



MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Washington County School District
121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah
September 7, 2021
4:30 p.m.

Present: Board President Kelly Blake, Board Vice President Becky Dunn, Board Member David Stirland, Board Member Craig Seegmiller, Board Member Terry Hutchinson, Board Member Laura Hesson, Board Member LaRene Cox, Superintendent Larry Bergeson, Business Administrator Brent Bills, Assistant Superintendent Richard Holmes, Assistant Superintendent Nate Esplin, Executive HR Director Lyle Cox, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Amy Mitchell, Executive Director Cheri Stevenson, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Technology Director Jeremy Cox.

Present from St. George City: Mayor Michele Randall, Randall, Manager Adam Lenhard, Councilwoman Dannielle Larkin, Councilman Gregg McArthur, Leisure Services Director Shane Moore, Sergeant Tyrell Bangarter.

Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer

Reverence offered by Member Stirland.

WORK SESSION

City of St. George

Adam Lenhard reported on growth in St. George City. There are plans submitted for the property on the east side of town. It should bring some affordable housing to the area. The master plans submitted to the City of St. George did not have property identified for a school site. It was mentioned that there is some funding for an interchange on the south side of town included in a legislative bill. The Divario development continues to grow on the west side of St. George. Mayor Randall reported that the Water Conservancy District is doing an assessment on water in the area. Adam Lenhard said the City of St. George is working on a water storage project to help with the water supply and is looking to expand the secondary water system. He mentioned that there is a housing crisis in the area. There are no homes available. The city is trying to get more housing to meet the needs. Businesses in our area are short the staff they need. Superintendent Larry Bergeson mentioned some of the properties owned by the District that could help provide schools for growth. The District is watching for other property options. There are some elementary sites that could be used if needed. The District has looked at adjusting the footprint of the elementary school buildings and build higher. Brent Bills said putting middle and high schools on the same site is saving the District some. Superintendent Larry Bergeson also mentioned that there have been discussions about increasing the school enrollment of each school. The goal is to still keep the schools in the same classification. Gregg McArthur mentioned that SITLA has some property set aside for the District. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said it will all depend on growth. Dannielle Larkin brought up concerns with parking at the high schools. The cost of putting in parking lots has increased. Building costs have increased also and building supplies are in demand. Adam Lenhard reported on plans for City Hall and plans for the downtown area. Superintendent Larry Bergeson reported that our growth will be about 1500 new students this year. We have the teachers needed but have a lot of paraprofessional positions still available. Gregg McArthur said the city is hunting for the higher paying jobs to come to this area. Officer Tyrell Bangarter reported on the crossing guards in the area. The changes in schools with kindergarten have changed the positions of the crossing guards. He said is a revolving door with

crossing guards. Amy Mitchell said a grant is paying for full day kindergarten for the next two years. She suggested that the crossing guards could be used as paras to provide the extra income. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said if we come up with funding, full day kindergarten would continue as it is a benefit for students. Officer Bangerter said they are required to have at least 10 kids crossing to have a crossing guard. Amy Mitchell said most of the Title I schools are under 10 students not participating full time. A notice could be put out to parents letting them know that crossing guards are needed. District administration reported that there will be no new schools opening next year. Adam Lenhard said there is growth in the Southern Hills area and will continue to grow. Brent Bills mentioned that we are seeing more secondary kids moving in than elementary. David Stirland mentioned that Hurricane City is building homes for those in the service industry. He suggested it may be something St. George City may want to consider. Adam Lenhard said they are in the process of discussions with the School District and Dixie State University to provide some options. He also mentioned that the state is going to lead an incentive program to help with water.

Board Member Hutchinson presented a motion to go into a closed session at 1:56 p.m. Board Member Stirland seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

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CLOSED SESSION

Property and Personnel Items

Personnel Items
Legal Item

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 3:15 p.m. Board Member Hutchinson seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

WORK SESSION

Growth/Facilities – Richard Holmes

Richard Holmes said the administration would like to present some suggestions for discussion on other options besides building schools. There are a couple of elementary schools needed and Snow Canyon Middle School will need some retrofits. It would be a big shift from previous discussions on school size and costs. Nate Esplin said it is anticipated that Desert Canyons Elementary will continue to grow. He mentioned that we are 341 different from the projected enrollment. Kelly Blake mentioned developments that could also affect Riverside Elementary. Nate Esplin said that Desert Canyons took some students from Riverside leaving them more room for growth. Horizon Elementary also has a development that will increase the school size. There is no more property in that area for another elementary school. David Stirland said the cities need to be aware of school sites with large developments. It was suggested that Craig Hammer check into a school site with the development going in by Riverside Elementary.

