



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

Calendar revisions receive OK from Board

Proposal for 2021-22 calendar includes school end before Memorial Day

The Board of Education of the Davis School District approved revisions to the 2020-21 calendar during its regular meeting on Tuesday.

The changes include moving a professional day from Friday, March 5, to Tuesday, Feb. 16. A professional day is negotiated for teachers and means students are not in class, but teachers are receiving professional instruction or are finalizing report cards and preparing for parent conferences. Friday, March 5 will be a remote learning day.

Davis School District Elementary School Director Dr. Helene Van Natter said the need to change the day came with the decision to continue four-day school weeks through the end of the year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Fridays remain crucial times for teachers to connect with students who are on quarantine or out for other reasons,” she said. “(Teachers) also rely on Fridays to provide instruction to quarantined students and to individuals in small groups and prepare in-person and digital curricu-

lum for the following week.”

The change also creates a nearly equal pattern of A and B blocks of classes for secondary students to continue through the end of the year — keeping A days on Monday and Wednesday and B days on Tuesday and Thursday.

Additionally, the last week of school includes a remote learning day on Friday, June 4. That day will still be used for teachers to help students in need of remediation. Students who have completed their work will attend school on Thursday as the last day.

“Fridays remain crucial times for teachers to connect with students who are on quarantine or out for other reasons.”

— Elementary Director Helene Van Natter

The board also considered the proposed calendar for the next school year of 2021-22. That proposal includes ending the school year before Memorial Day. Van Natter said parents overwhelmingly made that request on a survey for the draft calendar. After some adjustments and negotiations, the calendar committee unanimously approved that option to send to the school board for its consideration.

The calendar committee is made up of district and school representatives, DEA and DESP representatives and parents. The original proposal was posted on the web for

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Board re-elects president, names new vice president

The Board of Education of the Davis School District elected its leadership for the next two years. The election occurred during the regular meeting Tuesday night.

John Robison, who represents Precinct 2, was re-elected to serve as Board President. He received four member votes in retaining the position. Board member Julie Tanner, who was also nominated, received three member votes. Marie Stevenson, who represents Precinct 6, was elected unanimously to serve as



Robison

vice president. She replaces Liz Mumford.

In accepting the nomination, Robison said he will continue to do what he can to help students and support teachers. He said he also feels it’s important to work as a united board.

“My purpose has been and will continue to be to do what I can do in my position — not only as a board president but as a board member — to make a good district even better, working with administrators and teachers to do what we can to continue



Stevenson

to improve,” Robison said.

Mumford expressed appreciation for her opportunity to serve as vice president during the past two years.

“I really think having some consistency coming out of this pandemic is critical, and I look forward to Marie and the fresh perspective that she’s going to bring to leadership,” Mumford said. “I love the ways that boards are formulated. We all share an equal responsibility. Leadership doesn’t mean extra power, but it means a way to strengthen relationships and to make sure that every board member has a voice.”

COVID-19 updates include changes to school manual

Davis School District employees will continue to qualify for COVID leave despite the expiration of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

In an update to the Board of Education, Assistant Superintendent John Zurbuchen said the 10 days of paid sick leave for employees who needed time off for reasons associated with COVID-19, was not renewed in the recent update to the aid package. However, the district will continue to honor that extra leave through the end of the school year.

“We will maintain that leave. We will not expand it and we will not add to it,” Zurbuchen said. “So for those employees who have already used it, it’s been used. We are still in the middle of a pandemic and we will have staff members who will certainly be able to use that and should. We believe we shouldn’t have prejudice for those who had it early as opposed to those who had it late.”

Zurbuchen also reviewed changes to the state COVID-19 School Manual, which went into effect with the start of school Jan. 4. Changes and the area they impact include:

- Quarantines — Students and staff exposed to COVID-19 will not be quarantined if it was a mask-to-mask exposure, but will be advised to watch for symptoms. Students and staff who are quarantined will only be out for 10 days instead of 14. A negative rapid test after day 7 allows a return.

Zurbuchen said for every positive case, three to four students were being quarantined. However, “test to return” results showed only about 1 percent of quarantined students were testing positive.

“The state was able to use some of that informa-

tion as well as other districts and realize the quarantine rules were probably over restrictive,” Zurbuchen said.

- Outbreak thresholds — Schools with populations above 1,500 will consider a 1 percent positive rate as a threshold. Below 1,500, the 15 positive cases figure will hold. Only elementary school classrooms will be considered for a soft closure when the number of cases reaches three. Zurbuchen said it is also important to note that those numbers are not an absolute for closure, rather it begins a conversation with the health department about a possible soft closure.

- Soft closures — The time period for closing a school will be 10 days. High schools will have the opportunity to participate in a “Test to Stay” program to keep the school open. Participation of 80 percent of the student

body is necessary to provide a viable education.

Finally, Zurbuchen addressed the current status of the district’s COVID dashboard. Looking at it now, it appears that there are few cases of COVID-19. Essentially, the entire district was on a soft closure over the 17 days of winter break. With that in mind, the numbers reset to zero because students were not in school. That does not mean that schools are not aware of students who are isolated at home due to a positive diagnosis. However, as those students have not been at the school since it began again Jan. 4, they are not noted on the dashboard and counted in the outbreak threshold.

Zurbuchen also addressed the status of vaccinations for teachers. The timeline is still an unknown, he said. The district will continue to work with the Davis County Health Department and Utah Department of Health in adhering to the prioritization and distribution of vaccinations once they are received. That information will be communicated to staff members.



The Davis County Health Department was honored for its valuable partnership with the District during the pandemic.

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public comment, Van Natter said, and addressed specifically the inability to end before Memorial Day due to graduation venues.

“Even with that comment there, 30 percent of the comments still suggested we get out before Memorial Day,” she said.

Secondary Director Dr. Dan Linford and Supt. Reid Newey worked with Weber State University officials and found a way to make it possible to graduate the same week as Ogden and Weber School districts in 2022.

In order to make the change, the start of the school year was moved

to Monday, Aug. 23. Two additional professional days also will be scheduled for licensed educators. The state allows up to six professional days.

The Board of Education will make a final decision on the 2021-22 calendar proposal during its regular meeting Feb. 2. A copy of the proposal is available on the District website.