



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

District extends four day school week

Teachers, staff utilize Fridays for preparatory time, assisting students

During the regular meeting of the Davis School District Board of Education on Tuesday, Dec. 1, the board unanimously approved extending the current four-day schedule — with Fridays remaining a remote learning day — through the end of the school year.

Superintendent Reid Newey said the Friday schedule has been invaluable in allowing teachers and administrators preparatory time. In visits to schools, he's seen the time being used by teachers to offer one-on-one help for students, deliver remote lessons — particularly to those who are quarantined or sick — and prepare lessons for Canvas delivery.

“This has been an incredible benefit to our teachers and ultimately our students to have Fridays to organize, to deliver remotely and to bring students who need extra help in. There's not a second that's been wasted,” he said.

In approving the proposal, Board Vice President Liz Mumford said extending the current schedule through the end of the year helps teachers and administrators as they plan for the next semester.

“There's also a lot of value, I think, for the community and for teachers knowing that we're projecting the need for that throughout the year and giving them the ability to plan in that manner,” she said.

Assistant Superintendent John Zurbuchen also clarified some items for the board regarding COVID-19. He said there is some confusion in the community about the 15 cases threshold. Many believe 15 cases automatically

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Pilot targets keeping schools open

The Board of Education approved the district's participation in a state pilot project “Test to Stay.”

While the standard procedure would be to put the school into soft closure and move to remote learning, Assistant Superintendent John Zurbuchen said an opportunity to stay open would be offered to high schools only. To do so, 80 percent of the student body must receive a rapid test. Those who test negative could continue to attend school. Those who test positive would follow the normal protocol and isolate at home for at least 10 days.

Zurbuchen noted that conducting the tests requires a commitment from a large group of nurses. The testing would follow the same privacy procedures as the testing for athletes. However, students would not be mandated to test. Those who do not test will complete schoolwork at home, similar to a quarantine.

In a side note, the first use of the pilot took place at Syracuse High School on Monday, Dec. 7. The testing was conducted in the school's main gymnasium in coordination with the Utah Department of Health and the Davis County Health Department. A total of 29 nurses from the three entities assisted in the effort.

The pilot was successful in identifying 19 additional students who were positive but asymptomatic. However, only 68 percent of the student body tested so the school still went into a soft closure.

Bountiful High moves forward with naming new mascot

Bountiful High School will name a new school mascot by Feb. 1, Principal Aaron Hogge told board members Tuesday.

The school will retire its Braves mascot at the end of the 2021 school year. The decision was made by Bountiful High Principal Aaron Hogge after extensive work and input by a

large committee, which began meeting in August. The decision of school mascots and school colors are made at the school level.

“Through the committee process and really understanding the issue at hand, it is time to change the mascot at Bountiful High School,” Hogge said. “This has been a remarkable experience ... and a very difficult decision.”

The school's administrators spent the last couple of months collecting input from representatives of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation; current Bountiful High School students, faculty and staff; and community members who live within the school's boundaries with children attending Bountiful,

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moves a school into soft closure. Zurbuchen said it actually begins the conversation with the Davis County Health Department. Together they look at the 14-day curve. If there are enough individuals who are healthy and returning to the school, then the school might not go into soft closure unnecessarily.

“I believe it is our responsibility to do two things ... it is to balance safety for that school community with keeping kids in school, which we all in the community want to do as safely as possible,” he said.

Zurbuchen said the rapid testing site at the Freepoint Center has been very successful at getting students

and staff back into schools earlier. In 11 days, 1,706 tests were administered to quarantined students and staff seven or more days after their quarantine. Only 1.5 percent of those tests were positive.

“We only have this process because we have some of the best school nurses around,” he said. “This has been a real success story.”

Board members also approved following changes to the Utah COVID 19 School Manual as they happen. For instance, Zurbuchen said, modifications are coming to the 14-day quarantine requirement. Once that is altered in the manual, the district will implement the change.

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Davis Connect and Bountiful High School’s feeder schools.

“We brought together a widely diverse team and had a very open conversation at two community listening sessions where people spoke passionately on both sides of this topic,” said Assistant Superintendent John Zurbuchen.

“They spoke with zest for their point of view ... but they all spoke about the same thing — what it means to be a Bountiful High School student or parent. The attributes from both sides, regardless of the mascot, was the same and their pride was palpable on both sides.”

Hogge presented the board members with the school’s plan for next steps. Bountiful High will keep the Braves mascot for the duration of the 2020-21 school

year and will continue using the current school colors with the new mascot. In upcoming weeks, students currently attending Bountiful High and junior high schools feeding into Bountiful High will have the opportunity to submit mascot suggestions.

“With the leadership structure we have, one of the things that takes place at the school is mascot identification,” said Superintendent Reid Newey. “One of the most difficult things of the day is dealing with issues relative to the issues that they’ve dealt with at Bountiful High with the mascot and the notion of change. This isn’t a decision made by Principal Hogge. This is a decision made under his leadership at the school level and we appreciate that.”

District DESK standards consider interpersonal skills

Davis School District is considering an addition to the Dispositions, Essential Skills and Knowledge (DESK) standards to include a focus on communication and interpersonal skills.

Teaching and Learning Director Belinda Kuck told board members the consideration is in response to suggestions given by several business community partners.

“We would like to really get at the heart of what we want happening in each of our student’s lives — that they are acquiring not just essential skills and knowledge, but applying those dispositions of power skills that will help them be successful as they move on beyond the K-12 system at Davis School District,” she said.

DESK standards, formerly known as the Davis Essential Skills and Knowledge, were created nearly 20 years ago to align with state and national learning standards and identify skills and knowledge essential for student mastery at each stage of their education.

“DESK has always been prioritized and a guaranteed viable curriculum, and that’s not going to change. We’re just going to get tighter,” Kuck said.

The district will continue collaborating and receiving input from focus groups in an effort to evaluate the addition of interpersonal skills into the DESK standards.

Kuck attributes the pandemic to also helping the district move forward on competency-based learning. Historically, learning in classrooms has been teacher-directed, but with the increased focus on personalized learning, teachers are now moving toward student-directed learning, she said.

“I like to refer to it as the COVID catalyst in helping move Davis School District in the direction more quickly to personalized, competency-based learning than if we hadn’t had the pandemic. For all the things that are hard, this is the silver lining because we are seeing across the district teachers being able and wanting to personalize for students in ways that haven’t happened before,” said Kuck.

In other business, the board approved the framework for the Teacher and Student Success Act, formerly known as the School Improvement Plan (SIP). State legislation requires the Board of Education to annually approve the framework for helping schools implement a student success plan.

Board Honors



The Board of Education recognized the Davis County Commission for its support of the Davis School District during the Coronavirus pandemic.



Farmington High Marching Band is recognized for its state championship.



DSD Purchasing Department has been awarded the 25th Annual Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award for 2020 from the National Procurement Institute. This year marks DSD Purchasing Department's fifth-consecutive year for receiving the AEP Award.