



**Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Monday, November 9, 2020**

The Board of Directors held a Regular Board Meeting on Monday, November 9, 2020. This was a Zoom Meeting with login information posted on the Mead School District website. Directors Green, Burchard, Olson, Denholm and Cannon were present. Also attending were Superintendent Shawn Woodward, Chief Financial Officer Wayne Leonard and Assistant Superintendents Heather Havens and Jared Hoadley.

I. Approval of Agenda

Director Denholm made a motion to approve the agenda, as amended (New Business, Item F. Employee Termination, will take place following the Executive Session). Director Olson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

Director Olson made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of October 26, 2020, and Board Work Session of November 4, 2020, as presented. Director Denholm seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Remarks for the Good of the Schools

Director Olson positively commented on the powerful Mead High School Veteran's Day Video that featured the school's band and jazz choir, as well as photographs of staff, and relatives of staff and students, who are currently, or have in the past, served in the United States Armed Forces.

IV. Continuing Business

A. Second Reading Policy 3290 Suspension

Re-Admission of Expelled or Long-Term Suspended Students

Student & Family Services Director Josh Westermann presented the suspension of Policy 3290, Re-Admission of Expelled or Long-Term Suspended Students, for second reading consideration.

In September of 2018 the board approved the adoption of Policy & Procedure 3241, Classroom Management, Discipline and Corrective Action, which covers the processes and procedures to be followed when a student is expelled or long-term suspended. The updated language in Policy/Procedure 3241 sets forth how the reengagement of expelled or long-term suspended students will take place and, therefore, makes Policy 3290 obsolete.

On October 26, 2020, at the first reading of this policy suspension, the board had no concerns with the proposed suspension.

Director Burchard made a motion to approve the suspension of Policy 3290, Re-Admission of Expelled or Long-Term Suspended Students, as presented. Director Cannon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

V. New Business

A. Consent Agenda

Director Olson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. Director Burchard seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Highland Middle School ASB Constitution & Bylaws

Highland Middle School Principal Barb Pybus thanked the board for the opportunity to present the Highland Middle School ASB Constitution & Bylaws. To help with this presentation she introduced ASB teacher/advisor Tiffany Byrd and three leadership students who talked briefly about their vision and activities planned for Highland students.

Amber Taylor (8th grader) highlighted Highland's commitment to help make all, even "remote only" students, feel like a part of the school community. Amy Ragan (8th grader) explained the recent ASB sponsored Halloween Dress-Up Contest where prizes were awarded for 1st, 2nd & 3rd places at each lunch. Remote students were able to participate in this event via Zoom. Annelise Leavens (8th grader) talked about upcoming events including a Christmas Food Drive, a lunch room Christmas Tree where students can make and display ornaments indicating what they are thankful for and plans for three upcoming "spirit weeks."

Director Green thanked the students, Ms. Byrd and Ms. Pybus for their leadership at Highland Middle School. Director Olson especially noted the school's intentional focus on assuring all students feel welcome and included at lunches.

Prior to making a motion to approve the Highland Middle School Constitution & Bylaws Director Olson referenced a missing word in paragraph one of said document. Ms. Pybus made note of this. Director Cannon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Determine Levy Rate & Authorize Submission of OSPI Pre-Ballot Approval Form

Prior to the board deliberating on the renewal levy rate to put before voters in February 2021, Chief Financial Officer Wayne Leonard explained the recent law change that requires school boards to authorize and districts to submit a Pre-Ballot Approval Form to OSPI and Business Services Director Heather Ellingson, in broad categories, explained where current levy dollars are spent. This was followed by Superintendent Woodward sharing a PowerPoint presentation on how a \$1.75/\$2.00/\$2.25 scenario could be presented to the community. As requested by the board at their November 4th Work Session, Superintendent Woodward, prior to the board meeting, emailed each member information on six separate levy amount scenarios, including the \$1.75/\$2.00/\$2.25 option.

Superintendent Woodward's presentation included the following:

- A review of community feedback following the failure of the November 2019 Supplemental Levy. In answering the question, *In your opinion, what could the Mead School District do to improve?* the following themes emerged:
 - Reduce number of district office administrators
 - Expand on alternative learning options for students
 - Build a Skills Center for the trades
 - Increase mental health support for students
 - Increase fiscal responsibility
 - Better communication
- A review of the Strategic Planning process including strategic priorities.
- A review of Mead's Reopening Plan approved by the board in early August that gave families the option of face-to-face instruction or remote instruction. Only 2.83% of students in Washington State are afforded the option to attend face-to-face with one-third of that total being Mead School District students.
- A review of Mead's historic (40 years) levy support and the extras the levy provides. These include:
 - Extra-Curriculars: Sports, Fine Arts, Student Clubs, etc.
 - Academics: Electives, Class Size, AP Courses, Elementary Specialists, etc.
 - Student Support: Nurses, Para Educators, Counselors, Social Workers, etc.

- A list of strategic priority areas, based on community feedback, where additional levy funds could be allocated. These include but are not limited to:
 - Support for at-risk students
 - Access to mental health support for students
 - Increased emphasis on building a talent pool for local industry and beyond through partnerships
 - Choice programs at the elementary level
- A review of local school district tax rate (levy & bond) comparisons (this same information was shared at the November 4th Work Session) and information on the levy renewal rate neighboring school districts plan to ask voters to approve (Central Valley = \$2.50; Nine Mile Falls = \$2.25-\$2.50; Spokane = \$2.40). Mead currently has one of the lowest combined levy/bond tax rates in Spokane County.
- A spreadsheet showing funds generated using the \$1.75/\$2.00/\$2.25 levy rate scenario, along with dollar amounts that could be earmarked to support at-risk students, provide additional mental health support for students, develop partnerships with local industry in the form of work-based internships and begin to implement elementary choice programs.

In conclusion, Superintendent Woodward shared his belief that a \$1.75/\$2.00/\$2.25 levy rate renewal is respectful of the current climate in the school district and reasonable for beginning to address identified strategic priorities.

Discussion

Director Olson voiced his support for a \$2.00 renewal rate for all three years. It strikes a good middle ground between \$1.50 and \$2.50.

Director Burchard referenced the uncertainty of state funding for the upcoming school year and the need to be prepared in the event funding is reduced.

Director Denholm expressed support for having the funds to add para educators. He could support something in the \$2.00 - \$2.25 range. If the renewal rate is too low it could put the district in a financial bind.

Director Cannon made the following observations:

- The current levy rate is \$1.38. Even with the lowest presented renewal rate of \$1.52 there would be an increase to taxpayers.
- The district wants to maximize levy equalization and therefore needs a levy rate of at least \$1.50 to do that.
- Acknowledged the uncertainty of state funding but also noted if the state reduces funding the district will have some significant financial issues regardless of the levy renewal rate.
- Emphasized the fact the district, in providing the option for face-to-face instruction, is doing something only 3% of school districts in the entire state are doing. Also noted the in-person learning option Mead is providing is “not an inexpensive model.”
- The \$1.75/\$2.00/\$2.25 scenario presented by Superintendent Woodward clearly spells out how the district could/would spend the additional funds based on strategic priorities.
- It is clear the district has listened to the community, sharpened its pencil and made significant reductions to District Office administrative staff.
- Has concerns about the risk of asking for too much. Would like to stay below the \$2 mark . . . likes an amount that starts with a “1” . . . for example, \$1.95.

Director Green shared she likes the idea of a gradually increasing rate and believes it is important to address providing supports/alternatives for struggling students and additional para educators.

Director Burchard expressed support for a \$2.00 rate sharing his view that voters see \$1.95 much the same as they do \$2.00.

When asked her preference by Director Cannon, Director Green indicated she likes a rate that averages \$2.00 over three years because it provides funds for developing innovative learning options at the elementary level.

Following additional discussion including how much money a one cent increase generates, Director Denholm made a motion to approve an estimated levy rate of \$2.00 for 2022, 2023 and 2024 and authorized submission of the OSPI Pre-Ballot Approval Form. Director Burchard seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**D. Resolution 20-14
Citizens Boundary Review Planning Committee**

Business & Operations Assistant Superintendent Jared Hoadley presented Resolution 20-14, Citizens Boundary Review Planning Committee, for board consideration.

In the Fall of 2021 the Mead School District will open a new elementary school located on Five Mile Prairie on the same 68-acre site as Highland Middle School. In preparation for this opening there is a need to revise the Prairie View Elementary School attendance boundary. Resolution 20-14 authorizes the formation of an advisory Boundary Review Planning Committee and the selection of patrons of the district to equitably represent the current Prairie View Elementary School attendance area on this committee.

It is anticipated the committee will begin work in December 2020 with a final recommendation presented to the board by the end of February 2021.

Director Cannon made a motion to adopt Resolution 20-14, Citizens Boundary Review Planning Committee, as presented. Director Denholm seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

E. New Elementary School Final Survey Name Selection

Based on early November community survey results that included name suggestions for the new elementary school being built on Five Mile Prairie, followed by a survey sent to board members that included the twenty-two most popular names submitted by the community, Superintendent Woodward put forward the following eight names and asked that the board select 3-5 to be included in a final community survey: Sky Ridge, Ridgeway, Skyline, Vista View, Sunrise, Sunset, Vista Ridge & West Prairie.