Ironman 2022 Update – Larry Bergeson

Larry Bergeson said the World Ironman will be coming to St. George again on October 28-29, 2022. The city has moved it back. The calendar has been changed to start school on August 11, 2022. The October 28, 2022, date would be calendared as a Teacher Prep day.

2022-23 Calendar Change – Larry Bergeson

This agenda item was discussed with the Ironman 2022 Update.

AP Scores – Richard Holmes

Richard Holmes said a copy of the AP scores were shared in the Board packet for review.

JUUL Lab Lawsuit – Richard Holmes and Brent Bills

Joel Wright presented on the school vaping litigation. He explained the concerns of how they have promoted to youth and the concerns with nicotine. The majority of individuals using flavored vaping are under 21. He reported on the history of the lawsuit. The trial will go to court in March 2022. There are 500 school districts that have joined and many districts in Utah have it on their agenda to consider. Those who join the lawsuit will need to complete a 4 to 5-hour survey. Some districts are joining with provisions that allow them to drop out with no fee. If the lawsuit is won, the firm would take 20%. Joel Wright mentioned some of the preventative services being provided by school districts through vape detectors, visits to homes, and peer programs. It is anticipated that there will be no restrictions on how the money is spent by the districts if the lawsuit is won. Brent Bills said the intermediate and middle schools are asking for vape detectors. He said that this is something that is affecting our School District and we do have expenses with it. He reported on a few Utah districts that have declined to join the lawsuit. Terry Hutchinson suggested that the letter of retention should include an indemnity for fees related to bringing a RICO claim. Richard Holmes recommended that the District go with the Utah based company, Kirton and McConkie.

CT High School – Richard Holmes

Richard Holmes reported on work at the CT high school. Getting some of the workers there has been slow. Richard Holmes suggested naming the school Washington County Career and Tech High School. It is all encompassing for students in Washington County. LaRene Cox asked about providing a pickup spot to transport students. Richard Holmes said there are plans to have transportation from each of the high schools. The principal selection would be made in January and the principal would start in July. They would have a full year to staff for the programs. Superintendent Larry Bergeson mentioned that there would be an industry board for each of the programs. The principal will need to have a strong CTE background.

COVID Update – Larry Bergeson

Superintendent Larry Bergeson reported on COVID in the schools. Indications are we will peak soon and then see a gradual decline. There are also a lot of sicknesses going around, but those testing for COVID are seeing negative results. The biggest concern is keeping students in school. Many times, it is the safest place for kids. There is also a concern with not overwhelming the hospital. He expressed appreciation for the continuous support of Dr. Blodgett.

School Safety Discussion – Larry Bergeson

Superintendent Larry Bergeson mentioned that there is always concern for student safety. We have the safety doors in place. The collaboration with the SROs from each of the police departments is helpful. We are not going to contribute to an SRO for Arts Academy and Southwest High. The SROs work so closely with and have a great relationship with students. It helps with trust.

OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD

Healthy Dixie Update – Craig Seegmiller

Craig Seegmiller mentioned that he has reported to Healthy Dixie how the District has worked with Ironman. The group has really worked to get bicycles in the schools. He explained to them that the grant is too specific. They are going to talk with Bob Sonju and are planning to be more flexible in the requirements. Cheri Stevenson said they were looking for an outdoor club, but it is hard to supervise so many students.

USBA Update – Becky Dunn

Becky Dunn said Leadership Academy is coming up next week, September 16-18, and all board members can attend. She reported on the Delegate Assembly. They are asking for 5% WPU, plus the growth and

inflation money, transportation funding, and NESS funding. She said this is a great time to talk with legislators on why we need these funds for growth, repairs, and safety items. Becky Dunn said, as of the beginning of August, the USBA is planning for the conference in January at the Little America Hotel. It was also mentioned that the USBA Leadership Academy of offering a free golf tournament at the Homestead. The NSBA is still holding firm their conference in San Diego next April. Steven Dunham noted that Becky Dunn was recently recognized for what she does in Washington County.

MBA Update – Laura Hesson

Laura Hesson said the MBA is recognizing board with 100% completion again. This month the Board needs to share something good with Legislators. All assignments need to be completed by November 30th.

Dixie Tech Update – Terry Hutchinson

Terry Hutchinson reported on the leadership changes to the Dixie Tech Board. Dixie Tech is doing really well and is expanding. The coordination with the CT high school is going really well. He also mentioned that higher education was wanting vaccines mandated, but they elected to not require it. They would have to allow exemptions if mandated.

