



**Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Monday, October 25, 2021**

The Board of Directors held a Regular Board Meeting on Monday, October 25, 2021. This was a Zoom Meeting with login information posted on the Mead School District website. Directors Burchard, Denholm, Olson, Cannon and Green were present. Also attending were Superintendent Shawn Woodward, Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson and Assistant Superintendents Heather Havens and Jared Hoadley. Director Burchard shared the next board meeting (November 8th) will be held in-person at District Office. He additionally reminded, for those planning to attend in-person, that masking requirements will be followed.

I. Approval of Agenda

Director Cannon made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, as amended (addition of an Executive Session and, under New Business, Employee Terminations). Director Green seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

Director Olson made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 11, 2021, Regular Board Meeting, as presented. Director Denholm seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Remarks for the Good of the Schools

Director Burchard positively commented on the recent *Battle of the Bell* football game hosted for the very first time at Union Stadium. It was an awesome event with the outcome of the game decided in the final minutes. Director Denholm extended his personal thanks to Director Burchard and Director Green for stepping in to help with concessions. Director Green shared Director Burchard made hotdogs while she manned the nacho cheese machine. Concession proceeds are shared by the Mead High and Mt. Spokane athletic booster clubs. *Battle of the Bell* alone brought in \$4,000. The amount of concession money brought in just at Union Stadium so far this year exceeds what, in pre-Union Stadium days, was raised in an entire year.

Assistant Superintendent Heather Havens was very complimentary of the Home Coming Dance creativity shown by both high schools this past weekend. Both events took place outside under tents with patio heaters. Those in attendance had a great time.

IV. Continuing Business - none

V. New Business

A. Consent Agenda

Responding to a question from Director Olson, Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson explained the Capital Projects payment to Garland/DBS, Inc. was for the Prairie View roof project and the payment to Swinerton Builders was for the new Pro-Start kitchens at Mead High and Mt. Spokane. Director Cannon asked about the \$12,000 General Fund payment to Banner Bank. Ms. Ellingson believes this reoccurring payment is for rent. She will double check and get back to Director Cannon.

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

B. Procedure 6600 Revision Transportation of Students

Transportation Director Brian Liberg, in addition to communicating a change to *Bus Stop Guidelines* set forth in Procedure 6600, Transportation of Students, that adds language allowing the walking distance from home to bus stop to be in excess of one mile for students living in remote/rural areas, shared the following regarding the current Transportation Department's personnel shortage:

- **Current Issues:** There is a local (and national) school bus driver shortage. In Mead, to maintain current daily routes, all substitute drivers have been assigned to routes and mechanics/office staff are driving or assisting on buses. The situation is so tenuous staff are foregoing medical appointments as there is no one to cover a route if they are gone.
- **Near-Term Issues:** The department knows of pending retirements/resignations of drivers and bus assistants. This will add additional stress to the system. It is also problematic to, on an ongoing basis, have mechanics filling in as drivers. If mechanics are driving they are unavailable to handle road/weather calls. Unless changes, such as reducing the number of routes, are made it is probable a route or routes on any given day may need to be cancelled because there is no driver.
- **Status Quo:** If routes are not adjusted/reduced one driver could potentially cover two routes. This, however, would result in significant (up to one hour) early or late arrival at school and would also impact end of day pick-up and drop-off times. Other options include pre-scheduled rolling route cancellations (i.e. there is no service one day a week) and/or day-of cancellations when a driver is sick.
- **Solutions & Next Steps:** To avoid rolling and/or daily route cancellations the district is looking to maximize bus capacity. They will do this by consolidating routes and creating "hub stops" in rural/remote areas. These steps will reduce the total number of drivers needed. Prior to making any route or bus stop changes the district will communicate with impacted families. The district will also continue to recruit new drivers and bus assistants.

Regarding the impact of the vaccine mandate, Mr. Liberg shared his department lost one driver and one sub. Mead bus drivers are compensated near the top end for the region. Currently there is no negotiated signing bonus. This is something that could be considered in upcoming contract negotiations.

