

Easton School District No. 28
Meeting of the Board of Directors
September 8, 2020
Zoom Meeting

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by April Simonson at 5:30 PM.

Attendance: John Jensen, Jen Phillips, April Simonson,

Staff: Dawn Bechtholdt, Marilyn Fudge, Patrick Dehuff, Gretchen Jenkins, Mary Forry, Becky Houle, Julie Miller, Jackie Tate, Cathy Hammerburg, Cece Badda, Marchel Allenbaugh

Guests: Terri Campbell

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: Jen Phillips made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 25, 2020 school board meeting. John Jensen seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Communication to the Board: County Commissioner Laura Osiadacz sent an email message to Superintendent Dehuff and the Board of Directors expressing her support of Easton School and her willingness to help in any way that she can. Ms. Osiadacz requested that her email message be shared with the school board. Superintendent Patrick Dehuff read the email message from Laura Osiadacz.

Public Comment: Superintendent Dehuff has not received any public comments in writing. He asked if anyone attending the zoom meeting had public comments that they wished to make. There was none.

Reports:

Principal Report: Principal Bechtholdt discussed the training that teachers had on remote learning prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year. Tracy Van Lone and Sydney Kretschman gave a presentation to the teachers on Schoology, a Learning Management System that will help our teachers provide remote learning, and will also be beneficial for classroom instruction when students return to Easton School in person. Tracy Van Lone and Sydney Kretschman will be teacher leaders this school year, and help their colleagues learn how to utilize technology and our Learning Management System, Schoology. Training continued with a presentation by a trainer from Moby Max, which provides a variety of online assessments and learning tools for students. Our school nurse, Rachel Henderson reviewed safety protocols on COVID-19, and provided additional training on the use of an Epi pen for anaphylaxis, the use of inhalers for asthma, and on a variety of other health related topics.

Superintendent Report: Superintendent Patrick Dehuff acknowledged all the hard work that

the Easton School staff has been doing. He stated that all of the staff is committed to doing their very best to help students and provide support to families during remote learning, and will continue to do their best when we transition to having our students return in person to Easton School. Dr. Dehuff thanked Principal Bechtoldt for the hard work that she did through the summer and for her contributions towards helping him develop the Easton School Reopening Plan. He mentioned that families who do not have a good internet connection have been provided with a hot spot.

Board Report: John Jensen personally thanked everyone for their hard work. Jen Phillips has been researching apps for health screening that parents can also use at home. Ms. Phillips attached the information to the chat room on the zoom meeting.

Board Business:

Woodshop Class: A discussion was held regarding the plan for woodshop while we are teaching remotely. Principal Bechtoldt and Dave Allenbaugh, our woodshop teacher met this summer to review lessons for woodshop that could be done remotely. Mr. Allenbaugh has safety videos for lessons when working with construction. He plans to send home kits with various tools. Students have asked for special projects. Currently, there are 6 students enrolled in the woodshop class.

Staffing: Dr. Dehuff thanked April Simonson for accepting the position as a substitute teacher for our science classes while we continue to advertise and search for a science teacher. The English teaching position was also open because Marchel Allenbaugh requested a transfer to fill the vacant 6th grade position, which was open because Sydney Kretschman requested a transfer to fill the 2nd/3rd grade position when Sara McCoy retired. Superintendent Dehuff informed the Board that he hired Jessica Lewis for the English teaching position. Ms. Lewis was working as a music teacher for Kittitas elementary school and was RIF'd (reduction in force) from Kittitas School District at the end of the 2019-20 school year because of budget cuts. Superintendent Dehuff mentioned that Jessica Lewis is a second-year teacher with three teaching endorsements (middle and high school English and Social Studies, and K-12 Music). He acknowledged the accomplishments that Ms. Lewis has done so early in her career. He mentioned that she interviewed very well for the position and it was obvious that she puts her highest priority on connecting with students and doing her very best to provide them with a quality education. Jen Phillips made a motion to approve the hiring of Jessica Lewis. John Jensen seconded the motion and the motion carried.


Superintendent Dehuff made a recommendation to the Board of Directors to reinstate Principal Bechtoldt to a full-time position. Last spring, Superintendent Dehuff recommended to the Board of Directors to initiate cuts to preserve our fund balance, which had been impacted by mandatory caps by the State to our local levy funds. Easton School District has had the lowest local school taxes in the County for many years, but we still lost over ½ of our levy funds due to State laws that have unfairly punished small school districts. A portion of the principal positions was RIF'd this past spring, from a full-time position to a .63 position because of the budget deficit that the Easton School District was facing.

Dr. Dehuff recommendation to reinstate the principal position to full-time was based on several

factors. First, the administrative work load has increased substantially and we need to continue to be responsive to students and their families as we embark on remote learning and then transition to having students come back to school, while maintaining social distancing and other safety measures. Second, our ending fund balance is much better than we anticipated that it would be at the end of the 2019-20 school year. Third, we have had some additional personnel changes that reduces our expenditures. One is a retirement of a teacher who was at the top of the salary schedule, and another is that we had two paraprofessionals retire. These retirements will reduce our expenditures during the 2020-21 school year.

Superintendent Dehuff has been working with Business Manager Freida Ellison on factoring in the cost savings and the district can afford to reinstate the full-time principal position due to the improved fund balance and the cost savings mentioned above. April Simonson is pleased to hear that the ending fund balance is better than we thought it would be last spring when the budget cuts were made. Mrs. Simonson said she supports Dr. Dehuff's recommendation to reinstate Principal Bechtholdt to a full-time position. The other board members in attendance, John Jensen and Jen Phillips also stated that they were in favor of the recommendation to reinstate the principal position to full-time. Jen Phillips made a motion to reinstate the full-time principal position for the 2020-21 school year. John Jensen seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned: John Jensen made a motion to adjourned the meeting. Jen Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 pm.


Patrick Dehuff
Superintendent


Chris Helgeson
Board Chair