Following discussion, Director Burchard made a motion to include Sky Ridge, Ridgeway, Skyline, Vista View and Sunrise on a final community survey. Director Denholm seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

As a Five Mile Prairie resident Director Cannon shared that many developments, as well as a park, contain the word "prairie" or "sky" in their name.

F. Employee Termination

Note: Action on this item was deferred until after Section VII. Executive Session.

Confirming Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins provided appropriate written notice to Eric Edwards of the board's intended action on this agenda item, Director Denholm made a motion to accept the recommendation of Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins to terminate the employment of Eric Edwards for the reasons provided. Director Cannon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Reports

A. Learning & Teaching Report

To celebrate the opening of Highland Middle School this fall and the district's transition to a 6-8 grade middle school model, Learning & Teaching Assistant Superintendent Heather Havens and Director of Secondary Education Mark St.Clair, started their presentation by introducing and acknowledging the dedication and hard work throughout the transition process by middle school principals Barb Pybus (Highland Middle School), Gregg Hare (Mountainside Middle School) and Troy Hughes (Northwood Middle School). All three were in attendance. They additionally acknowledged and thanked the 100+ staff members who served on one or more of the 15 middle school transition cadres. Transitioning to a 6-8 grade middle school model was a monumental program shift for the Mead School District. Because of the collaborative work of these individuals the transition was essentially seamless.

Summarizing the transition work Ms. Havens and Mr. St. Clair shared the Transition Team goal - *Ensure that every student has access to a consistent, equitable and rigorous education* - and highlighted the following:

- **Staffing:** Working collaboratively with the Mead Education Association teacher placement preferences were solicited and, for the most part, first choice locations were honored. This involved the reassignment of nearly 50 teachers.
- **Schedule/Instructional Time:** For the first time all middle schools have a consistent bell schedule that includes Homeroom. An example of the ongoing initiative to provide more equitable middle school learning opportunities is that honors classes, leadership classes and beginning instrumental music classes are now open to all students.
- **Systems of Support (MTSS):** To meet the social emotional needs of students all three middle schools are teaching the *Character Strong* curriculum.

Quotes from Northwood teacher Brittany Page, Northwood Principal Troy Hughes, Mountainside Principal Gregg Hare and Highland Principal Barb Pybus articulating the positive impact of having 6th graders in middle school were shared. This was followed by a video put together by Public Information Officer Todd Zeidler featuring students from each middle school.

Director Green acknowledged the tremendous amount of work associated with transitioning to this new middle school model. On behalf of the board she extended her thanks and appreciation to all who worked extremely hard to make it happen noting all of the feedback she has received has been very positive.

B. 2019-2020 Year-End Financial Report

Chief Financial Officer Wayne Leonard presented a year-end financial report focused primarily on the General Fund. This report included a detailed explanation of the General Fund's ending balance/cash reserve. While the ending cash balance is higher than anticipated because of last spring's COVID closure, those savings will be used to help defray the added safety expenses associated with being open in a pandemic and anticipated loss in revenue because of a significant drop in enrollment.

Answering Director Olson's question, Mr. Leonard shared the state funds the district September - December using budgeted enrollment. This will put the district in an "over-funded" situation. The state will resolve this over-payment by reducing the district's monthly apportionment January - August.

Discussion included any loss of grant monies because of COVID and the state of the district's bus fleet.

C. September 2020 Financial Report

Chief Financial Officer Wayne Leonard presented a brief financial report for the month of September 2020. Enrollment remains 540 FTE below budget.

D. Superintendent's Report & Discussion Items

Superintendent Woodward introduced Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins who shared the following Target Objectives identified by HR as they relate to Strategic Plan Priority Area 2 - *Highly Effective and Caring Teachers, Leaders and Staff for Every Student*:

1. Refine and implement effective systems for professional growth and evaluation.
2. Increase effectiveness of orientation and mentorship programs.
3. Develop a talent pipeline in collaboration with internal and external partners.
4. Employ diverse and culturally competent administrative, instructional and support personnel.
5. Promote a positive over-arching, district-wide culture centered around strategic goals.

Ms. Hutchins, focusing on objectives #4 and #5, shared progress and action steps toward achieving the stated objective. In particular she shared a comparison between district student and staff demographics and highlighted the desire to have staff demographics more closely match that of students. For example, staff is 94.5% Caucasian while 83.09% of students are Caucasian.

VII. Executive Session

At 8:20 pm Director Green called for an Executive Session for the purpose of reviewing the performance of a public employee.

At 8:30 pm Director Green returned the meeting to Open Session.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 pm.

President

Secretary