In response to a question from Director Green, Mr. Liberg shared individuals who, in the past, drove bus to supplement retirement income do not now want to continue working. It is also problematic for some to have a large chunk of time "off" in the middle of the day between morning and afternoon routes. When work is available the district has bus drivers and bus assistants sub in schools/kitchens during this middle of the day "off" time. Superintendent Woodward shared it will be important moving forward for the district to proactively address the bus driver shortage and make the position financially appealing enough to attract applicants.

Director Cannon asked the following questions: #1 - How much leeway is there to provide monetary compensation, such as a signing bonus, outside of the contract? and #2 - Has the district explored partnership opportunities with STA to utilize their van pool? In response to Question #2, Mr. Liberg indicated he would reach out to STA to inquire about van pool availability. He did, however, note the spots in the district where using vans makes the most sense are located outside of STA's service area. HR Director Keri Hutchins, responding to Question #1, shared the district has an obligation to bargain changes. Even utilizing STA to help transport students would need to be discussed with the bus driver group.

Noting the "raised hands" of community members listening to the board meeting online, Superintendent Woodward reminded that, while the community is invited to listen in, it is not appropriate in a board business meeting to engage in back-and-forth dialogue on agenda items.

Those with questions and/or suggestions were invited to reach out following the meeting to the appropriate Mead School District department and/or individual.

Director Burchard inquired about the driver shortage and extra-curriculars. Mr. Liberg reported the shortage impacts both regular school bus routes and extra-curriculars. His department is working with secondary schools to combine team trips whenever possible. To date only one extra-curricular trip has been cancelled. Director Green asked about the possibility of coaches obtaining their CDL. The department is open to that and there have been conversations about providing a summer CDL class for coaches who, in many cases, also teach in the district and therefore cannot attend such a class during the school year. A typical CDL class involves approximately 100 hours of classroom (40-50 hours) and behind-the-wheel (50+ hours) training. Those who participate are paid for their time and the district reimburses licensing costs.

C. Employee Terminations

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

Confirming Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins provided appropriate written notice to LeeAnn Willy 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 LeeAnn Willy for the reasons provided. Director Olson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

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

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

Confirming Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins provided appropriate written notice to Gerald Fraley 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 Gerald Fraley for the reasons provided. Director Olson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

VI. Reports

A. Language Immersion/Dual Language Report

Learning & Teaching Assistant Director Robin Placzek provided an overview of Dual Language Immersion, a program/learning option the district plans to offer beginning in the fall of 2022. Report highlights included the following:

- An overview of the following pillars of Dual Language Education:
 - *Bilingualism & Biliteracy* - Students acquire the ability to use both languages in oral and written form, eventually reaching native-like proficiency in both languages.
 - *High Academic Achievement in Both Languages* - Dual Language closes achievement gaps by the late elementary years, with bilingual students consistently outperforming monolingual students in reading by high school.
 - *Sociocultural Competence* - Students develop an appreciation for and deep understanding of diverse cultures. Differences are seen as opportunities to connect rather than obstacles to overcome.

- Key ideas including:
 - All subjects are taught (at different ratios each year) in both languages throughout the course of this multi-year program.
 - Dual Language is an asset-based approach to language acquisition and literacy.
- A review of how Dual Language education fits with Mead’s Strategic Plan, Priority Area 1 (ensuring academic success and high levels of learning for all students) and Priority Area 4 (connecting school, family and community).
- A summary of Mead’s Dual Language Program design that included:
 - *Partner Language* - Spanish, which is second only to Chinese as the most spoken language in the world. There are over 450 million Spanish speakers in the world including 55 million who reside in the United States.
 - *Initial Grade Level* - Kindergarten. It is best practice to build a Dual Language program from the ground up.
 - *Composition of Students* - Half of the students will be multilingual students (EL) and half will be native English speakers.
 - *Program Structure* - Content is taught in two languages. 90% of instruction is in the partner language (Spanish) in the 1st year. This percentage decreases each year (e.g. 80% partner language, 20% English in 1st grade) until the percentages are 50/50.
- Information on program costs/funding was shared. To help defray program development costs the district applied for and received a \$190,000 two-year Dual Language Grant from OSPI. It is estimated the additional cost per student/year for a Dual Language education is \$137. Additional monies to support the program are also available via Title III and TBIP.

