



MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Washington County School District
121 West Tabernacle, St. George, Utah
October 12, 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 Nate Esplin, Executive HR Director Lyle Cox, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Amy Mitchell, Executive Director Cheri Stevenson, Executive Director Craig Hammer, Communications Director Steven Dunham, and Technology Director Jeremy Cox.

Legislators Present: Senator Don Ipson, Representative Walt Brooks, Representative Brad Last, and Senator Evan Vickers (via Google Meet)

Minutes: Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer

Reverence offered by Terry Hutchinson.

WORK SESSION

Legislators

Senator Don Ipson said that there are several education bills coming before the Legislature. Brad Last said every year there are 40-50 bills related to education. There are four priority bills this year. Senator Evan Vickers said he has not heard a lot of rumbling with education bills at this point. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said the local legislators have taken care of education needs pretty well with WPU, growth, and transportation. He mentioned that Truth-in-Taxation makes it hard to keep up with inflation. It would be good to receive the growth funds to help with that. He also mentioned some of the school security items that are more expensive but would be helpful to have some of the one-time funding to help purchase. Superintendent Larry Bergeson mentioned that we work with local police departments and have about 30 SROs in the school. One-time money would be helpful for those types of costs. Money in the WPU and money to help with transportation is also appreciated. He mentioned that we are still needing drivers. All licensed transportation staff are driving routes to help. We have had a couple of instances where parents have had to pick up their student or wait for a delayed bus route. Lyle Cox reported that the District is short over 300 paraprofessionals this year. Superintendent Larry Bergeson mentioned appreciation for the support and partnership with the legislators in meeting the needs of the students. Kelly Blake said he also appreciates that the legislators are willing to listen to the District's concerns. Brent Bills said the business administrators across the state are frustrated with the Utah State Board of Education. Many times, the state is asking for 100% documentation for funding. Some funding has still not been received. Expenditures have been disqualified from district to district. High school sports lost a lot of money with COVID. Some expenses were going to be covered using ESSER funding. The state has denied those expenses to be paid through ESSER. Money was given to schools to cover the costs, but now we are not approved to use the ESSER funding for those costs. Other districts were approved for similar expenses. Brent Bills shared other examples that are costing us so much time and effort for reimbursement. Brad Last asked if the State Board knows what is happening. Brent Bills said he has talked with a couple of State Board members, but they only want to deal with one issue at a time. Another example is refusal to pay for homeless expenses when we don't have receipts. Parents are required to sign for a gift card to purchase the items needed. The State Board of Education wants receipts for items purchased. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said it has been frustrating for us to get

reimbursement. We are only being allowed to use ESSER funding for about one of every three COVID expenses. We have millions in ESSER funding, and we are not able to spend it as the restrictions are so tight. Brent Bills and Superintendent Larry Bergeson reported on the District funds that will be used to help pay for UHSAA expenses. Senator Don Ipson suggested that the superintendents throughout the state should meet with State Superintendent Dickson. Superintendent Larry Bergeson noted that he has talked with her. Brad Last suggested that the state may be short staff in dealing with the ESSER expenses as well. Brent Bills said there has been a big power shift at the State Office. The finance side of the USBE in not making calls anymore. He mentioned a science lab expense that was denied as a food item. He stated that they do not send out the rules beforehand. We hit the qualifying rules that are listed but are not being reimbursed. Superintendent Larry Bergeson reported on COVID in Washington County schools. We have been pretty consistent with low numbers. Students and staff are allowed to wear masks if they choose. The mental health of staff and students is most important right now. The schools do have Wellness Rooms and curriculum to help. The curriculum has received some criticism, but it has been reviewed by parents. Lyle Cox briefly reported on the TAVA Mental Health program available. It has been important for many of the staff members and is available to all employees, even those not benefitted. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said the preferred way to teach is to keep the students in-class with a teacher. The District has not been issues with suicide recently, but we are still worried about abuse in some homes. School is the safest place for many students. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said the SEL program teaches students how to identify and how to deal with problems. We have taken some parts out of the curriculum and won't show items that may be considered controversial. Senator Evan Vickers said there is interest in reducing the tax rate this year. There will be a lot of discussion with deep cuts, and the Taxpayers Association is putting a lot of pressure on the Legislature. Becky Dunn mentioned a proposal for the state to pay for school fees in place of a tax cut for families. Senator Don Ipson reported that they are finishing redistricting meetings throughout the state and will be meeting in a special session early November.

