



MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Washington County School District
121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah
August 26, 2024
2:00 p.m.

Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Burke Staheli, Board Member Nannette Simmons, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Assistant Superintendent Cheri Stevenson, Executive Director Amy Mitchell, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Rusty Taylor, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Technology Director Jeremy Cox. Board Member Terry Hutchinson participated electronically.

Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer

Reverence by Member Staheli.

WORK SESSION

UFA Update – Rusty Taylor

Superintendent Richard Holmes said the administration has been discussing the Utah Fits All Scholarship for the past couple of weeks. It is still new enough that we don't know all the impacts yet. The impact to extracurricular is minimal for now. It could grow to a point that it would impact our District. It is too early to know for sure at this point. Our primary responsibility is to students currently in our schools. We believe it is an integral part of the experience for our students. He suggested holding and not allowing the scholarship students to participate with extracurricular activities for now. David Stirland asked how the coaches are feeling about the scholarship students. Superintendent Richard Holmes said previously, home school students could participate, but the number has been minimal. Rusty Taylor said he has received no feedback from the coaches. Burke Staheli felt the student at the last meeting did a good job explaining her situation about trying out before applying for the scholarship. The board members discussed the pros and cons. Nannette Simmons feels that we are here for all students as many of them do not have a choice and should be allowed the opportunity. Superintendent Richard Holmes said parents had to apply for their student to receive the UFA Scholarship. They can then select where they want to have their student educated. The vendors have to apply through the state to be approved.

SB 173 – Superintendent Richard Holmes

Superintendent Richard Holmes said we have until December 31st to declare if we plan to participate. The District has not yet decided to be involved. The bill would require that we select 25% of our top performing teachers and submit their names to Utah State University to be put in a pool with the other teacher names submitted from throughout the state. They will then evaluate the teacher information and decide who then receives the merit pay. It is based on student performance, student growth, evaluation, and other LEA determinations. Basing the merit pay selection on student performance and growth would eliminate some teachers with special needs students. We would also need a common assessment for every subject for comparisons. He mentioned that the teacher's association is not in favor. He feels that with our focus on team collaboration, it would be hard to recognize one teacher in a team. He also feels it would be nice for teachers who received the additional amount of pay. His understanding is that a teacher selected would receive the merit pay for three years. He suggested that we send out a survey to teachers to see what they feel about it. The Board shared concerns with our focus being on team collaboration. Superintendent

Holmes said the amount our District would receive will fluctuate. David Stirland feels it should have more of a local level to determine who would receive the merit pay. Superintendent Richard Holmes said it is based on a system used in Texas. He will share more information as we receive it. Nannette Simmons feels they are using a business model. Kathleen Cheshire feels it is the national push to undermine education. Brent Bills explained that if not enough Districts apply, those who did will receive the merit pay. Burke Staheli feels we need to keep our focus on recognizing and appreciating our teachers locally. Richard Holmes said \$150 million was put in for the next three years.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON BOARD ACTION ITEMS

No public comments were given.

ACTION ITEMS

- 1. Three Falls Elementary TSSA/SLT Plan Change**
- 2. South Mesa Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 3. Legacy Elementary TSSA Plan Change**

Burke Staheli mentioned how impressed he is with the plans and how specific they are and how thought out they are.

Board Member Stirland presented a motion to approve the Three Falls Elementary TSSA/SLT Plan Change, the South Mesa Elementary TSSA Plan Change, and the Legacy Elementary TSSA Plan Change. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Policy 2200 Dress Code Policy – Cheri Stevenson

Cheri Stevenson briefly reviewed the proposed policy changes. It includes what is appropriate to wear and how we would like students to dress for school. The wearing of hats was removed. The verbiage on consequences was changed to align with the Safe Schools Policy. Becky Dunn said she is still concerned with consistency across the District. She is concerned that the principals will still feel the burden of determining what is appropriate or not revealing. It will be hard for them to enforce. Cheri Stevenson said the intent is to have discussions in principal trainings and then have them talk with staff and parents to have them help determine what is appropriate. She feels that is how we will get buy in from the schools and around the District. David Stirland said there are non-negotiables in the dress code. That is where the focus should be. He feels principals would appreciate the non-negotiables included in the dress code. He suggested training with principals also include the non-negotiable items. Cheri Stevenson said they are planning to have the discussions with principals, assistant principals, and coaches. Craig Seegmiller again said that we need them to know that the Board will support them and will have their back. Nannette Simmons asked about hair color and piercings. She feels we need to be specific on what we will allow as it is helpful to parents. Cheri Stevenson said with hats, we do want to give autonomy to the schools to determine. Schools do have some students with other reasons to wear hats. She said the District will allow the 30-day review for input. Terry Hutchinson still feels we need some generalized language on the learning environment. He suggested using some of the language from Title IX.

School Boundary Change – Cheri Stevenson

Cheri Stevenson shared a proposal to change the boundary of Pine View to students living north of the Washington Dam Road. The Horizon Elementary Dual Immersion program would remain in the Crimson Cliffs cone site. Burke Staheli said he has received comments from his area asking why Snow Canyon is being remodeled when Pine View Middle is an older school. He feels the District will need to show some good effort in the Pine View area. He also suggested moving Leeds to Pine View. Cheri Stevenson said Long Valley is included in the proposed change. Cheri Stevenson said in talking with some in Leeds, they feel they have good programs at Desert Hills and feel they would still travel about the same amount of time. LaRene Cox said there are 1000 home lots in Leeds and 4000 by the Toquerville exit. Cheri Stevenson shared the number of students in Leeds. It was suggested to include that change in the boundary hearing also. She will get the parent meeting scheduled.

Board Member Simmons presented a motion to go into a closed session at 3:07 p.m. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

Property and Personnel Items

Present: Board President Becky Dunn, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Vice President David Stirland, Board Member LaRene Cox, Board Member Burke Staheli, Board Member Nannette Simmons, Superintendent Richard Holmes, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Assistant Superintendent Cheri Stevenson, Executive Director Amy Mitchell, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Rusty Taylor, Executive Director Wade Jensen, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer. Board Member Terry Hutchinson participated electronically.

Personnel, Negotiations, Legal, Property, Safety

Board Member Staheli presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 4:37 p.m. Board Member Hutchinson seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Board Member Stirland presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:38 p.m. Board Member Simmons seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT