

WEBER SCHOOL DISTRICT
5320 Adams Avenue Parkway
Ogden, UT

Study Session
May 5, 2021

The Board of Education of Weber School District held a Study Session in the Superintendent's office at 5320 Adams Avenue Parkway, Washington Terrace, Utah. The meeting convened at 5:00 p.m. The following Board Members and Superintendency were present:

Jon Ritchie	Board President
Dean Oborn	Board Vice President
Doug Hurst	Board Member
Janis Christensen	Board Member
Jan Burrell	Board Member
Paul Widdison	Board Member
Bruce Jardine	Board Member
Jeff Stephens	Superintendent
Art Hansen	Assistant Superintendent
Lori Rasmussen	Assistant Superintendent
Robert Petersen	Business Administrator

Attending virtually, Uniserve Executive Director Barbera Whitman. Also attending, WEA Board Members, Craig Pitts and Meredith Hoskins.

Superintendent Stephens noted recently data was compiled on our survey organized by Lane Findlay, Community Relations Specialist and Curriculum Director, Sheri Heiter. Using Qualtrics data collection we asked key questions related to a possible bond with approximately 1,750 employees responding, 2,300 parents and 450 members of the public. Dr. Stephens discussed a few of the questions consisting of three sub groups: Employees, parents and public.

1. What do you feel is the greatest need facing Weber School District in terms of construction projects? (a.) replacing aging facilities, (b) building new facilities to accommodate new growth, (c) striking a balance, or (d) Weber School District has no construction needs. Results from each group consisted of: Employees - 1% said no needs, 99% said there are construction needs. Parents - 3% no needs, 97% construction needs. Public - 5% no needs, 95% construction needs.
2. Would you support a bond in the November 2021 election to fund the replacement of older school buildings, and the construction of new schools in Weber School District if it did not include a tax rate increase? Responses: Employees 81% yes, parents 74% yes, public 72% yes.

3. If a bond included a tax rate increase how much extra would you be willing to pay in new property tax? Employees, parent and public - 20% would not support it. Approximately 28% said they would go up to \$3 per month. This figure dropped if \$6 per month. It was noted what is the level of tolerance if the Board decides to put a bond on the ballot in November. If there is a rate increase it makes margins smaller.
4. Would the COVID-19 pandemic have any influence on your vote for or against a school bond? Results were identical across the board, 98% no.

Superintendent Stephens noted this has been a great opportunity to get feedback from the public before deciding to have a bond on the November ballot.

Superintendent Stephens noted he received an email from Utah State Board of Education Superintendent Dixon, indicating the State Board has waived the policy dealing with the 990-hour requirement for next year. They did not waive the 180-day requirement. It was noted as a result of COVID forcing our teachers into online learning, we have experienced real progress and growth pertaining to their ability to seamlessly integrate a digital component and blended learning into their curriculum. Teachers can more effectively personalize and customize learning for every student by using digital resources. Superintendent Stephens asked if there would be interest to continue utilizing the 45 minutes next year to permit teachers to continue to build upon recently acquired skill sets. Ultimately, providing greater learning experiences for every child.

Superintendent Stephens is interested in collecting some feedback from parents and teachers around the possibility that may exist with a digital 45 minutes. It is important to note, teachers would have expectations around personalizing instruction with a blended learning component. We do not want to say here is an online assignment to do at home. So how can we capitalize on digital resources to personalize learning for every student.

Superintendent Stephens noted another question for feedback, prior to the pandemic, the Board was requested to look into a later start for secondary students, due to research suggesting teens do better later in the day. The problem is this will push secondary schools into a later time to end school and may impact extracurricular activities, jobs, etc. For elementary students, it causes a late ending time. There is the possibility of 45 minutes more in the morning. It was noted we are not pushing or promoting the idea but would like an opportunity to explore. President Ritchie asked how quickly could we have data back from parents, teachers and students. It was noted that the Qualtrics tool enables us to have a survey out within a week and by the June Board meeting have the data. Board Member Jan Burrell asked about moving toward digital learning, and do we have capacity for training during those times. It was noted yes, we have the digital capacity to deliver training on Zoom or Canvas training. Our district is poised for a step forward from progress made from our Digital Teaching and Learning Department. We have moved forward digitally as a school district at least five years. Board Member Bruce Jardine noted teachers have put so much into it, and it would be travesty to step back.

Board member Jane Burrell asked if we know what learning losses students have had throughout the year. It was reported to the Board a lot of our preliminary analysis is optimistic. Some of the losses we anticipated early are not present. This is due to the Board having courage to provide in person instruction from day one and mitigating academic loss anticipated six months ago. A plan is in place for a deep root cause analysis, performed by teachers in every grade and subject under direction of Sheri Heiter, Curriculum and Assessment Director's leadership. Dr. Stephens noted professional development will be offered by teacher leaders and every school will receive \$100 per student, with each school developing a plan to address specific issues. President Ritchie asked the Board if they would like to consider the 45-minute late start. Superintendent Stephens proposed to move forward collecting data and bring results back to the Board in June.

Utah State Board of Education Member Brent Strate addressed the Board and noted we have always wanted local control. Our view was to let each district determine what is best for them. The 990 hours was in the way, but the State Board have set parameters for each LEA to decide.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 pm