Fine Arts Update – Rob Schmidt

Rob Schmidt said Fine Arts in Washington County School District are the best. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said Rob Schmidt is appreciated a ton and is a great employee. Rob Schmidt reported that overall numbers are up in band and orchestra after the summer program. Teachers have reported an increase and numbers are staying steady. The summer program was positive and beneficial. Some schools are saying that there are too many options that take students from band or orchestra. Cheri Stevenson explained a Spanish Culture class that was offered as an elective and pulled students from other programs. Numbers are down statewide, but we are not down as other areas. Rob Schmidt reported on the Fine Arts Committee and the assignments they have to help with media and retention. He mentioned that as we grow, we are seeing problems continuing some of the programs we have participated in such as the Utah Symphony for all 3rd grade students. Brent Bills said transportation is also an issue with our growing numbers. They will be looking at changes with SUPAF and local Art Festivals. Rob Schmidt also mentioned that teacher burnout is happening. He has been sending messages to teachers about setting boundaries and limiting the amount put on their plate. It has been challenging to treat this as a normal year as we still have COVID issues. Rob Schmidt said there are 142 Fine Art programs with 99 teachers. There are 17 teachers working at multiple schools and 20 teaching multiple subjects. He reported that the Orchestra PLC is doing great. The Band PLC and Middle School Theater PLC are really improving. The Choir, Dance, Elementary, High School Theater and High School Art PLCs need improvement. He has been working with Robert Proffit to help the Fine Art PLC groups. He said the District has great teachers and things are moving forward. Rob Schmidt also briefly reported on the All-State Choir with 58 students from Washington County School District being selected by their teacher to participate.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to go into a closed session at 1:50 p.m. Board Member Stirland seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

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 Nate Esplin, Executive HR Director Lyle Cox, Executive Director Steve Gregoire, Executive Director Amy Mitchell, Executive Director Cheri Stevenson, Communication Director Steven Dunham, Executive Director Craig Hammer, Technology Director Jeremy Cox, and Executive Secretary Kajsia Boyer.

CLOSED SESSION

Property and Personnel Items

Personnel and legal items were discussed.

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, and Business Administrator Brent Bills.

Personnel items

Board Member Stirland presented a motion to go out of the closed session at 3:44 p.m. Board Member Seegmiller seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

WORK SESSION

Employee Wellness Incentive/Fitbit Program – Tammara Robinson

Tammara Robinson shared the proposal for a new wellness incentive. When going to the Fitbit program there were goals to achieve including helping employees and spouses to fully engage in happiness and productivity in their personal lives; provide an avenue for employees and spouses to feel more energetic, fit, and to be there for their family; to help reduce unnecessary medical insurance utilization and premiums. She said that data does not demonstrate that steps are decreasing the utilization. The District has paid \$682,000 to Fitbit for devices and utilization of their program. Preventive care is the biggest category and early detection have helped to reduce costs. Hypertension and depression are the most prevalent. The District has allowed employees to use alternative plans with other devices or disease management in place of participation with Fitbit. Fitbit will no longer offer the corporate Fitbit program. They are moving to more individually driven-based goals. The District would propose a different program after December 31. There are rules and laws we have to follow with participatory and health. The new program will be participatory. Employees will work with health care providers. The program will be done via email and will offer prizes. Participation in the new Wellness program will allow all employees to participate. We can recognize employees for what they do to improve their health. Team activities will be highlighted to give ideas and there will be no cost for not participating. The main points of the new Employee Wellness program are: No Fitbit required, all employees can participate, and the program will be voluntary with no penalty for non-participation the first year. The District will work with doctors locally on trends in our area. They want to hit mental health and hypertension to help employees. Each month will focus on different areas for health. There will no longer be incentives to purchase a device. Most research shows that 25% will do things for incentive, but not for personal change. This participation program will give employees information to empower them when they need it. Employees can still utilize the Fitbit in personal ways. Those who have not replaced their Fitbit can still use the \$50 incentive through December.

