

Easton School District No. 28
Meeting of the Board of Directors
Zoom Meeting, April 14, 2020 – 5:30 PM

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Amy Grove at 5:40 PM.

Attendance: Amy Grove, April Simonson, John Jensen, Jen Phillips

Staff: Dawn Bechtholdt, Marilyn Fudge, Patrick Dehuff, Cece Badda, Julie Miller, Jackie Tate, Jenny Jensen, Becky Houle, Gretchen Jenkins, Mary Forry, Dave and Marchel Allenbaugh, Lyn Cox, Cathy Hammerburg, Freida Ellison, Rachel Henderson, Ofelia & Brian Todd, Sara McCoy, Sydney Kretschman, Tracy VanLone, Carol Shapiro.

Guests: Maria Ramsey, Mel Blair

Communication to the Board: Communication was sent to the board electronically. The board reviewed the communication and agreed to respond. John Jensen will draft a letter and send it to Superintendent Dehuff, who will forward it to the rest of the board.

School Closure: Superintendent Dehuff provided an update on the school closure. Governor Inslee extended the stay at home order through May 4th, and has ordered that all schools remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. OSPI is in the process of updating its guidance to school districts and it is anticipated that OSPI will continue to update its guidance as we continue working through these unprecedented times. Our staff is working and planning to help meet student's needs. Jackie Tate, Julie Miller, Melissa Sandby, Jenny Jensen, and Steve Jensen have been working on ensuring the distribution of food to our students. We applaud them for their dedication to our students and their families. We are working on ideas for our teachers and paraprofessionals to provide instructional support in a remote learning environment. This will continue to be an evolving situation as we try to provide instruction and support but not overwhelm students and their families during the process.

Mrs. Bechtholdt shared that we continue to search for resources for students. There are parents working from home that have multiple students in a home. There was a 90% response during conference week. We are planning on having a more formal schedule to follow soon. OSPI have many changes that affect us and the rules can change daily. Teachers check in with students a couple of times a week. The elementary team rolled out work in the form of quests that are child related. Music and PE are incorporated in as well. The secondary staff is rolling out a project. There are TEALS volunteers that work with our students daily.


Resolution # 453: Superintendent Dehuff presented the Board of Directors with a proposed Resolution (#453) that many school districts in Washington State are adopting. It allows the suspension of current board policy when the suspension of current board policy is necessary to implement written guidance from OSPI relating to COVID-19 for the duration identified in the Governor's order of April 6, 2020 and any subsequent order of school closure. April Simonson made a motion to approve Resolution # 453. Jen Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried.

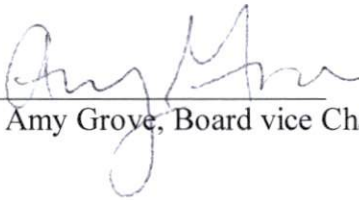
Budget Cuts: Superintendent Dehuff and Business Manager, Freida Ellison costed out the ideas that were submitted in the survey responses. There was a total of 50 survey responses. Two of these survey responses were blank, giving us 48 responses. The survey responses were anonymous and people could respond more than once, if they wished to. Budget cuts are always difficult. Easton has had a balanced budget every year over the past 12 years, except this current school year. This is primarily because of the cap on our Educational Programs and Operations levy. This is unfortunate because we already had the lowest local school tax rate in Kittitas County and one of the lowest rates in the State before the levy caps. The new law reads that school districts are capped at \$2.50 per thousand of assessed valuation or \$2,500 per student, which is less. We were at approximately \$1.00 per thousand of assessed valuation before the levy cap and now we are at less than 40 cents per thousand of assessed valuation because of the clause that says or, \$2,500 per student, whichever is less. This caused us to lose over ½ of our local school levy and we need to make budget cuts to maintain a healthy fund balance.

There will be no decision on budget cuts made at this board meeting tonight. Rather, it is an opportunity for the Board to consider various options of budget cuts, now that they have identified from the survey results and costed out by Superintendent Dehuff and Business Manager, Freida Ellison. One of the ideas presented was cost shifting of some payroll costs from the general fund to capital projects. It is common for school districts to cost shift some of the payroll costs of personnel who spend time coordinating or working on capital projects. Superintendent Dehuff recommends that some cost shifting of wages could occur with his wage, Steve Jensen's (transportation and maintenance supervisor), Freida Ellison (business manager), and Joe Moore (contracted with ESD 105 for technology services). In addition, some of the costs for our subscription educational services that enhance and supplement classroom instruction could be transferred to the library fund provided these services can be utilized on the library computers.

Jen Phillips mentioned the difference in revenue based on student enrollment. While we can't guarantee our enrollment will increase next year, we should do everything we can to increase student enrollment. Discussions on combining administrative positions were discussed, as well as reductions in staffing of paraprofessionals, reducing hours for accounts payable, cuts to counseling, cuts to custodial staff, combining preschool with kindergarten, and reductions in substitute costs, classroom budgets, printing supplies, and materials. There was also a discussion about reducing costs for extracurricular activities but the Board of Directors expressed concern over any reduction in programs for our students. The Board of Directors will have a regular meeting on April 28th, where they can make decisions regarding budget cuts and keep to the time-frame that is required to give proper notice to any staff members who are affected by the budget cuts.

Meeting Adjourned: April Simonson made a motion to adjourn the school board meeting. John Jensen seconded the motion and the motion carried. The board meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.


Patrick Dehuff
Superintendent


Amy Grove, Board vice Chair