



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

Board approves ninth-grade participation policy changes Alterations also approved for school enrollment permits

The Board of Education of the Davis School District voted 6-1 Tuesday giving final approval to changes to two policies.

The policy alterations align Davis School District with all other districts in the state when it comes to ninth-grade participation in Utah High School Activities Association (UHSSA) sanctioned extracurricular activities.

After the initial consideration of the policies, the proposals were placed on the district website for comment. Board Member Liz Mumford said the feedback overwhelmingly was in support of a policy change. She noted there were a few comments also suggesting training for coaches and athletic directors to ensure that recruiting does not become an issue with the changes.

The policy regarding enrollment options for students changes all “boundary variance” references to open enrollment permits. The policy allows for early enrollment application Dec. 1 through the third Friday in February and creates a waiting list. Schools identified as closed after the early enrollment period will not be open for late enrollment.

The policy regarding ninth-grade student participation in UHSSA sports and activities allows ninth-grade students to try out for a team at the high school which they would normally be assigned or at the high school which

they have received an open enrollment permit to attend during their eighth-grade year.

Board Member Cheryl Phipps said she voted against the policy change because of concerns about equity. She spoke of her own knowledge of students being cut from a team because ninth-grade athletes were placed on the team. She said she felt the policy changes give fewer students the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities.

Board Member Brigit Gerrard said she felt the intent of the original policy was good as it was put in place to prevent the recruitment of athletes. However, she said that she also understood the policy was not being followed as some parents were finding a way around it. Additionally, other districts were not under the same restrictions.

“As we have listened to the experts in our district, they feel that they will have a little more control over these types of things, these situations, than we have had in the past with the current policy that we have,” Gerrard said. “And I just feel like it’s time, to bring us in line with the Utah High School Activities Association and with all of the other districts in the state.”

The policy revisions emphasize that coaches and advisors cannot recruit students. The changes go into effect for the 2022-23 school year.

Board weighs in on changes to public comment period

Several board members weighed in on a proposed change to the public comment period, before voting 5-2 to give it preliminary approval.

The policy change proposes that the comment period be expanded to 20 minutes with individual presentations limited to two minutes. Additionally, the public comment period would only be held at the beginning of a regularly scheduled Board business meeting. Currently, a public comment period occurs at the beginning of both the workshop and Board business meeting and is set to not exceed 18

minutes.

Board members Brigit Gerrard and Liz Mumford said they value the many avenues the public has to have their voices heard. Gerrard said in her conversations with board members from other districts, many have expressed surprise that public comment occurs prior to Davis School District Board of Education workshops. Mumford agreed and said some of the best dialogues she has with the public are in one-on-one conversations because they can ask questions and receive answers.

Patrons have the opportunity

to email board members or call staff directly with questions and concerns. Additionally, for items such as truth-in-taxation, budget adoptions and other major decisions, a public hearing takes place, which is not limited on overall time.

“I think the discussion for me highlights that we need to communicate all these different avenues that parents have — to participate in committees, to share concerns with board members directly. I think public comment is one of them, but it’s not the only one. And I think the primary pur-

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pose of this meeting is a business meeting. The workshop has a separate purpose.”

She added that a workshop is a time for the board to give issues a more in-depth study, discuss, and get feedback from the administration in an open dialogue.

Board members Julie Tanner and Cheryl Phipps spoke of their philosophy to encourage the public to be heard. Tanner said public comment is a vital part of the process and said she has been a part of pushing for more public comment during her tenure on the board. She agreed that there should be parameters and time limits, but advocated for keeping the public comment period at the beginning of both workshops and business meetings. Phipps agreed that she values comment even during a study session.

“I’m concerned with anything that has a feel of cutting off the voices of the public,” Phipps said. “Those voices are important and they are important for us as we make good decisions. ... The struggle is, when is there enough dialogue and when is it not. ...”

The proposed policy change will come before the Board for a final vote during the Nov. 4 meeting.

In other business, the board approved:

- The repeal of a policy for establishing a district-sponsored charter school. Legal Counsel Ben Onofrio said the district would follow state rule and so the policy was unnecessary.

- Adding legislated changes to the policy outlining employee discipline and dismissal, which defines the process in an appeal. Additionally, a section was added to the policy to define job abandonment following an employee’s unexplained absence for five consecutive work days.

- Clarifications in a policy regarding video surveillance. With cameras on campuses districtwide, Onofrio said there is more interest in obtaining that footage from outside parties. The policy change clarifies the parameters for the release of the video.

- The purchase of a little over an acre of land adjacent to Bountiful Elementary School for \$550,000. Business Administrator Craig Carter said the purchase prepares for a future rebuild of that aging school and gives access to the school from 200 West.

Board adds early dismissal days to calendar

The Board of Education of the Davis School District approved the addition of three early dismissal days to the elementary school year calendar for 2021-22.

The additional early dismissal days are Wednesday, Oct. 27, Thursday, Jan. 13, and Wednesday, March 16.

Ruthanne Keller, district elementary director and chair of the calendar committee, said the addition allows teachers time to prepare end-of-term reports and plan for the new term. The dates previously set aside for those purposes will be filled with professional development trainings, including a state-required training for K-3 teachers.

The state-required training is for Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling

(LETRS), which provides teachers with literacy and language development skills. Teachers not involved in LETRS will participate in other mandatory professional development trainings.

Keller said the calendar committee voted unanimously for the change. She noted that committee members recognized it will be a burden on parents, especially those with dual-working families.

“We recognize the loss that (an early dismissal) is for families and the loss of instructional time for children,” Board Member Liz Mumford said. “I think understanding that it is not a long-term change, but that it is in response to a situation, we’ll have to work with it.”

Board honors



The Board of Education of the Davis School District honors Bountiful Junior High Madrigals representatives. A special performance was broadcast to open the meeting.



Farmington Junior High band leader Heath Wolf and the jazz ensemble are recognized for being named the division winners of a junior high school large jazz ensemble by the Foundation for Music Education for the second time.