

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

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

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

Staff: Dawn Bechtholdt, Marilyn Fudge, Julie Miller, Jackie Tate, Gary Wargo, Freida Ellison, Gretchen Jenkins, Jenny Jensen, Steve Jensen, Mary Forry, Cece Badda, Becky Houle. Marchel Allenbuagh joined at 6:20 PM.

Board Members Absent: None

Guests: Dana Meehan

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

Board Minutes: John Jensen made a motion to approve the February 23, 2021 minutes. April Simonson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Communication to the Board: None

Public Comment: A question was asked about staff going out of state and returning. The question was “Do employees have to quarantine 14 days upon return?” Gary Wargo indicated that he would ask the school nurse, Rachel Henderson. Follow-up later in the week from the nurse indicated that there is no state mandate to quarantine upon return from out-of-state travel. The governor has requested that state residents do so, however, there is no mandate and there is no school policy requiring such. Further discussion with the school nurse resulted in the thought of sharing out a letter to staff and parents prior to Spring Break to indicate that the school will offer Covid rapid testing on Monday, April 12, to staff and students.

Update from Dr. Larson, Kittitas County Health Director: Dr. Larson has been in conversation with Commissioner Cory Wright, who is a strong supporter of reopening schools. Dr. Larson shared information on the current incident rates, which are down. December 2020 rates were down and remained down until the end of January. February and March rate increased which Dr. Larson attributed to people wanting to get outside. The increase included an AAU sports event where teams traveled to and from the event in groups and contracted positive results mainly from being in the same vehicle. As of March 7th, the incident rate was lowering. Currently in the county there are 2 in the hospital, ages 42 and 70. Each patient has underlying conditions. CWU is working to control student activities on and around campus as the college numbers seem to be increasing. CWU plans to be fully open in the Fall with full dorms, etc.

There has been no transmission within the schools. Dr. Larson reported school districts, parents and students are doing a good job cleaning and following safety protocols. Dr. Larson reported that there is an effort to replace social distancing requirements from 6 feet to 3 feet based on the results of recent studies. Dr. Larson commended the Easton and Cle Elum-Roslyn School nurses for having done an excellent job of monitoring student and staff health and for keeping our schools safe.

Board Business:

1. **Student Mentor/Distance Learning Specialist:** Interviews were held on March 8th. Steve Eims and Marchel Allenbaugh participated with principal Dawn Bechtholdt in the interview. Katie Estes was the single applicant for the position. Dawn and the interview team members were pleased with the applicant and believe she will support our remote learners very well. The team recommended that Katie be hired for this temporary position that ends at the end of the school year, June 17. April Simonson made a motion to approve the hiring of Ms. Katie Estes as the Student Mentor/Distance Learning Specialist. Jen Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried.
2. **Procedure 4220:** The district has an approved policy 4220 that speaks to complaints against staff or school programs. Procedure 4220 is a Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) procedure that outlines how the policy is administered. The procedure seeks to resolve problems at the lowest possible school administrative level. The procedure outlines the steps one would follow to make a complaint known and how the process works to resolve the issue. Gary Wargo shared that the procedure will be placed in with our school board policies and the district will begin to use this process.
3. **QMLATIV Update:** The district subscribes to a statewide fiscal and student management system through ESD 105. The state is moving to an updated version of this software and is converting districts to the new system on a schedule. Easton's conversion was scheduled for the Fall of 2021 in the month of October. Gary reported that this schedule does not work well for a small school with a small office staff. The conversion is time and labor intensive. Additionally, the months of September-November are busy months for the office staff as the new school year begins and several large state reports must be completed at the beginning of a new school year. The district is requesting that Easton's conversion to the new system be scheduled between January and April 2022. Gary contacted the ESD 105 superintendent, Kevin Chase, and asked for his support of our request.
4. **Substitute Teacher Pool:** Easton has 5 new substitute teacher candidates. Dawn Bechtholdt contacted CWU recently to ask if there were any teachers-in-training who might be interested in substituting at Easton School. We received a good response. Substitutes are difficult to find and this addition of names to our substitute pool is wonderful. On March 15th, we are planning an orientation of our substitute candidates at Easton School to meet our staff, receive required trainings and familiarize themselves with our processes.

5. **Update on the Extension of the Secondary 7-12 School Day:** Principal Bechtholdt has been meeting with the secondary staff and getting input on the processes and safety protocols for resuming in-person learning four full days a week for our secondary students, grades 7-12. The target date for this extension of the school day is April 13, the day students return from Spring Break. Dawn Bechtholdt and the school safety team went through the return-to-school safety guidelines we have in place and the team believes our return to extended in-person learning plan is good. The district will prepare a letter explaining our extension of the school day that will be sent home to the parents of secondary students and placed on our website. The district is planning for how to support the secondary remote students and that plan will also be shared with the families of students who will remain in remote learning.

Phillip Meehan asked who is notified if a student is tested positive. Rachel Hederson, our school nurse, is vigilant at checking with families of children who exhibit symptoms and/or test positive. Rachel is also in constant contact with the county health department to seek guidance on how to handle situations.

Closed Session: At 6:42 PM, board chair, Chris Helgeson, announced that the school board would be going into a Closed Session to discuss contract negotiations. At 7:30 PM, Chris Helgeson announced the Closed Session ended.

Executive Session: Board chair, Chris Helgeson, announced at 7:30 PM that the board would begin an executive session to discuss possible litigation and that the session would last 45 minutes. Should the session go longer, the board chair will return to announce the extension. The executive session ended at 8:20 PM.

Resume Regular Meeting: At 8:20 PM, the board returned and resumed the regular meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: John Jenson made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:21 PM. Phillip Meehan seconded the motion and the motion carried.


Patrick Dehuff, Superintendent


Chris Helgeson, Board Chair