Director Green thanked Ms. Placzek for this report and expressed her excitement to see the district moving in this direction. She first heard about Dual Language at a National School Board Conference. She is excited for this new opportunity for Mead students. In response to a question from Director Burchard, Ms. Placzek shared the host school for the program has not yet been determined. Director Denholm also expressed his excitement. In response to a question from Director Olson, Ms. Placzek shared the district will be connecting/collaborating with both the Bethel School District and Kennewick School District who currently offer Dual Language programs.

Initially (fall 2022) the district plans to open one kindergarten Dual Language classroom. Starting small will provide the opportunity to work out any bugs before expanding the program in the fall of 2023 when the plan is to have two classes at both kindergarten and 1st grade. Explaining the “why” behind Dual Language to ELL families will be very important in the recruitment process. One reason for selecting Spanish as the program’s initial partner language is the availability of curriculum including Benchmark already used in district elementary schools.

In addition to the program’s alignment with the district’s Strategic Plan, Superintendent Woodward reminded, based on survey responses, that families want, especially at the elementary level, more choice. Implementation of Dual Language is one of the areas where additional levy dollars approved by voters last February will be put to work.

B. Reading & Math Comparisons – Pre-Pandemic to Present

Mark St.Clair, Director of Assessment & Program Effectiveness, using MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) pre and post pandemic scores (Grades 2-8) for reading and math, shared the following:

- **Reading** – Reading achievement was less impacted overall than math. While reading measures were below pre-pandemic indicators, the district’s percentile for achievement remained stable and well above national averages. From Fall 2020 to Fall 2021 more than 50% of students met target growth levels at all grade levels.
- **Math** – While Math metrics were more impacted than reading, which mirrors a national trend, district students still scored well above national norms for achievement with most

grade levels experiencing a great bounce back and growth in the 2020-2021 school year. From Fall 2020 to Fall 2021 all but one grade level exceeded the 50% target growth level. At 8th grade the percentage was just under 50%.

In sharing reading and math data Mr. St.Clair was careful to point out Mead School District indicators were collected “during” the pandemic and compared to National Norms established “before” the pandemic began . . . not an “apples to apples” comparison.

The board thanked Mr. St.Clair for the presentation. Director Denholm commented that the presented reading and math data affirms the board’s decision to offer in-person instruction to all students in the 2020-2021 school year.

C. Superintendent’s Report & Discussion Items

Superintendent Woodward shared the following:

Public Information Officer Todd Zeidler is working on a community communication survey. The information gathered will be helpful in determining effective communication strategies. In December Mr. Zeidler will present a Communication Plan to the board. This fall, to enhance communication, the district launched the *Weekender* that shares news with parents on a specific topic each week and a bi-weekly staff newsletter will once again be sent to all employees.

At the next board meeting Learning & Teaching will present information on upcoming changes to the district’s Highly Capable program at the elementary level. Regarding high school course offerings, Secondary Education Director Darren Nelson has put together information on course offerings at each high school highlighting where they are alike and how they are different. Superintendent Woodward, noting it is fascinating to see the “what” and “why” of course offerings, will email this information to the board.

VII. Executive Session

A. Review the Performance of a Public Employee

At 7:15 pm Director Burchard called for an Executive Session of approximately 10 minutes for the purpose of reviewing the performance of a public employee.

At 7:45 pm Director Burchard returned the meeting to Open Session.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 pm.

President

Secretary