

Uintah Elementary School Community Council Meeting

August 13, 2020

4:45 – 6:00 pm

Open Meeting

Bruce Simpson, Amy Taylor, Ellen Schwede, Jacob, Amanda Funai, Carol Theurer, Melissa Jansen, Jennifer Foth, Erika Hill, Caroline Moreno, Melissa Ford, Angie Carter, Samuel Hanson

General Discussion - Reopening School

Expectations re: student/community events, yearbook, fundraising, parent volunteers

Jen expressed concern about yearbook. Deadline is in early spring so there is time to make decisions. Jacob suggests adding a continuing agenda item to continue to come back to it. Jen asks for ideas for the book before next meeting. Carol says teachers take their own photo when they do their in-school assessment.

August/September timeframe – In-person meetings and assessments

Bruce reports that they are finalizing class lists based on feedback from parents and teachers. Currently around 435 students, down from last year. Parents will sign up using Canyon Creek for 45-minute (max) meetings with teachers in person, with 15-minute cleaning period in between. This is still getting set up; hopes it will be live by next week. Main goal of these meetings is relationship building. Parents asked not to bring siblings. Assessments will be different by grade. Upper grade students will be asked to take half a RISE math blueprint, which can't really be done in an hour, and can't be done remotely (secure test). There will be discussion tomorrow to see how to address this issue. Carol reports that students will receive their printed materials at these meetings. Computers will also be handed out. No sharing of computers as happened in the spring, because students will likely have overlapping Zoom commitments.

How instruction will look this fall

Bruce is excited, in light of all the work that has gone into making this school year effective and safe. Focus is on student success. Teachers have been working all summer on Canvas and doing training provided by the District. Zoom licenses have been purchased, and NearPod, Newsela are some of the other resources to which teachers will have full access. Carol reminds that parents asked for more live instruction. For some this will be synchronous computer time, but teachers have the option to pre-record. Angie mentions that teachers will be recording their synchronous meetings for later asynchronous use by kids who can't attend school during the day, and Carol says that 3rd grade is doing both: recording synchronous meetings and pre-recording. Jacob is concerned about the burden on the teachers of all these recordings and tracking kids. He asks if there is a plan to reassess the workload. Bruce is looking at ways to utilize the paraprofessionals to support this type of learning. K and 1 will likely need the most support, both while on-line and in other ways. Looking to hire someone specifically for 6th grade. Regarding parent concerns on feedback, first thing is to communicate with teachers early and often. There will be weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings to help facilitate the best use of this teaching approach. Some parents are forming 'learning pods'. Caroline asks if there are efforts to connect parents to these pods? Are there any lists? Bruce has only heard of people self-

organizing. Amy mentions groups on FB connecting families and teachers. Melissa has heard from a few parents. She wants to let the teachers continue to teach the classes and not have parents insert their own instruction. Caroline was thinking more of social aspect and as a complement.

Art, Drama, Music, Phys Ed.

Melissa asks about subjects like art and music: would pods be good for this? Bruce will discuss this at the school-wide meeting. Uintah is hiring a new art para. Art, drama, and PE are under discussion, as well as library. Bruce has asked the computer teacher to support first grade, since a pull-out class doesn't make sense this year. Tanner Dance has reached out; Bruce wants to see how to incorporate some of these fun things. Also, the Counselor, working with classes: how can she be in the schedule? Caroline asks about violin and band: Bruce just heard from Adam saying that the music dept is working on how to do this. Currently there is a plan for asynchronous classes for 4th/5th; 6th will have one live class per week. Students will stick with what they were doing last year.

Tech needs

In terms of tech support: teachers will be able to reset the student passwords. During the individual meetings, teachers will show students and parent their Canvas page. After that, the paras will be trained to assist with Canvas questions. Training is coming on the 24th.

Metrics and Switching Teaching Modalities

Amy asks about the Town Hall mentioning a possible switch back to Hybrid on Oct. 9. Melissa says that any transition time would be a grading period. The first possible one of these would be Oct 9, with a confirmation date needed from parents by Sep. 22, although it seems unlikely to be that early. Metrics for the District are: test percentage positivity of less than 5%, and fewer than 10 new cases per 100,000. Melissa confirms these metrics; the seven-day rolling average. The County website has the testing percentage, covidactnow has the cases per 100,000. The Board is looking at the City rather than County numbers. This metric makes more sense since District and City boundaries essentially overlap. Angie asks if the Board will look at different areas of the District, mentioning differences between the East Bench and Rose Park for instance. Melissa Ford says that they will be using City-wide numbers across the board for the whole district.

Private "learning pods", Parent Feedback

Jacob asks Melissa Ford if there is a District policy on private study groups. There are many implications to these groups – self-selection, safety, equity, etc. Melissa Ford agrees that this is incredibly complicated. She supports parents doing what they can to assist their students; there is no District policy on these pods. She thinks we need to trust that people will do what's best for their children; we are going to need to be very flexible because needs will be varied and will change over time. She acknowledges how difficult the District's current plan is, but it's the safe approach. Concerning feedback, it needs to be on-going. Call your Board members, teachers, the Principal, an Ask A Question button on the Board website(?).

Supporting Different Student Populations

These changes are scary but also exciting. Bruce hopes that equity will be aided by having the ability to bring students into the building. Everyone will come in to meet their teachers, and after this we can

decide how to support those who need it the most. Supporting students with IEPs, possibly visiting with the new SPED teacher, Taylor Gustafson. Also, the ELL students, and other populations as well. Weekly teacher meetings will be on-going, discussing how students are doing, to see who needs perhaps a small-group in-person visit, or a targeted Zoom. Bruce would want no more than 4 students coming in to a classroom concurrently.

Expectations this fall vs. last spring

There much more training and resources now, so expectations are higher. Attendance will be taken for example. When parents are frustrated, they need to get in touch, because staff wants to help. Former counselor (Mary Jane) will be back helping the kids.

Example of elementary schedule and communications

Amy asks if a video what showing a daily schedule might look like is on the way; the one presented in the School Board meeting for middle school was very helpful. Bruce and Melissa Ford say they understand that these are on the way for elementary and high school. Bruce asks himself how he can do something to create videos to assist. They will discuss this next week, perhaps shooting an FAQ video to help parents. The administrators also discussed that parents want to hear more from their schools rather than the District: message received! They are waiting for more solid information; Bruce wants to avoid giving out information that would later have to be retracted, causing confusion. He also wants to avoid daily emails, as they would get old quickly. But teachers will be communicating with teachers weekly, and Bruce aims to keep that line of communication open.

School calendar and teacher contracts

Amanda asks about the School Calendar Committee – what is happening? Samuel “hazards” a response to this. The Superintendent just sent an email saying the State Board has not fully waived the 180-day requirements. There was some guidance, but teachers may be required to deliver three more days of non-synchronous instruction on days they would have otherwise had off. School will end June 4th, and otherwise stick with the calendar as planned. Melissa Ford says.... mostly. But things are constantly changing. 180 days is about student instruction days; we are off by about 9 days. The State Board waived a few of those, there is on-going discussion about the remaining three days. We will stick to the calendar for posted breaks. Angie asks if the teacher contract stays the same; Melissa says it will. The question is how to make up student days without changing the teacher contract. Maybe create curriculum plans for the days that would have been professional development days; these would not be live teaching days. The Board is trying to figure this out. Angie asks if contract days were front-loaded this year; Melissa says there are still 3 PD days, one sometime in September, one in March. She doesn't have the calendar in front of her. Bruce clarifies that the ones that were front-loaded were contract days, paid at PD rate, non-mandatory days. Sam has the dates: 9/25/ 11/25, 3/5. This is a proposal that has not yet been confirmed.

Bruce is pleased with all the hard work going into this plan, and sees other districts looking to SLCSO thinking that we're onto something. Angie says the SLCSO has done a great job preparing teachers for this upcoming year. The teachers will have the technology to really teach kids and will look very different from what we had last spring. They have prepared their teachers well. Carol believes that the expectations for teachers are very different from spring. She confirms that there has been a lot of

training and money poured into teacher support. They hope students will take this as seriously as they did in the brick and mortar – get up and dressed, eat breakfast, and attend school on time as usual.

Food service

Melissa J asks about lunches: Bruce says that lunch and recess will be built into the schedule, and the schools will have the lunches available for pickup. In most cases, one pickup for a five-day week; breakfasts as well. For families who cannot do this, there will be options for more frequent pickups. They want to consolidate pickups for families who have elementary, middle school, high school etc. so they don't have to visit multiple locations. These aspects are being considered to make this easier for families. Bruce waiting to hear on candidates for the new lunch manager.

Melissa F adds that currently we are using Federal funding for no-cost meals, but when school begins there will be a fee unless you qualify for free lunch. Food-insecure families will still have support as needed. Jacob asks if the same software will be used to pay; Bruce confirms. These lunches are available for any student, just like "regular" lunch. Kelly Orton has asked that school websites make it very easy to find how to contact the nutrition manager at the school. If this system doesn't work, they will adjust but this is the plan more or less. By and large though, lunches will be handed out for the week all at once.

September Meeting preparations

Review council memberships

Generally, there is a two-year opportunity to be a voting member. Jacob will review these rules etc. and be ready to discuss at the next meeting. Same with soliciting new members.

Land Trust funds

Bruce says there is greater leeway on how to spend Land Trust money. There was some left over and they tried to shift expenses and help teachers purchase for the new science curriculum. Wanted to avoid leaving larger sums unspent. Jacob asks if a .5 SPED teacher will be hired; the land trust will pay for the ELL teacher. New SPED teacher has been hired.

Class lists

Caroline asks when class lists are coming out. Bruce hopes to provide it online through Power School sometime next week; will be discussed in SIC. Jacob says Annie told him they are going out tomorrow. Jacob thanks everyone and moves to close; Amy thanks the teachers and seconds the motion.

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