

Easton School District No. 28
Meeting of the Board of Directors
September 22, 2020
Zoom Meeting

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

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

Staff: Dawn Bechtholdt, Marilyn Fudge, Patrick Dehuff, Gretchen Jenkins, Becky Houle, Cathy Hammerburg, Cece Badda, Freida Ellison, Jennifer and Steve Jensen, Rachel Henderson. Joining the meeting late: Sydney Kretschman, Marchel Allenbaugh

Guests: Maria Ramsey, Phillip Meehan, Stephanie Porter, Alex Tutino, Michael Tutino, Keri Kaestner

Approve Agenda: Superintendent Dehuff requested a change in the agenda to include the resignation of Board Director Amy Grove. John Jensen made a motion to approve the amended agenda for tonight's meeting. Jen Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Board Minutes: April Simonson made a motion to approve the minutes from the board meeting on September 8, 2020. Jen Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Communication to the Board: Upon receipt of a letter (attached to an email message) addressed to the Superintendent and the Board of Directors, Superintendent Dehuff forwarded the letter to the Board. The letter was from a group of parents who expressed their concerns with remote learning and asked when the school will reopen for in-person instruction. The parent who signed the letter (on behalf of herself and other families) requested that the main points of the letter be discussed in the Board meeting. The main points of concern that were covered in the letter are as follows;

“A child learning through a computer screen for fundamental academic skills especially the younger students is not adequate.

- Students learn best in a classroom setting with a person in front of them & with hands on materials and visuals.
- The Moby Max website is not keeping students logged in; there are hiccups, and stalls. These programs are not meeting our children's needs or targeting their correct level for placement.
- Zoom meetings are not always streaming without glitches. The younger children struggle to correctly mute or unmute themselves, parents must sit by their child's side to monitor their behavior & keep them focused, which then leads to the children not acting like themselves or showing reservations in their willingness to speak to the class.
- Most households need both mom and dad working to maintain financial stability. The school closure has impacted several families harshly regarding financial issues!
- Thorp and Kittitas schools have executed an in person hybrid model.
- Why is it expected that mothers should be giving up their seat in their careers to support their

children through virtual learning? This weight on the shoulders of most women or parents is something we as a society should be monitoring!

- For the working parents, they are forced to do virtual learning with their children at the end of the day when everyone is tired and tensions are high. Families need to be coming together for dinner at the end of the day, not stressing about entries into Moby Max.
- These high tension learning atmospheres in the home is absolutely counter-productive and extremely non conducive to a young learning mind.
- Variables within the home such as younger siblings, or older siblings are distracting to a child; for example, my 19-month old pulls on my daughter throughout our learning sessions and is exceedingly interruptive. Mothers who are home are forced to prioritize homeschooling their child over the needs of the younger child in the home!
- Children's educational, social, and mental needs should not be compromised any more than it already has been."

There was a general discussion about each of the bullet points in the letter. Further discussion on this topic is further down on the agenda under Board Business.

Public Comment: During public comment, several parents gave their input regarding the challenges of remote learning.

Reports:

Staff: April Simonson gave a staff report. April Simonson said that it is amazing to hear the students' voices and see their faces. She is initially focusing on making good connections with each student and making sure that everybody has what they need. Students have also shared when things were not going well, and changes were made.

Principal Report: Principal Dawn Bechtholdt said that we have made connections with all of our students and made sure that those who did not have a good internet connection were provided with a hotspot. We are working on building routines and going in person to deliver materials. Our learning management system, Schoology is connected and we have training on October 5th. We are having weekly planning meetings as we prepare for a Hybrid model.

Superintendent Report: Superintendent Dehuff thanked the parents who wrote the letter that was discussed in "communication to the Board". He said that he really appreciated the parents for reaching out and letting us know their specific concerns. Superintendent Dehuff mentioned that everybody is trying hard to do their best under these difficult circumstances. He agreed that remote learning is difficult and it creates a sense of urgency to get our students back for in-person instruction. However, we also understand concerns from families who have expressed safety concerns about opening up for in-person instruction. We have had good discussions during our planning sessions as we brainstorm ideas to keep our students and their families, and our staff safe when we bring back our students for in-person instruction. We will continue to work on improving technology and want to hear from families if they are having any difficulty with connectivity. Superintendent Dehuff thanked John Jensen for his advocacy for the electronic signs that show the speed of vehicles as they enter the school zone.

Board Report: John Jensen mentioned that the County will be painting the speed limit on the street in the school zone. He also mentioned that there is a virtual meeting for public comment on October 6th, at 2 PM regarding the Marian Meadows Development agreement. John Jensen mentioned that they are not in compliance with requirements of the development agreement and encouraged residents to attend the meeting on October 6th.

Jen Phillips asked about signing up for the annual conference that the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) sponsors. Superintendent Dehuff mentioned that the dates of the conference are November 18-20, 2020 and that it will be held virtually. Marilyn Fudge will register board members who can attend the conference.

Board Business:


Policy 3241: Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) recommends policy changes to school districts. WSSDA has recommended some changes to Policy 3241, Student Discipline. The Board was provided a copy of an updated Policy 3241 that includes the changes recommended by WSSDA as a first read. The updated Policy 3241 will be on the agenda for the board meeting on October 27th.

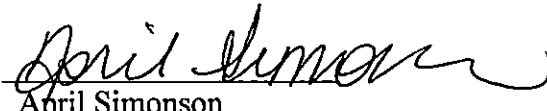
Update on School Reopening: The Board of Directors thanked the families for sharing their concerns in their "communication to the Board". Board Director April Simonson stated that we have been discussing the various plans (remote, hybrid, all students back to in-person instruction) at board meetings and planning meetings where students, parents/guardians, staff, and community members were invited to attend. The Board understands the concerns but is keeping our students and their families, and our staff's safety a priority. We are in the process of developing safety measures and plans for a Hybrid model, and carefully tracking guidance from Public Health, which evolves and changes over time. The district recently put out a survey for students, parents/guardians, and staff. While some families want to move ahead with some form of in-person instruction as soon as possible, there are others who would prefer that their students continue in a remote learning environment because of safety concerns. After some discussion, the Board of Directors would like to have a meeting scheduled next week, on September 29th for further discussion on this topic. This will give an opportunity for students, parents/guardians, and staff to respond to the survey and for the Board of Directors to read the responses.

Resignation of Amy Grove: Board Director Amy Grove submitted her resignation. Amy has enjoyed being on the Board but made this decision to be able to focus on her family. Amy Grove has been a long-term resident in our community and her family homesteaded here many years ago. Superintendent Dehuff said that Amy Grove has been an advocate for all students at Easton School and that he has really enjoyed working with Amy and appreciates her passion and dedication. Amy Grove's fellow Board members also spoke about how great Amy is to work with and how much she will be missed. Jen Phillips made a motion to accept Amy Grove's resignation from the Easton School District Board of Directors. April Simonson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

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. Chris Helgeson seconded the motion and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 pm


Patrick Dehuff
Superintendent


April Simonson
Board Director