Work-based Learning Committee – Mike Hassler

This discussion was postponed.

COVID Update – Larry Bergeson

This discussion was postponed.

School Safety Discussion – Larry Bergeson

This discussion was postponed.

Elementary Highlights – Nate Esplin, Amy Mitchell, and Steve Gregoire

Amy Mitchell reported on a visit from Alpine School District on our transition from OEK to full-day kindergarten. They reported getting so much more from their visit to Washington County School District. Amy Mitchell shared the Acadience data from the end-of year 2020-21. WCSD outperformed the state in every area. We were very close at the beginning of the year. Growth in proficiency showed increases for WCSD. Amy Mitchell also reported on LETRS Training. It is not required for our District, but teachers are choosing to participate and there is a waiting list. Through the training, teachers are learning how the brain is involved in learning. The training is a two-year program. Superintendent Larry Bergeson said DSU invited us to be involved in a training, but we are already doing it.

Transportation Update – Lyle Cox and Craig Hammer

Lyle Cox reported on transportation concerns. An email has been sent to stop school bus requests at times students are taken to and from school. There have been 10 new drivers hired in the past week and several are in training. Two previously hired have just completed the training and three more are doing the driving training. The freeze on trip requests will continue until we have the drivers available. Due to the driver shortage, schools have submitted more request for charter buses. Two drivers left last week to drive for St. George Shuttle. One of the individuals has returned and asked for the position back. There were two drivers that resigned after completing the training as they were already retired and did not feel they wanted the workload. Lane Hadlock reported to Lyle Cox that we are in a better situation than many places in the country. He also appreciated the support from the School Board. We currently pay a higher salary than the charter bus company. He mentioned that we are looking at options to stagger routes and make more positions full-time and benefitted. Drivers start at \$19.10 and there is additional compensation for experience. Drivers also receive an inconvenience stipend for waiting on activity routes. Lyle Cox said some drivers are up to 35 hours but generally drivers put in about 20 hours a week. We have 30 drivers that are benefitted. The drivers who are benefitted are more apt to stay with the District.

OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD

Healthy Dixie Update – Craig Seegmiller

USBA Update – Becky Dunn

MBA Update – Laura Hesson

Dixie Tech Update – Terry Hutchinson

Foundation Update – David Stirland

FCAOG Update – LaRene Cox

Audit Committee Update – Kelly Blake

Craig Seegmiller reported on the bike program with Healthy Dixie. They have only been able to get the program in two charter schools. They don't want to grant the flexibility requested from our schools. It was proposed to start with a smaller number of schools. For \$12,000 they would sell the program to us to start in a school to see if we are successful. Healthy Dixie would pay the other \$12,000 needed. He asked if the District would be interested in starting a program at Washington Fields as an intervention program. Cheri Stevenson said the program is an 8-10 week program. Becky Dunn asked about maintenance of bikes and the cost. Cheri Stevenson said the program is to provide a life skill to students on how to take care of the bike. It is part of the curriculum to teach the students how to take care of the bike and teaches good health habits. Brent Bills said programs come and don't last a long time. He would like to know what is different. Cheri Stevenson said that there is a teacher that would like to run the program at Washington Fields. The bikes would stay at the school and the program would rotate through the students as part of an intervention program. We want a program that we can sustain and support. It would start next year.

ITEMS FOR BOARD REVIEW

Enrollment

Safe Schools

GRAMA Requests

Department Reports

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.

Reverence offered by Member Dunn

Welcome – Board President Kelly Blake

Pledge of Allegiance led by Member Hesson

Virtual Teacher Recognition – Richard Holmes and Nate Esplin

Nate Esplin explained that many students wanted to participate virtually last year with COVID. About 2000 students chose the virtual education option. The teachers being recognized were willing to teach virtually. Appreciation was expressed for all they did to keep the students educated with virtual learning. He also recognized Cheri Stevenson, Melissa Dietzel, and Tony Campbell for their help with the virtual learning. Teachers were recognized by the School Board and given a Bundt cake.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes

- a. **August 2, 2021 - Special Meeting of the Board of Education**
- b. **September 7, 2021 – Meeting of the Board of Education**
- c. **September 20, 2021- Special Meeting of the Board of Education**

1. Financial Report

- 2. Personnel and LEA Specific License Items**
- 3. Coral Canyon Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 4. Coral Cliffs Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 5. Hurricane Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 6. Enterprise High School TSSA Plan Change**
- 7. Red Mountain Elementary TSSA Plan Change**
- 8. Sunrise Ridge Intermediate TSSA Plan Change**

Becky Dunn asked about the Grow Your Own Grant. Brent Bills said there are 10 paraprofessionals and 10 counselors on a Grow Your Own Grant. They receive money toward education costs and salaries.

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

WHAT’S RIGHT IN WCSD SCHOOLS

Enterprise Elementary School – Principal Jason Brooks

Jason Brooks shared what is right at Enterprise Elementary. Enterprise is growing and they really appreciate the classroom addition planned for the school. They are currently using every space. This year are at 460 students and still growing. The school is a growth mindset school. They look for improvement wherever they can including: intellectual, physical, and emotional. The teachers are asked to find ways to incorporate all three in of each lesson. They are using Kagan skills. Students remember things they learn about and talk about those things. They are working on student engagement this year with everything they do. They are using WIN (What I Need) Time. Every student is monitored once a month to see what they need. They are doing small group programs to help students with reading. They also have a 3rd grade multiplication mastery program with a recognition t-shirt. In 6th grade they have a kindness crew that does birthday cards for everyone. He shared some of the extension programs at the school including: After School Reading Club, Homework, Agriculture Club, and Leverage Way to College Club. One community member is donating scholarship money for students who earn a PHD in the club. He shared the academic performance scores. There are 74% of the students on or above typical growth. The goal next year is 80%. At the school they say, “We are awesome, but let’s try to be more awesome”.

Fossil Ridge Intermediate School – Principal Jonathan Howell

Jonathan Howell shared what the school recently did at the September Parent Conferences. One goal was to increase stakeholder involvement by getting them in the building. The school did a BBQ at the Back-to-School Night. They did get families into the building. They then wanted evidence to show that parents really knew the school purpose and mission statement. They did a scavenger hunt to get evidence from parents and families. Students were encouraged to walk the parents through the scavenger hunt and explain the mission statement and values. The event was awesome. As an incentive, students were given T-Rex money to spend in the school store. In going through the survey, it was awesome to see the responses. They plan to do something similar each time they bring parents in with different questions. They were able to really introduce stakeholders to what is happening at Fossil Ridge Intermediate School.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON BOARD ACTION ITEMS

No public comments were given on Board Action Items.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

Special Education Policy and Procedures – Hollee Cullen

Hollie Cullen said the policy has been open for comments or feedback the past 30-days. No comments were received. The changes are just aligning our policy with the state policy and procedures.

Board Member Hutchinson presented a motion to approve the Special Education Policy and Procedures. Board Member Cox seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Work-based Learning Committee – Mike Hassler

Approval of this item was tabled.

Architect Tax Credit – Brent Bills

Brent Bills said Naylor Wentworth Lund Architects would like the opportunity to take the tax credits for designing an energy efficient building. We are not allowed to take the credits but can give them to the architect. It has been a joint effort. They are not the only business who has received the tax credit in the past.

Board Member Seegmiller presented a motion to approve giving the energy efficient tax credits to Naylor Wentworth Lund Architects. Board Member Stirland seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Policy 3635 Student Overnight Activities – Lyle Cox

Policy 7020 In-State Field and Activity Trips - Lyle Cox

Lyle Cox said both of the above policies deal with oversight of the supervision of students on activity trips. There has been a lot of discussion. It clarifies how many chaperones are required and that one must be an employee. Volunteers must have a background check. It also includes training that chaperones must be positioned on a bus to supervise all students. Some of the changes are clean-up work for the policy. The bus driver is to focus on driving and chaperones are to supervise the students. One additional comment includes not allowing loud music to be played on the bus as it tends to encourage students to get up and dance. Grades 8-12 will require two supervisors for trips over one-hour. Elementary trips would have two supervisors on the bus. Superintendent Bergeson said on occasion students are just being transferred from one local school to another. Those trips during the day would only require one supervisor for grades 8-12. Any trips beyond Cedar City or overnight will require two supervisors. Terry Hutchinson suggested one should only be allowed during daylight hours. After dark there should be two on the bus. Becky Dunn suggested clarification for roundtrip travel. David Stirland asked who does the background check included under 3.2.1.3. Lyle Cox said it is the District that does the background check. Becky Dunn said we may need to update Policy 7040 to apply the same rules. She also suggested that sports may want to be listed in the purpose for specific definitions.

Policy 3600 Distribution and Posting of Promotional Materials – Steven Dunham

Steven Dunham said this policy is being updated as Technology has been working on an electronic Send Out system for the advertising of flyers.

INFORMATION

Instructional Technology – Tony Campbell

Gabbi Young shared what is working in the transformation schools. The transformation schools are Bloomington Hills Elementary, Diamond Valley Elementary, and Hurricane Elementary. Each school is working on an instructional strategy. Those in the school look at what is working and then share it with others in the school. They are working on deeper learning and future ready skills. Technology is a tool to help with all learning.

REPORTS

Superintendent

Superintendent Bergeson recognized our CTE employees, Francisca Pena, Dave Gardner, and Jon Butler, who are working at state level of the Utah ATCE. He also noted that Kesha Schultz will also be participating on a statewide Human Resources committee. Superintendent Larry Bergeson mentioned that Bob Sonju and Washington Fields Intermediate were the focus of the October 2021 Utah Spotlight: Inspiring Educators. Superintendent Larry Bergeson also recognized Steven Dunham who received the Media Relations Award from the Utah Public Information Officers Association. He was nominated by Chris Jones of KUTV 2 News. Steven Dunham is valued for his professionalism, and he represents the District very well.

Board

No Board reports were given.

Association

Amy Barton said Friday time for elementary teachers has been a huge benefit for them. It helps to have the extra time. Amy Barton said the prep days coming back from breaks is also huge. Teachers have time to work as a team. Teachers would like to continue those days if the state will allow them. Amy Barton said the LETRS Training is so valuable and powerful. There are 170 teachers who have voluntarily taking the training. She also said that teachers have liked the change from Move This World to Second Step. It has been a positive change. Amy Barton mentioned that substitutes is always a concern and is a challenge. They want things to be normal, but it is hard when students are ill and miss school or when the teachers are out and require a sub. Some are having to help in other classrooms. They are hoping things will improve as it is definitely felt in the classroom. She said things are feeling better after eight weeks. She is glad to be in school and not virtual.

PTA/PTO/Community Council

MarChe Hinds said October is a busy month for PTA. Some schools are doing Mileage Club, Teacher Appreciation, White Ribbon Week, and Red Ribbon Week. PTA leaders are doing well and figuring out what is needed. She said that PTA leaders have been able to review the Second Steps. She is impressed with everything implemented.

PUBLIC OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD – 3 minutes each

Tom Jordan

Did not address the Board as requested.

Board President Kelly Blake adjourned the meeting at 5:35 p.m. as there was no further business to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT