

**OLDHAM COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL-CALLED MEETING MINUTES
July 24, 2020**

The Oldham County Board of Education met in a special-called session, held at the Arvin Center and live streamed on Friday, July 24, 2020. The following board members were present: Joyce Fletcher, Board Chairperson; Kevin Woosley, Vice Chair; Larry Dodson, Board Member; Patrick Kehoe, Board Member; Suzanne Hundley, Board Member. Greg Schultz; Superintendent and Secretary for the Board of Education

The following administrators were in attendance to facilitate discussion and answer questions from the board members: Lisa Burgess, Anne Coorssen, Dr. Dylan Smith, Brent Bohannon, Brent Deaves, Jeff Webb, Lori McDowell, Carlina Loyd, Trey Greenwell, Eric Davis, Stephanie Anderson.

The meeting was recorded and live streamed for the public viewing.

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairperson Fletcher called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

Chairperson Fletcher called for motions to approve the agenda; motioned by Larry Dodson, seconded by Suzanne Hundley, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the July 24, 2020, special-called meeting agenda (5-0).

III. SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS

Superintendent Greg Schultz read the following statement before proceeding with the SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

Dear OCS community,

I want to express my thanks for the level of engagement from all regarding this school year. Not every email has been easy to read, but everyone has been read, if not responded to. Here is the reality. We are in the midst of a pandemic, hopefully the only one we will face in our lifetimes. This year will not be like any prior year. No matter how hard everyone tries, this is the abject reality.

As Superintendent and as Board members, we cannot adopt the perspective of any one group. Our mission statement says that we will "ensure the learning of all." That is ambitious, and the right thing to strive for and we are attempting to do this now as we face the realities that COVID 19 have thrust upon us. There are parents, students, and staff who want to start the year - and possibly conduct the entire year - in NTI, face-to-face, and everything in between. Any of the options considered for reopening has unique logistical issues that accompany it. The reopening options become extremely complex because they involve instructional delivery, teacher availability, transportation, technology, school health and safety, and school nutrition. At times, there are no good answers for all of these elements when we look at each option. For that reason, once we start down a path there may be times that we will need to change course because one or more of the logistical issues are virtually unsolvable.

As we proceed down the path to reopening, I am alarmed by the amount of fighting, arguing and demanding on social media and in emails. While parent, teacher, and community input is important, decisions regarding reopening cannot be based on popularity. Our reopening strategy must be grounded in the best instructional practices we can implement correctly considering the realities of in-person, remote, and hybrid learning. I believe under normal circumstances we all would agree that face-to-face instruction is the best possible scenario for students, teachers, and parents. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person instruction will not be the best option for some students, families, and teachers, so we have developed a virtual option. In the short time since the Virtual Learning Academy was announced, the platform supporting grades 6-12 in VLA has been berated by parents and students, even though it is a nationally recognized virtual platform on which many students across this country have had good success. To increase student success, we are putting human resources behind the virtual platform. Yet even with an enhanced virtual platform, remote learning is not, nor can it be, the same as face-to-face instruction. Many of the critics of the virtual learning option are expecting it to be exactly the same education their child would receive in-person, with the exact same course offerings and opportunities. However, a virtual learning environment is not designed to be a replacement for everything a student would receive through a traditional school setting. The VLA is a temporary solution to the obstacles to in-person learning associated with the current global pandemic. We are continuing to tweak the platform and explore means

of enhancing the virtual experience to offer a high-quality remote education. We recognize that this option will not provide every student with each opportunity they might take advantage of during in-person instruction.

For some families NTI was a great experience last year, and I will continue to praise our teachers and families for doing the best they could under extremely challenging circumstances. But for a lot of families, NTI was not a success for a variety of reasons, many of which were outside the district's control. We have reflected on areas where we could have done better, while fully recognizing that many issues were a direct result of such an unexpected change with little pre-planning time. We are in a much better place now. However, I also recognize there are outside influences that make NTI difficult for families. Single-parent families, households in which both parents work outside the home, families that were not technologically equipped to fully support student learning, children who required specialized services, and students who needed the socio-emotional support offered in the school are just some of the reasons why the NTI path is difficult. This is not a blame game. This is reality. NTI was never designed for the extended use that we had to implement last year. Under normal circumstances, NTI is authorized only for ten school days when schools are closed due to inclement weather. With the pandemic, there may be times when we have to use expanded NTI days, but we must be mindful of the consequences of doing so. If it becomes necessary to use NTI, we must implement it to the highest standard we can.

As much as everyone, including myself, wants there to be a sense of normalcy for this year and beyond, we must acknowledge that we are in extraordinary times. The novel coronavirus, whether you believe it is a serious pandemic or not, is here in our community, and it is forcing us to make decisions that we would not typically make. This will be the most expensive year ever for operating our school system. Any of the educational options we implement during this unprecedented time will be more costly than a normal school year. We have been successful with our conservative fiscal approach in the past, and are in better financial shape than many districts. However, there are limits on how much we can spend in trying to meet everyone's wants.

As a community, parents are asked to check their children's temperatures and review the screening questions every day before sending their children to school. If the child has a temperature greater than 100.4, they should not come to school. If a child exhibits a temperature greater than 100.4 when they arrive at school or anytime during the school day, they will need to be picked up from school immediately. Now is the time for parents to teach their children the expectations about wearing face masks on the bus and at school and start getting them acclimated. All parents need to plan for this now and cooperate with the guidelines from the CDC and Public Health so that schools can reopen.

I urge everyone to reflect on their expectations with the understanding that there is no playbook for what all of us are experiencing. We need to be as flexible and responsive as possible. More importantly, we need to work together, not against one another, as we try to solve the problems that our school system, and every other school system across this nation and the world are facing.

1. Amendment options for the 2020-2021 School Year Calendar due to COVID-19.

Michael Williams, Director of Pupil Personnel, presented the proposed amended calendar with two options to the board for consideration. A question and answer session and extensive discussion followed this report with no further interruption. The Board took the proposed amended calendar report under advisement.

IV. ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss Chairperson Fletcher called for motions to adjourn.

On a motion by Suzanne Hundley, seconded by Kevin Woosley and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned the July 24, 2020, special-called meeting at 5:35 p.m. (5-0).



Joyce Fletcher, Board Chairperson



Greg Schultz, Ed. S, Superintendent/Secretary to the Board