

Easton School District No. 28  
Meeting of the Board of Directors, Workshop  
February 14, 2017

Jennie Marie Giovenale-Austin Library

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Lynn Lopez at 6:30 PM.

**Attendance:** Lynn Lopez, Chris Helgeson, Amy Grove

**Board Members Absent:** Jen Knox

**Staff Members Present:** Patrick Dehuff, Marilyn Fudge, Wandah Messinger, Jennifer Jensen, Steve Jensen

**Guests:** Jerry Martens, Larry Wyman, Dan Wasell, John R. Jensen, Myrna Jensen, Judy Zwiefenlofer, Lyn Zwiefenlofer, Sharon Carlson, John Carlson, Molly Fisher

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approve Agenda:** Chris Helgeson made a motion to approve the agenda for the February 14, 2017 workshop. Amy Grove seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Board Business:** Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor Steve Jensen and Superintendent Dehuff made a decision to close the school due to bad weather this winter. Steve Jensen was thanked for his work, and concern for the safety of our students and employees. The state requires that school districts have a total of 180 annual days of school. Therefore, the day when school was closed will need to be made up. Superintendent Dehuff recommended that the make-up day be scheduled on February 21, 2017, rather than the end of the school year. Amy Grove made a motion to approve February 21, 2017 as the make-up day. Chris Helgeson seconded the motion and the motion carried. Mary Roberts was recently hired as our new school nurse. She was retired when she applied for our school nurse position. She had previous experience as a school nurse but didn't realize how much regulations and demands of the school nurse position have increased over the years. She has decided to resign from the position but will graciously continue on until a replacement nurse is found. Mary Robert's letter of resignation was submitted to the board. Chris Helgeson made a motion to accept Mary Robert's resignation. Amy Grove seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Discussion:** There is a proposed development, Marion Meadows, that is off of Sparks road in Easton and within the Easton School District boundaries. Superintendent Dehuff, and the board, are hosting this workshop to discuss the possible impact to Easton School District if the development was approved. Dr. Dehuff distributed the section of the Environmental Impact Statement, February 2011, pertaining to the school district and went over some of the details in it. To begin with, on page 33-131, the report mentions student assessments of Washington Measurements of Student Progress and the High School Proficiency Exam. These tests have changed since the report and the state assessments for our students are called "Smarter Balance" assessments. It also refers to Initiative 728, which has been repealed by lawmakers. The report

states that transportation is provided for students living more than 2 miles from schools but that requirement is now 1 mile.

The Environment Impact Statement states that the school district may request the local jurisdiction to adopt school impact fees to pay up to 50 percent of school facility costs due to growth and refers to RCW 82.02.050. Information on impact fees was distributed. While there are provisions for potential impact fees, RCW 82.02.050 does not include language that would allow for up to 50 percent of the school facility costs to be paid by the local jurisdiction. In fact, one of the handouts on impact fees states that the 2015 Legislature has enacted changes that enables develop, upon request, to delay any impact fees until the time of: Final inspection, Issuance of the certificate of occupancy, or the closing of the first sale of the property.

Superintendent Dehuff stated that any impact fees does not account for the ongoing increase in expenditures that would come with a significant increase in student population. Easton School District operates under a small schools funding formula. While larger districts are adversely impacted by a reduction in student population, smaller districts that receive the small schools funding formula can be adversely affected by an increase in student population when the increase in expenditures is greater than the increase in revenues. Since two grades are taught in most classes at Easton School, an increase in student population can easily lead to single grades being taught, resulting in increases in staffing expenditures. Wandah Messinger, Business Manager, ran a simulation of increasing the student population by 37 students, which would require staffing an additional three teachers (because the existing classes would become overloaded) and the increase in staffing expenditures over the increase in revenue was approximately \$100,000 annually. And this just takes into account the cost of additional staffing of teachers. If another building was required, there would be all of the additional staff that is required to operate a separate school.


The increase cost of transportation was also discussed as our two bus runs are currently close to capacity now. This would require additional buses, bus drivers, and the facilities to house them since our current bus building is at capacity. The challenges of adding onto our existing school or building another school in a different location and the added costs of operating two schools in separate locations was discussed. Superintendent Dehuff shared information on the rates that our local taxpayers pay for the Maintenance and Operations levy, and is the lowest in Kittitas County and much more reasonable than most school districts in the state. He distributed the "School District 2016 Property Tax Rates and Certified Levies by Fund" which showed that Easton School district is listed at 261 out of 295 school districts in the state for the rate per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. In other words, there are 260 school districts (out of 295 districts) in the state that have higher rates per \$1,000 of assessed valuation on their local levies. Dr. Dehuff said that Easton School District is diligent in managing its resources effectively and always strives to be good stewards of its financial resources. He further stated that the District seeks grant funding, whenever possible, to keep its low rates. He said that he is voicing his concerns over the potential financial impact of the proposed development on Easton School District because he is mindful of the impact that taxes can have on our local community.

John Jensen asked if it would be a threat to Easton School if the local Maintenance and Operations levy didn't pass. He said that he is concerned because we have such a nice school

and, when you walk in the Easton School building, you see how the positive interactions between elementary and secondary students and that all of the students relate to each other no matter their age. He also mentioned that sports are available to all our students. Superintendent Dehuff said that Easton School is dependent on local levy funds. There was a time when local levy funds were used for the "extras" including extracurricular activities, sports, and supplemental or enrichment programs. However, school districts have become increasingly reliant on local levy funds to remain in operation. While we have a healthy fund balance, we would go through our reserves within a year or two if we failed to pass our Maintenance and Operations levy.

Jerry Martens stated that growth will come either way to the Easton area. If the residents or school don't feel they can support this development, they need to understand the loss to the area. Jerry Martens stated that he was involved in the development of Evergreen Valley Platt. Mr. Martens shared the tax base increased. He now represents Marion Meadows. John Carlson said that the local newspaper, Northern Kittitas Tribune is very supportive of Easton School. The articles that they write are all positive. The articles confirm how important the Easton School is to the community. Board Chair, Lynn Lopez thanked Dr. Dehuff for the information. She said that all the staff works hard to maintain the building and the busses. Lynn Lopez thanked everyone for attending the workshop.

**Meeting Adjourned:** At 7:24 PM, Chris Helgeson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Amy Grove seconded the motion and the motion carried.

  
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Patrick Dehuff  
Superintendent

  
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Lynn Lopez  
Board Chair