Foundation Update – David Stirland

David Stirland mentioned a turnover on the Foundation Board. They approved a \$10,000 grant for the arts. The annual Golf Tournament is scheduled for September 24th. There is one team opening. Last year it brought in \$84,000 and went directly to classroom grants for teachers to use. David Stirland also mentioned plans for a counselor closet that will allow counselors to access items needed to help students including, food, shoes, toiletries, etc. It will be a resource for every school. The Foundation will help fund and stock the closet. There have been some heartwarming stories from counselors being able to help students and promote learning. Steven Dunham said counselors were surveyed to determine what items were needed. The Foundation will work to find businesses to help donate items or money to support the program and different options to meet the needs of students. David Stirland said the Foundation is working with a business partnership that could bring a significant contribution for Classroom Grants. The Board is invited to come out to the Ledges for the Golf Tournament.

FCAOG Update – LaRene Cox

LaRene Cox had nothing to report.

Audit Committee Update – Kelly Blake

Kelly Blake said the committee is still waiting for results on the audit.

ITEMS FOR BOARD REVIEW

1. Enrollment
2. Safe Schools
3. GRAMA Requests
4. Department Reports

Amy Mitchell shared that 710 more students were able to participate in full-day kindergarten. Some schools are funding with other sources. She said schools reported that lunch went better than expected. The numbers of students opting out is going down. The teachers have been wonderful at helping parents understand. Kindergarten students started today. Over 1000 students are enrolled in the full-day program. She is hoping that after two years of this funding we will receive additional funds to continue for another three years. The bulk of the instruction happens in the morning for those students who have opted out of the full-day program.

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Washington County School District was held after due, legal, and timely notice being given to all members and interested parties. Board President Kelly Blake called the meeting to order and welcomed all visitors. Board members present were Craig

Seegmiller, Laura Hesson, Becky Dunn, David Stirland, LaRene Cox, and Terry Hutchinson. Staff members present were Superintendent Larry Bergeson and Business Administrator Brent Bills.

OPEN MEETING – 4:30 p.m.

- 1. Reverence - Member Hutchinson**
- 2. Welcome – Board President Kelly Blake**
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance – Member Hesson**

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Minutes**
 - a. August 10, 2021- Meeting of the Board of Education**
 - b. August 23, 2021- Special Meeting of the Board of Education**
- 1. Financial Report**
- 2. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items**
- 3. UHSAA 150-Mile Request Approval**

Becky Dunn asked about purchases for buses. Brent Bills said four Special Education buses were needed. The state bid is through International. There was also an offer to purchase a demo propane bus. Bluebird has a higher force power propane bus. It was purchased to see what the cost is for their propane bus. The buses give off less emissions and save on maintenance. The District has 15-16 propane buses currently. They are slower getting up hills but run quieter. We have a fueling station at the bus yard, in Hurricane, and in Enterprise.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items. Board Member Dunn seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

WHAT’S RIGHT IN WCSO SCHOOLS

Pine View Middle School – Principal Steve Gustaveson

Principal Steve Gustaveson shared the vision of a partnership with In-N-Out Burger. They teach the students how they prepare food and run the business. The school has wanted to expand the program. Nate Moffet shared that he believes in visualization for students. Students can learn from business executives and entrepreneurship. They want the students to have connections and see things in real life. They have one unit where they teach about employment. There are several businesses who have partnered and allow students to come to their business or present in the school. They have also partnered with the Innovation Plaza at DSU for students to tour and learn about patents. Steve Gustaveson said it really helps the students connect with the real world for deeper learning.

South Mesa Elementary School – Principal Ginny Nobis

Principal Ginny Nobis shared what is right at South Mesa Elementary. They started a partnership with the PTA early on and created a school motto and crest. Their motto is, “We are courageous, we are kind, we strive for excellence, we are the South Mesa Knights”. After testing on Acadience, they noticed that students were falling behind. Teachers really stepped up and are seeing increases in growth. The 3rd grade had 100% of the students on typical or above typical growth. They also did good on RISE testing. They have realized that they need to focus on Tier I instruction. They are doing what they can to help students get it the first time. Strong Tier I instruction is key for strong learners. They also had a wellness goal and have utilized it more this year. The wellness room has helped students. It helps the students feel happy about being at school and in communication with parents. The final goal is for students to have a growth mindset. This year they are doing 95% group phonics, a reading clinic, Portuguese club, Lego League, Lunch Laps, Crown, Quest, Parent Connection, and Moments. They are creating traditions as they are still a new school.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON BOARD ACTION ITEMS

No public comments were given on action items.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

Special Education Policy and Procedures – Hollee Cullen

Hollee Cullen said the state Special Education Policy Manual was updated in 2020 and districts were given the responsibility to update their policy and procedures. The policy has been updated and was submitted to the state. It received state approval. She reviewed the main changes including needed updates, alignment with the Utah Code and Administrative Rules, updating procedures for identifying students with learning disabilities, updating terminology for rules related to services for the deaf and hard of hearing, a definition of co-teaching, reviews the accurate use of program services and program funding, and clarified definition of specially designated instruction. The policy has been aligned and mirrors the state policy. Members of the Board asked that the policy have a 30-day review period for approval. Larry Bergeson noted what an outstanding job Hollee Cullen is doing in her position. She is recognized throughout the state. The Special Education Policy and Procedures approval was tabled to allow a 30-day review.

2022-23 Calendar Update – Larry Bergeson

Larry Bergeson shared that the District is working in partnership with the city and community for Ironman. Ironman will not have international competitors this year as planned and has asked that St. George host it again. They have asked that we allow a day for the event on October 28th. We have adjusted the start day of the 2022-2023 calendar and will have a Teacher Prep Day on October 28th. He recommended that the calendar changes be made to accommodate the Ironman event.

Board Member Hesson presented a motion to approve the 2022-2023 Calendar Update. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

JUUL Lab Lawsuit – Richard Holmes

Richard Holmes said this is a nationwide lawsuit against JUUL. There are hundreds of districts who have joined. The makers of vaping cigarettes have targeted youth and we have even seen problems in our District. There are no expenses that will be incurred. If won, the money will come back to the District to use for education and prevention training. The recommendation is that we do join for the benefit, safety, and health of our students. Kelly Blake said the District does incur a cost for educating students and it would be prudent on our part.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve joining the JUUL Lab Lawsuit with Kirton and McConkie. Board Member Hutchinson proposed an amendment to the first motion to provide indemnification to a RICO action and approval being subject to approval by legal counsel. Board Member Cox seconded the motion and the amendment that passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Terry Hutchinson mentioned that the intermediate band numbers are higher, and retention is higher. The efforts of the administration have helped. A grant is also being given by the Foundation to the Fine Arts program.

INFORMATION

There were no information items.

REPORTS

Superintendent

Superintendent Larry Bergeson recognized the business department for the ASBO Meritorious Budget Award for the 2021-2022 budget year. He congratulated Brent Bills and his department. We are one of 8 districts in Utah, out of 41, with a AAA rating.

Superintendent Larry Bergeson recognized the Transportation Department for the work they do. We started the year with all positions filled. COVID hit and all those in the department with CDL have filled in to help cover the routes. Lyle Cox oversees the department. He expressed appreciation for the whole Transportation Department. Superintendent Larry Bergeson also recognized the teachers in Washington County School District. We have done better with virtual learning. Teachers are working with students who are out to make sure they stay on track. We couldn't hold school without the bus drivers and teachers.

Superintendent Larry Bergeson also mentioned appreciation for Dr. Blodgett with the Southwest Public Health Department and the school Board who have worked to keep students in school. There are two goals through COVID to keep students in school and keep hospitals from maxing out. He said we appreciate the effort of all. Nothing replaces a teacher being in front of students.

Board

No reports were given.

Association

Amy Barton she is hearing good things from the teachers. There are some concerns with the Friday prep and planning time. There is a lot of professional development at the beginning of the year. Teachers want the planning and prep time. It is critical to have the time to plan to teach. Second, they are hearing about COVID. The process is unclear and is being slow. Everyone wants to err on the side of caution and look out for the health of students and staff. Teachers need to understand the process to make sure it is happening.

PTA/PTO/Community Council

MarChe Hindes said there are 39 schools with a PTA. She mentioned that the Panorama PTA was able to give out \$3000 in teacher grants this year. She encouraged the School Board member to join the PTA. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said the District values the partnership with PTA/PTO organizations.

Brent Bills reported on the number of students eating school lunch and the cost if milk were provided to every student. It would be too expensive to provide milk for students not eating lunch. There are 22,000 students eating school lunch this year.

PUBLIC OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD – 3 minutes each

Laura Butler shared that she is against students having to wear masks and shared reasons such as bacteria and cross-contamination. She will not allow her student to attend school in a mask. She asked the Board to open hearts and minds and end the insanity.

Board President Kelly Blake adjourned the meeting at 5:31 p.m. as there was no further business to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT