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Minutes of a Special Board Meeting of the Governing Board

Office of the Board
Maricopa County, Arizona
January 4, 2021
5:00 p.m.

1. Opening Items - 5:00 pm

1.01 Roll Call

Barb Mozdzen, Board President; Lara Bruner, Board Vice President; Jason Olive, Joel Wirth and Lindsay Love, Board Members, were present.

Dr. Camille Casteel, Superintendent; Lana Berry, Chief Financial Officer; Frank Fletcher, Associate Superintendent for Support Services; Sandy Cooper, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Craig Gilbert, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education; Dr. Wendy Nance, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Frank Narducci, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education; Larry Rother, Senior Executive Director of PK-12 Educational Services; and Terry Locke, Director of Community Relations; were present.

1.02 Pledge of Allegiance / Moment of Silence

1.03 Oath of Office for Newly Elected Board Members

Superintendent Dr. Casteel administered the Oath of Office to newly elected board members Barb Mozdzen, Jason Olive and Joel Wirth.

1.04 Election of Board President for 2021

Motion to nominate Barb Mozdzen as Board President for 2021.
Motion by Joel H Wirth, second by Jason R Olive.

Dr. Casteel asked if there were any other nominations.

Motion to nominate Lara Bruner as Board President for 2021.
Motion by Lindsay A Love, second by Jason R Olive.

Dr. Casteel called for a vote on the first motion.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Barb R Mozdzen, Jason R Olive, Joel H Wirth

Nay: Lara E Bruner, Lindsay A Love

1.05 Election of Board Vice President for 2021

Motion to nominate Jason Olive as Vice President for 2021.
Motion by Joel H Wirth, second by Barb R Mozdzen.

Mrs. Mozdzen asked if there were any other nominations.

Motion to nominate Lara Bruner as Vice President for 2021.
Motion by Lindsay A Love, second NONE.

Mrs. Mozdzen called for a vote on the first motion.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Barb R Mozdzen, Jason R Olive, Joel H Wirth

Nay: Lara E Bruner, Lindsay A Love

2. Routine Business

2.01 Approve the Minutes of the December 9, 2020 Regular Board Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2020 Regular Board Meeting as presented.

Motion by Lindsay A Love, second by Jason R Olive.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Barb R Mozdzen, Lara E Bruner, Lindsay A Love, Jason R Olive, Joel H Wirth

3. Comments

3.01 Citizen Comments

Parents, community members and a student (total of 14) addressed the board stating their thoughts whether schools should remain open or return to virtual.

Terry Locke, Director of Community Relations, summarized over 800 comments submitted to the board electronically, organized by topic. The comments are available in their entirety on the website.

Terry Locke apologized that a technology glitch caused COA parents not to receive communications over the break.

4. Action Items

4.01 In-person and Virtual Instructional Options

Dr. Wendy Nance and Larry Rother summarized the support and certified committee meetings that took place earlier today with representation from sites and departments across the district. Dr. Stemmler, Maricopa County Department of Public Health, presented information and answered questions from participants. The committees then listed positives, suggestions for improvements, and additional concerns. The purpose of this meeting was to gather input from staff to give administration another perspective.

Move to follow current Maricopa County Health Department and Arizona Health Department benchmarks and recommendations for schools to determine the instructional modality and redeploy classified staff whose positions are impacted by virtual learning.

Motion by Lara E Bruner, second by Lindsay A Love.

Board Members discussed the pros and cons of in-person and virtual instructional options, the use of data from the County dashboard to guide decisions and requested the District survey parents and staff again for their current perspectives. Some board members felt this motion was too open-ended, expressed concern for parents to have choice in the way their children were educated, the challenges for working parents when children are not in school including childcare, and lack of resources for our most vulnerable kids. Other board members expressed concern for teachers who felt at risk, acknowledging data could be looked at again in 6-8 weeks after the vaccine is available to teachers. The proposal is to follow the county metrics because they are responsible.

Motion Fails

Aye: Lara E Bruner, Lindsay A Love

Nay: Barb R Mozdzen, Jason R Olive, Joel H Wirth

Move to begin virtual instruction for Elementary Grades PreK-6 on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 with in-person instruction resuming Tuesday, January 19, 2021 (the day after Martin Luther King Holiday), data to be reviewed again January 13, 2021, and redeploy classified staff whose positions are impacted by virtual learning.

Motion by Lindsay A Love, second by Jason R Olive.

4. Action Items (cont'd)

4.01 In-person and Virtual Instructional Options (cont'd)

Lara Bruner acknowledged that some families want virtual, some want in-person and others are in-between, that elementary is less likely to get or spread COVID than secondary, but she believes the fear of contracting COVID increases anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders in children. Many industry companies have made choices for their employees to work from home. She expressed concern about teachers' exposure, the lack of long-term effects, acknowledging district resources are stretched thin, and the lack of flexibility for teachers. She feels virtual is the best education possible without teachers being exposed, the District should be following County metrics, and for these reasons, cannot support this motion. Lindsay agreed with Lara but acknowledged at least this option will give them two weeks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Barb R Mozdzen, Lindsay A Love, Jason R Olive, Joel H Wirth

Nay: Lara E Bruner

Move to begin virtual instruction for Secondary Grades 7-12 on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 with in-person instruction resuming Tuesday, January 19, 2021 (the day after Martin Luther King Holiday), data to be reviewed again January 13, 2021, and redeploy classified staff whose positions are impacted by virtual learning.

Motion by Lindsay A Love, second by Jason R Olive.

Barb stated it is unfair that everything in our state is open, but they want to close schools. It is the lack of regard for our community that is most concerning. She wants kids back in school and acknowledged that some students and teachers struggle in the virtual environment. Lindsay felt this option was the best we can do now but agreed that two weeks is not enough of a mitigation for our staff. She feels we will be in the same place in 4 weeks, 6 weeks, etc. Jason felt that two weeks would give the board an opportunity to look at it again.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Barb R Mozdzen, Lindsay A Love, Jason R Olive, Joel H Wirth

Nay: Lara E Bruner

Move for In-Person Learning for Elementary and Secondary to begin as scheduled on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 with a stipulation for consequences for those that don't wear masks.

Motion by Joel H Wirth, second NONE.

Final Resolution: Motion failed for lack of second.

Move to lower the threshold for temporary Virtual Learning effective January 5, 2021 and revisit at the February 10, 2021 board meeting after teacher and parent surveys.

Motion by Lindsay A Love, second by Jason R Olive.

Motion Carries

Aye: Barb R Mozdzen, Lindsay A Love, Jason R Olive, Joel H Wirth

Abstain: Lara E Bruner

5. Information Items

5.01 CUSD Board Agenda Roadmap

Board members discussed upcoming events and activities. Barb encouraged board members to request study sessions on topics of interest.

5. Information Items (cont'd)

5.02 Superintendent Comments

Dr. Casteel promised to get information out to parents as soon as possible.

5.03 Board Member Recognition / Comments

Joel Wirth thanked the community for their emails saying they were well written and well-thought-out. He assured that board members do care about parents, students, and staff.

Jason Olive acknowledged that no matter what the board decided, it would not make everyone happy and thanked everyone for their patience.

Lindsay Love welcomed the new board members and asked Dr. Casteel to summarize the decisions made by the board tonight for clarification purposes.

Dr. Casteel explained in detail the decisions of the board:

- Virtual instruction will begin on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 and in-person instruction will resume Tuesday, January 19, 2021.
 - Tuesday, January 5, 2021 will be a non-student day and a teacher workday. Teachers will report to their school sites in order to prepare for virtual instruction and distribution of devices to those students who need them.
 - Special Education services will be provided as they were during the previous virtual instruction. Dr. Marshall and her staff will work with teachers to deliver in-person services to those in specialized classrooms beginning the week of January 11, 2021. Details will be communicated directly with the families involved. All students with special education services will return to school with the general education population on Tuesday, January 19, 2021.
 - Food and Nutrition Department will distribute meals.
 - Childcare options will continue.
 - Schools will be open per Executive Order 2020-51 to provide free on-site learning opportunities and support services for students who need a place to go during the day.
- If virtual instruction impacts a support staff employee's ability to perform their regular job duties, the employee will be redeployed in meaningful work.
- The current thresholds for the temporary closure of an individual site with virtual instruction will be lowered:

	Current Threshold	Lower Threshold effective January 5, 2021
Elementary	2% positive active cases	1.5% positive active cases
Junior High	1.5% positive active cases	1% positive active cases
High School	1% positive active cases	.75 positive active cases

Lara Bruner welcomed the two new board members and expressed her thank you to the staff and teachers who work so hard to support their families.

Barb Mozdzen acknowledged the staff and teachers who work so hard burning the candle at both ends.

6. Adjournment

6.01 Adjourn the Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm.