

Easton School District No. 28
Meeting of the Board of Directors
February 9, 2021

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

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

Swear in New Board Member: At the prior school board meeting, Phillip Meehan was appointed to the Board Director position that became available when Amy Grove resigned from the Board. Superintendent Dehuff thanked Phillip for his interest in serving his community as a Board Director and congratulated him on his appointment. Mr. Meehan recited the Director's Oath of Office. The Board of Directors welcomed Mr. Meehan to the School Board.

Attendance: John Jensen, Jen Phillips, April Simonson, Chris Helgeson, Phillip Meehan

Staff: Dawn Bechtholdt, Patrick Dehuff, Marilyn Fudge, Julie Miller, Jackie Tate, Jenny Jensen, Steve Jensen, Gretchen Jenkins, Marchel Allenbaugh, Mary Forry, Freida Ellison, Ofelia Todd, Phillip Derrick, Cece Badda, Rachel Henderson, Sydney Kretschman

Guests: Alex and Mike Tutino, Keri Kaestner, Kara Gunderson, Lindsay Albert, Dana Meehan, Charity Sawyer, Nancy Valenta, Toni Brenning, Gary Wargo

Board Minutes: Chris Helgeson made a motion to approve the January 26, 2021 minutes. Jen Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Communication to the Board: Superintendent Dehuff has received five email messages that are considered "Communication to the Board." Dr. Dehuff forwarded the email messages to the Board. Two of these email messages requested that the Board read their Communication to the Board during the meeting. Board Directors read the contents of these two letters.

Public Comment: Board Chairman, Chris Helgeson asked if there were any public comments, and requested that comments be kept to 3 minutes time-frame. Mary Forry asked if the Board would consider bringing students in 2 full days a week, and after all staff that wish to be vaccinated are, then bring the other students slowly back. Aaron Mostofi said that he moved his family to a home in Easton School District. Mr. Mostofi said that he appreciates all that has been done to prepare the school building to be a safe environment for the students. He mentioned that studies show that locking schools down is not the answer to slow the spread of Covid-19. Mr. Mostofi said that the people who work for him say the biggest stress factor has been that their children have been out of school. Phillip Meehan requested clarification on the current schedule of school days.

Board Report: April Simonson shared her concerns about the climate at Easton School. April and her family have lived here for 5 years. They were told how amazing Easton School is and that the school is a tightknit group of people who are there for the students. The students came

first and families were involved. Mrs. Simonson asked, “where has that gone?” We enrolled our son in Easton School because of Julie Miller who is at the front desk. Ms. Miller made us feel welcome, and we wanted to be here. Now, the Board is receiving “Communication to the Board” from parents who say that there are some staff members who are telling people to pull their kids from the school to make a point. The Board is working very hard to do what is best for our students and we are taking everything into consideration. The Board has said many times to the community and staff to come and talk to the board. There is an opportunity for Communication to the Board, and Public Comment at Board meetings and the Board has been transparent in their discussions and planning through this challenging school year.

Mrs. Simonson mentioned that she has been professionally attacked by certain teachers in the building. She has offered to help as a substitute teacher in any way that she can but has been treated poorly by some of the staff. April Simonson said that staff should be holding themselves to a higher standard and that we should do everything that we can to work together to improve the atmosphere at Easton School. She asks the question, “How do we build this up to get us back to what we were and where we can be?” John Jensen thanked April Simonson for expressing her concerns and mentioned the letter that the Board shared with the entire staff of Easton School last year, sharing some concerns and encouraging everyone to work together and do what is best for our kids. Other Board members agreed about the importance of a good school climate and shared some of their experiences and perspectives, both past and present, about Easton School. Jen Phillips mentioned that communication to parents from teachers needs to be consistent and provided to all in the same manner, regardless of whether a parent is a Board Director. Jen Phillips also expressed her concern about communication coming from a teacher to parents after reading several of the email messages from parents that were “Communication to the Board”.

Board Business: Superintendent Dehuff announced that he was recently diagnosed with cancer and will be starting chemotherapy treatment soon. His treatment plan will continue through the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. Superintendent Dehuff said that he is optimistic about his recovery but it will require that he work from his home since it is very important to avoid catching any type of illness when he is getting chemotherapy treatments. He said that Gary Wargo, who is recently retired from being the superintendent of Cle Elum-Roslyn School District has agreed to help us out as an administrative substitute for 2-3 days a week, if needed. Superintendent Dehuff said that he has worked with Gary Wargo on various projects and that he would do a great job as an administrative substitute. Dr. Dehuff and Gary Wargo will communicate via text, email, and phone on a regular basis and ensure that the district is well managed through the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. Dr. Dehuff said he will miss seeing everybody while he is undergoing treatment. A motion was made by Chris Helgeson to approve the hiring of Gary Wargo as an administrative substitute at the rate of \$400 per day. Jen Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Extension of School Day: April Simonson shared an idea on how to move forward with students coming back to school for full days. April Simonson has been part of our planning committee and has had discussions with other members of the planning committee, including Jackie Tate, Julie Miller, and Jenny Jensen on the logistics of bringing students back for full days. One issue is elementary students being served lunch. Ms. Tate has the kitchen area is spaced properly, and knows how to serve them. The food deliveries to remote learning students will continue. Ms.

Tate can prepare hot food for students and the kitchen is the staging area. The transition from elementary classrooms to the lunchroom would be staggered to ensure social distancing. Staff members will supervise lunch and continue to ensure safety and social distancing. If we follow the procedure, all the elementary students are fed lunches and social distancing is maintained. There was some discussion among the Board Directors. They all agreed that it would be best to extend our in-person instruction time to full days, 4 days a week, and start that soon for our early learners as long as we can maintain safety precautions. There was some further discussion about hiring a success coach to provide support for our remote learners. The Board also discussed the timing of extending the school day. The Board felt that it would be good to start with extending the school day for grades K-6 in a couple of weeks and start to plan for extending the day for grades 7-12 shortly after spring break. John Jensen made a motion to approve the K-6 students return to the building on February 23, 2021, for full 4 days a week, Tuesday through Friday. Phillip Meehan seconded the motion and the motion carried.

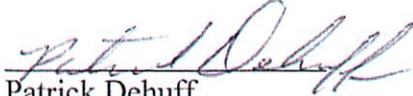
Adjourn to Executive Session: At 7:40 pm board chair Chris Helgeson stated the board would be going into an executive session. The session is estimated to be 45 minutes.


- 1) Superintendent Evaluation
- 2) Complaint against a public employee

At 8:32 pm, Board chair called for an extension of the executive session until 9:00 pm.

Regular Meeting: The Board transitioned from executive session to regular meeting at 9:00 pm.

Meeting Adjourned: Chris Helgeson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Phillip Meehan seconded the motion and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.


Patrick Dehuff
Superintendent


Chris Helgeson
Board Vice Chair