

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

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Amy Grove at 5:35 PM.

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

**Staff:** Patrick Dehuff, Marilyn Fudge, Dawn Bechtholdt, Lyn Cox, Gretchen Jenkins, Jenny Jensen, Ofelia Todd, Brian Todd, Becky Houle, Dave and Marchel Allenbaugh, Carol Shaprio, Sara McCoy, Tracy VanLone, Phil Derrick, Julie Miller, Jackie Tate, Jenny and Steve Jensen, Cece Badda, Mary Forry, Cathy Hammerburg, Rachel Henderson

**Board Members Absent:** Chris Helgeson

**Guests:** Maria Ramsey, Keri Kaestner, Monica Gray, Alex Tutino, Mel Blair, Austin Heyer

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

**Board Minutes:** The Board had previously been sent the minutes from the board meetings on March 10, 2020; March 24, 2020; and April 14, 2020 for their review. Jen Phillips mentioned that there was a typo in the minutes of March 24, 2020 and that the minutes of April 14, 2020 needed to include the discussion of furloughs. April Simonson made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 10, 2020, March 24, 2020, and April 14, 2020 school board meetings with the corrections that Jen Phillips mentioned. John Jensen seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Communication to the Board:** Superintendent Patrick Dehuff emailed each board member a letter that was communication to the board.

**Public Comment:** There were four public comments that were submitted and each one was read by one of the Board of Directors. Sherri Burgess mentioned using the school as a community center, and open the gym for basketball and volleyball, before and after school daycare, community dances, and a farmer's market. Keri Kastner and Rachel Henderson mentioned the need to keep our existing preschool program at Easton School. Reasons that were given included that we have a proven program that is already successful and that students are more likely to continue their education at Easton School if they have the option to attend preschool here. Carol Shapiro mentioned the need for a full-time principal and the advantages of having a full-time principal instead of contracting out or reducing the existing position. She also mentioned the need to have someone who is able to lead the students and staff and that it was a challenging time for the school and students with the COVID-19 situation.

**Reports:**

**Financial:** Business Manager Freida Ellison reviewed the financial budget status reports, trends, and enrollment with the Board (reports are attached).

**Staff:** No report.

**Student Representative:** No report

**Principal Report:** Mrs. Bechtholdt shared that Easton School was one of 391 schools in the State of Washington who were acknowledged for an improvement in student achievement growth of the school's Hispanic students.

**Superintendent Dehuff:** We are in an unprecedented time as we, along with schools throughout Washington State and the nation, are working on providing education and support to students and their families in a remote learning environment. Our staff is working hard to meet the ever-changing rules and regulations association with the closure of schools, and are reaching out to our students and their families on a regular basis.

**Board Business:**

**Policies:** The State Board of Education has recommended the approval of the following policies to allow flexibility in how students can be awarded credit. Policy 2402 (English Language Arts), Policy 2403 (Math), Policy 2404 (Science), Policy 2405 (Social Studies), Policy 2406 (The Arts), Policy 2407 (Health and Fitness), Policy 2408 (Integrated Environmental and Sustainability), Policy 2413 (Equivalency Credit Opportunities), and Policy 2418 (Waiver of High School Graduation Credits). April Simonson made a motion to approve all board policies that are listed above. Jen Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Budget Cuts:** Amy Grove, Board Vice-Chair, started the discussion on budget cuts by saying that the Board would prefer to avoid any reduction in force (RIF) of staff members if it could be avoided. However, we are looking at a \$200,000 budget deficit if the Board of Directors does not make some hard decisions, including the option of RIFs.

Superintendent Dehuff mentioned that cost shifting of a portion of wages of the superintendent, maintenance supervisor, business manager and the contracted amount for technology support could be shifted from the General Fund to the Capital Project Fund for the amount of time that is allocated towards the planning and implementation of Capital Projects. This can be done and is appropriate regardless of whether there is a budget shortfall, provided the cost shifting of payroll expenses (wages and benefits) is proportional to the percentage of time that is allocated towards Capital Projects. The estimate of the savings to the General Fund with this cost shifting is \$66,074 annually over the next four years. Cost shifting from the General Fund to the Library Fund of educational subscriptions that can be utilized in the library is estimated to be \$15,000. April Simonson made a motion to shift the cost of the portion of payroll expenses for staff who work on Capital Projects from the General Fund to the Capital Project Fund and a shift in costs from the General Fund to the Library Fund for educational subscriptions that can be utilized in the library. Jen Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Jen Phillips discussed the option of furloughs. She mentioned that there are a lot of people who are being furloughed and that they can collect unemployment. Freida Ellison and Superintendent Dehuff have been doing some research on this topic. They have reached out to ESD 105 and our



district attorney to get their advice on this option. The Board discussed the survey results and the options for budget cuts. Utility costs, paper and printing costs, classroom budgets, field trips, substitute costs for certified and classified staff, professional development, and other miscellaneous costs were discussed. Regarding personnel costs, the principal position, paraprofessional position, accounts payable position, custodian position, and the preschool program was discussed and cost savings of wages and benefits were calculated by reducing the positions to  $\frac{3}{4}$  time,  $\frac{1}{2}$  time, or eliminating the position. After discussing various options of staff reduction, John Jensen made a motion to eliminate one paraprofessional position for the upcoming 2020-21 school year. April Simonson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

April Simonson mentioned that a lot of the survey responses had to do with reductions in administration. There was a discussion of whether to reduce the principal position and, if so, whether the cut should be to a  $\frac{1}{2}$  time position or whether it should be to a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time position. The Board was split on whether to cut the principal position to  $\frac{1}{2}$  time or  $\frac{3}{4}$  time. Superintendent Dehuff advised the Board that they cannot approve a motion without a majority of board members present voting in approval. Jen Phillips asked if there could be another option besides a  $\frac{1}{2}$  time or  $\frac{3}{4}$  time principal position. Superintendent Dehuff said that the options of a  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  time principal position were provided to give examples of cost savings. He informed the board that they could consider any percentage of a reduction of any position that they were considering for a reduction in force (RIF). The Board discussed the option of a reduction in force (RIF) to a .63 FTE principal position. Jen Phillips made a motion to do a reduction in force (RIF) to a .63 FTE principal position. April Simonson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Adjourn Meeting:** John Jensen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Amy Grove seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

  
Patrick Dehuff  
Superintendent

  
Amy Grove  
Vice Board Chair