible and contact our county health department.
- Dr. Morrison wanted to speak to online learning. If we were a bigger district, we would be able to accommodate online learning better. If we had 10 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers and 80% of our students wanted to do in school learning and 20% of our students wanted to do online learning, it would be really easy to say okay 2 of our teachers can focus on online learning only. Unfortunately we only have two teachers per grade level. If the split happened to be 40/10, it's really hard to say okay this teacher is teaching 40 kids in the building and this teacher is teaching 10 students online. We are trying to do the best that we can. We understand that our online option may not be the best fit for you and that you may need to withdraw your student from our district for some time.
- Mr. Evans stated that teachers are already thinking about online learners. They are on our radar and we are trying to address it.
- Mr. Nixon stated that unfortunately this is the new norm. Parents and staff will need to work together.
- Leah Hernandez: I have four kids in school. One of them is scared to come back. Do you have any suggestions?
- Mr. Honsinger advised Mrs. Hernandez to allow that child to stay home for a bit. Let her see her sibling go back to school. Let her see school start. Let her get comfortable with the idea.
- ZOOM: Can you opt out of mask wearing?
- Mr. Honsinger stated that we are not going to expose others to this virus on purpose. There are certain situations where kids may not be able to wear a mask. If a kid is not able to wear a mask at school they will have to do online learning.
- Mr. Honsinger stated that he wanted to wrap thing up. I don't always agree with the board, but they do represent our community well. I respect the decision that they have made tonight and we are going to do the best that we can. I'm glad that I am not in their shoes making this decision tonight. There is no right decision. I want to thank the board. They represent this community with integrity.
- Mr. Nixon thanked the community, board and administration for participating in this forum.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

- **Motion made by Mr. Nixon to adjourn, second by Mrs. Wells.**
- **Motion approved 4/0**
- **Meeting adjourned at 7:34 pm**