

Easton School District No. 28  
Meeting of the Board of Directors  
December 17, 2019  
Jennie Marie Giovenale-Austin Library

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chris Helgeson at 5:30 PM.

**Attendance:** Chris Helgeson, Amy Grove, John Jensen, Jen Phillips, April Simonson

**Staff:** Dawn Bechtholdt, Marilyn Fudge, Patrick Dehuff, Steve Eims, Carol Shapiro, Becky Houle, Ofelia Todd, Brian Todd, Marchel Allenbaugh, Dave Allenbaugh, Gretchen Jenkins, Tracy Van Lone, Lyn Cox, Steve Jensen, Jenny Jensen

**Board Members Absent:** None

**Guests:** Sarah Conner, Phillip Mehann, Gerald Rogers, Kara Gunderson

**Approve Agenda:** John Jensen made a motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting. April Simonson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Board Minutes:** April Simonson made a motion to approve the November 26, 2019 minutes. Amy Grove seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Communication to the Board:** Superintendent Dehuff has four letters from parents/relatives of students that pertain to the climate and culture within the school. They will be read during the portion of the agenda listed as Climate and Culture of Easton School.

**Board Report:** Chris Helgeson requested a leave of absence from the board beginning in January 2020 to attend EMT classes. Chris Helgeson will return to the board in June 2020. April Simonson made a motion to approve Chris Helgeson's request. Amy Grove seconded the motion and the motion carried. Chris Helgeson abstained from the vote.

**Climate and Culture of Easton School:** Superintendent Dehuff shared a handout of the PPT slides and handout on professional boundaries with the board from a recent presentation by Catherine Slagle from OSPI. Dr. Dehuff said that the presentation by Catherine Slagle was good and that all staff were encouraged to attend (note: the presentation was filmed for staff who couldn't attend the training). At tonight's meeting, the board would like to get feedback from the audience regarding the climate and culture of Easton School and how formal, or informal, our interactions should be with one another. Superintendent Dehuff started by talking about his daughter, Seneca who graduated from Easton School and had attended Easton School since preschool. The staff was supportive of her throughout her years as a student at Easton School. One of our teachers, Steve Eims, made such a great impression on her that she decided to enroll into the teaching program at Central Washington University (CWU). His son, Alden is currently a running start student at CWU and has also attended Easton School since he was in preschool. Alden still mentions how helpful Lyn Cox, science teacher at Easton School, was to him.

Chris Helgeson said that he was raised by a single mom and graduated from Easton School. He grew up knowing that the staff at Easton was always there to help him. Kara Gunderson, the parent of a preschooler, said that she had attended High School on the west side of the state, where teachers did not get to know individual students very well and that it was not very personal. They moved to Easton to give their daughter the opportunity to attend a small school, where close relationships can be formed. Phillip Meehan, a parent of two students who attend Easton School, said that he grew up in Easton. He is employed by the fourth largest school district in the state of Washington. He said relationships are more caring and personal at Easton School in comparison to larger schools. He moved his family back to Easton for his children's education. Both he and his wife know that their children can attend any event at Easton School without the worry of where they are or who they are with. Their children feel safe and secure as well.

Jenny Jensen, custodian, ASB Advisor, and Athletic Director, said that she attended Easton School from kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Jenny has been a part of Easton School her entire life. The students and parents trust her and know that they can call her and count on her to help them anytime. Jenny said that she is here to help our students feel cared about so that they can learn. Sandy Ferguson is a volunteer in the school library. She enjoys coming to Easton School to help and has been volunteering at the school in various areas since her granddaughter, Hailey was in kindergarten. Hailey is now 25 years old. Sandy Ferguson is known as Grandma Sandy to the students and staff.

Lyn Cox, science teacher, and Gear UP Director, said that she greets each child coming in the door every day with a big hello, and by their first name. She also acknowledged Julie Miller for her caring interactions with students, greeting each one of them by name and asking how they are doing as they come off of the bus and into the front door of Easton School. Lyn Cox said that some students come to her before putting their things away to talk or get a hug, if needed. Ms. Cox said that it is unacceptable for us to lose our right of who we are as individuals. It is not up to us to police each other and we can maintain professionalism and manage our own interactions with one another. Steve Eims, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, said that he is not sure what part of professional conduct is being perceived as being wrong. Are we not friends? Easton School is more than a school. Kids come to Easton School and know that they are coming into a family. Some of the students come with so much baggage. I can teach them, while being caring and supportive. They respond to that and it motivates them to learn.

Brian Todd, music teacher, has worked at two other small districts. He said that professionalism needs to be reviewed between students and staff. Informal can be too informal. Mrs. Allenbaugh's previous experience with special education students showed her there is a fine line when it comes to teacher's interactions with students and that it is okay to be cautious. Becky Houle, kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, said that the OSPI presentation was well done. She mentioned that there are situations that have been observed that could be wrong. We need to keep in mind the mindset and influences of people from the westside that are moving to our area. We need to be more professional with students. We should not be on social media with students, having meals outside of school with students, etc. Becky said that we are not a family. Family is a sacred group. Ofelia Todd, paraprofessional, said that everyone should be willing to learn the professional code of conduct. The staff and board need to be in the know.

Carol Shapiro, paraprofessional, said that the OSPI training was great. She said that everyone at Easton School is professional and there does not need to be any revisions to the way we interact with one another. Sarah Conner, a parent, said that she graduated from Easton School, and both of her children attend Easton School. Her children always feel safe here. Everyone is always helpful in any situation. Her children are here because of who we are at Easton School. She feels that if a teacher wants to change or fix anything in the district, they should be addressing bullying, hat issues, and other concerns, not the code of conduct. John Jensen, Board Director, said that he will hug a student that needs it.

Chris Helgeson excused himself from the meeting to attend a prior commitment at 6:30 pm. Amy Grove requested that the submitted letters be read out loud. Four letters from parents/relatives of students were read out loud by Board Directors. Phillip Meehan commented that to say Easton School isn't a family is wrong. He mentioned that a prior employee of Easton School helped save his life just by taking him to lunch at a critical time in his life when he was attending school here. If the district loses more students will it shut down? Would we have to take our children to Cle Elum? The employees of the school need to continue to be a family. Gretchen Jenkins, special education teacher, said that we do not have to have anyone police our actions for us. We all know how to use our best judgment, and we are fully capable to be responsible for our own actions.

April Simonson, Board Director, who has been included in email messages regarding this topic, said that we are not a doctor's office or an organization that tends to be more formal, and we should not try to change our school atmosphere to be like one. As a substitute teacher, parent, and board member, I would be offended if I was told how I should be addressed. Teachers need to develop a relationship with their students. The students know how to address a teacher, class to class. April Simonson continued with her thoughts about labor-management meetings. When there is a labor-management meeting, the union presidents are supposed to be representing their entire union membership. All union members should be included and provide input prior to a labor-management meeting. Jen Knox, Board Director, and parent, said that as a board member there are other areas that we should be working on. Amy Grove, Board Director, and parent, said that there are days when students struggle and sometimes just a smile helps. Her daughter knows that she can come to the office when she is having a hard day. We need to clarify what the problem is. We need a solution that is simple and everyone agrees with. We all have to be on the same page.

The discussion continued with questions regarding a bullet point list in the board packets that Board Director April Simonson mentioned. The list was submitted to Superintendent Dehuff after the labor-management meeting by the union president of the EEA (note: the complete list was not included in the board packet, just the bullet points that pertained to the topic of discussion on the board agenda). Questions were raised regarding the list by union members in the audience who had not seen it, or knew of it. They asked to see the list. Becky Houle said they would see it during their scheduled union meeting the next day.

At 7:35, the board announced a break in the meeting. The meeting reconvened at 7:55 pm.

**Reports:**

**Principal Report:** Dawn Bechtholdt reported that our technology specialist (contracted through ESD 105) is working with our staff to identify technology priorities. The CODE.org was a great event. The students in the TEALS program recently took a field trip to explore opportunities for college and career.

**Superintendent Report:** Dr. Dehuff mentioned that Anna Kerlee, substitute teacher, is finishing her Master's degree in applied technology. With the passage of our capital projects levy, we have the opportunity to expand and improve on implementing technology into our students' learning. A part of that is purchasing the technology equipment, and another part of it is the training of our staff to enhance the use of technology with student learning. Perhaps Anna Kerlee could help us with some of that training. The board agrees that more training for staff is important. Board members April Simonson and Amy Grove inquired about the upcoming bargaining with certificated staff.

**Consent Agenda:** John Jensen made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Jen Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Meeting Adjourned:** John Jensen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Amy Grove seconded the motion and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.

  
Patrick Dehuff  
Superintendent

  
Amy Grove  
Vice Board Chair