



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

Elementary moves to four days, secondary stays hybrid Board continues to monitor spread of COVID-19 in schools

The Board of Education of the Davis School District voted 6-1 Wednesday evening to move ahead with its earlier decision to have elementary school students return to school for four days of in-person, face-to-face instruction.

Board members said they weighed a lot of information in coming to their decision. Board Member Julie Tanner said the lower numbers at the elementary level and the easier transition mid-term led her to believe that was the appropriate move.

During the Sept. 15 meeting, Assistant Superintendent John Zurbuchen said the number of cases in Davis County per 100,000 elementary students during the first week in September was 29 and the number of cases per 100,000 secondary students in the county was 143.

Fridays will be limited remote-learning days and teacher preparation days for all students.

That said, the school board will also continue to monitor the spread of COVID-19 and may make further adjustments in the future. Superintendent Reid Newey said that includes deciding on a school-by-school basis regarding any outbreaks.

“We have agonized over this since the beginning of March,” Newey said. “We are ultimately concerned about the health of our staff and realize that is where the education starts and happens is in our schools. We certainly recognize the strain this has put on families and students. There are no easy answers.”

The board had previously decided on Sept. 15 to return all students to a schedule of four days of in-person instruction and one day of remote learning. After the number of COVID-19 cases rose in secondary schools and after receiving feedback from students, parents and teachers, the board decided to keep secondary students on the hybrid schedule through the end of the first term.

Board Member Cheryl Phipps said this has been one of the hardest issues she has dealt with. The fair thing, she said, is to make a decision and stick with it so families, teachers and students can plan ahead. However, she said she also recognized the importance of being able to make a change based on numbers.

Board Member Marie Stevenson said despite the division, everyone wants the same four things.

Students begin new schedule

The four-day Monday through Thursday schedule began Sept. 28 for elementary school students. Junior high and high school students remain on a hybrid schedule until the beginning of the second term on Nov. 2.

In a related note, a survey posted in myDSD Sept. 21 requested that parents indicate whether they wish to change their student enrollment to/from Davis Connect.

That survey is closed for elementary students and goes through Wednesday, Oct. 14 for secondary students.

Enrollment change requests will be processed when the district moves away from the hybrid model at each level.

“We want our students to have the best education possible. We want our students and teachers to be safe and healthy. Third, we care about the social, emotional and mental well-being of all of our students, teachers and our families. Finally, we want to keep all schools open.”

Board Vice President Liz Mumford said: “We recognize the ongoing challenges for students, families and educators. The board is committed to continuously reviewing new data and mitigating safety risks as students come back to school.

“We all have a shared responsibility as a community to getting to Nov. 2 and having our cases low enough to get our students back in school,” she said. “We share a commitment with our community to make choices that will get us to full opening. We are all in this together.”

Board President John Robison was the one dissenting vote.

“I certainly appreciate people who have said to me ... that this must be really hard for you and your board,” Robison said. “We realize that this decision, as monumental as it is, as big as it is, makes it hard for parents, makes it hard for students, makes it hard for teachers. That’s where the real difficulty comes, is with the people we serve.”

Robison said his decision came after studying the issue, questioning other districts, speaking with parents and talking to teachers.

District promotes positive experiences for diverse populations

The district is offering continued equity training for staff and students to promote positive experiences for all.

“We want to ensure that we have a positive learning environment for all of our students and diverse populations by having supports in place and encourage recruitment to address the needs of our diverse population,” said Educational Equity Director

Bernardo Villar during a workshop presentation.

Trainings have already begun with staff throughout the district. A new pilot program for antibias training has been set up to work with students at Buffalo Point, West Clinton, Sunset, Crestview, Wasatch, Adelaide and Foxboro Elementary Schools, North Davis and South Davis Junior High Schools and Layton and Northridge High Schools.

The district’s Equity Depart-

ment is collaborating with the Teaching and Learning and Social Emotional Learning Departments to instruct students in the pilot program about diversity, race, disabilities, gender and other socioeconomic areas.

“When we talk about diverse populations, we look at different aspects, not just color of skin. We want to be equitable and make sure our services are equitable throughout the entire district,” Villar said.