

**THREE RIVERS SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING  
March 11, 2020**

Three Rivers School District Board of Directors met for a regular session, Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at the Fleming Middle School, 6001 Monument Drive, Grants Pass, Josephine County, Oregon. A full recording of the meeting is available on the District web page.

**PRESENT**

Rich Halsted, Board Chair  
Jennifer Johnstun, Board Vice Chair  
Kate Dwyer, Board Member (Via phone)  
Paul Kelly, Board Member  
Danny York, Board Member

Dave Valenzuela, Superintendent  
Casey Alderson, Director  
Stephanie Allen-Hart, Director  
Jessica Durrant, Director  
Shelly Quick, Recording Secretary

Administrators: Rachel Damiano/Hidden Valley High School Assistant Principal, David Regal/Evergreen Elementary Principal, Wensdae Davis/Woodland Charter School Administrator, Damian Crowson/Hidden Valley High School Principal, Alana Goldstein/Woodland Charter School Administrator, Rob Saunders/District Office Administrator, Michael Herzog/Merlin Alternative Center Administrator, Cassie Banuelos/Fleming Middle School Assistant Principal, Renee Hults/Manzanita Elementary Principal, Kellie Lovell/Madrona Elementary Principal, Jody Hoffman/Sunny Wolf Charter School Administrator, Mark Higgins/Lincoln Savage Middle School Principal, Steve Fuller/Applegate and Williams Elementary Principal, Lori Higgins/Fleming Middle School Principal, Alicia Timbs/Ft. Vannoy Elementary Principal and Kirk Baumann/Lincoln Savage Middle School Assistant Principal,

**CALL TO ORDER/EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Board Chair Halsted called the meeting to order in Executive Session at 5:00 p.m. under ORS 192.660(2)(i) – superintendent evaluation.

Board Chair Halsted recessed Executive Session at 5:45 p.m.

**REGULAR SESSION**

Board Chair Halsted reconvened the meeting in Open Session at 6:00 p.m. and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. He then announced that Member Dwyer would be participating by phone due to illness.

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

Mr. Kelly made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Johnstun seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

**SAY SOMETHING POSITIVE**

Mr. Kelly complimented the Academic Masters program. It is a great opportunity to showcase our students. Ms. Johnstun thanked the people involved with the union negotiations. She is happy about how amicable the whole process has been. Mr. Halsted shared a story relayed to him by Illinois Valley High School Principal Tanner Smith in which one of his students got a job as a welder. Principal Smith took the time to work with him to get his schedule changed and get him some work experience hours so he could not only succeed in the classroom but succeed in life as well. This is a great example of the district's goal of 'culture of care' to meet students where their needs are. He also shared the success of Lincoln Savage Battle of the Books. Kudos to the entire team! Mr. York shared that he had a conversation with a student from

Illinois Valley High School last weekend and the student showed him pictures of the pickup that was donated to him by the shop teacher, and all of the work that he has done to it. He's over the moon with what he is doing in the class. He is super proud and super excited to have the truck running soon. Superintendent Valenzuela thanked everyone for showing up to the meeting. Two of the biggest conversations he has ever been a part of with the district are taking place tonight. He also expressed his thanks to the staff members that participated in the four-day committee work. He then thanked both unions for coming to the table and being willing to work hard and also look at it from a systems perspective. Director Alderson shared that Spring sports are starting up today. Director Durrant recognized all of the hard work that went in to Battle of the Books. She also recognized our social studies teachers for their hard work. Director Allen-Hart recognized the special education teachers in the North Valley area. She also gave a shout out to Hidden Valley High School and Mr. Decasas Lifeskills program. They are doing some pretty amazing things there with their 21<sup>st</sup> Century program.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- **COVID-19** – Three Rivers School District is taking it very seriously. We are taking all of the precautions we can as a school district. That includes our communication about preventative behavior. Also, our partners at Aramark are in constant communication with him utilizing their resources. We are also exploring third party response vendors to handle a situation if a case of COVID-19 should occur in the district so we don't have to put our employees at risk.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Items in the consent agenda will be approved by a single motion unless a member of the Board or the Superintendent requests that an item or items be removed and voted upon separately.

- Routine Personnel Items – March 2020
- Athletic Coaches – March 2020
- Annual renewal, nonrenewal, contract extension and non-extension of teacher and administrators as required by law.
- Out of State Travel Requests (3)
- Mrs. Johnstun made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. York seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously (5-0)

### **COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

- Susan Greely-OSEA – Expressed some thoughts on the possibility of the district moving to a four-day week. She appreciates the district's commitment to keeping all of the classified employees whole and minimizing the fear.
- Judy Ahrens – Shared her concerns with Common Core. She also shared concerns about what parents will do with their children on the fifth day if the district should move to a four-day week.
- Karen Satern – She is the grandparent of a student at Manzanita. She feels the four-day week may be detrimental, especially for the primary school age kids due to the longer days. She also shared her concerns about childcare options and the ability to participate in after school programs with longer school days. There is also very little data on the academic success of the four-day model.

### **REPORTS – NO ACTION**

- **North Valley Area Elementary and Middle School Administrator Reports**
  - Fort Vannoy Elementary Principal Alicia Timbs shared a presentation highlighting some of their great community partnerships.
  - Fleming Middle School Principal Lori Higgins shared a presentation highlighting some of their happenings so far this school year. She also recognized Deputy Konieczny who is constantly building relationships with students and celebrating their successes.
  - Manzanita Elementary Principal Renee Hults shared a picture presentation of amazing things going on at Manzanita. She shared some great things going on at the school thanks to amazing

community members. She also shared some information on the outstanding growth in her student's reading skills.

- **Sunny Wolf Charter School Annual Report**

- Sunny Wolf Charter School Director Jody Hoffman shared a bit of background about herself. She then reported that there are currently 115 students enrolled in six classrooms with a teacher and an assistant in each classroom. Sunny Wolf is a schoolwide Title I school. She also provided information on the following:
  - Testing results
  - Curriculum
  - Parent involvement activities
  - Financial reports
- Ms. Hoffman stated that one area for improvement is their attendance rate. For 2018/19 their attendance rate for regular attenders was 64%. This will be a focus for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Next year they will be expanding to add a sixth grade and a preschool.

- **Wastewater Treatment Update**

- Mike Bollweg from Southern Oregon Water Technology and Rob Brandes from Josephine County Public Works provided the board with an update to the status of the North Valley area wastewater treatment facilities. Mr. Brandes reiterated the county's commitment to the partnership they have at the Fleming plant with school district.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- **Student Investment Account (SIA) Application**

- Superintendent Valenzuela stated that the district recently held the public feedback session for the Student Investment Account (SIA). He shared the background of the Student Investment Account the purpose of the funds. The amount for Three Rivers School District equals \$3.8 million. One of the major requirements for these funds is the engagement of staff, students, parents and community. The district has held Town Halls, forums, student feedback panels and doing everything we can to get stakeholder input. The fund is a three-year commitment. The money is intended to help meet student's mental health and behavioral needs. We have not been able to meet those needs as much as we would have like to in the past because of resources. We are also looking to increase academic achievement and reduce those disparities. He showed some data showing where students have historically been performing. The money can be used to reduce class sizes, but it has to be targeted around some of the despaired areas that were talked about. Another area is well rounded education which would bring back some of the things that the district has been missing for years such as middle school electives and elementary music. Also adding instructional time for things such before and after school programs and summer programs, making more opportunities for students. Safety is another big one for students.

For the engagement piece we have been targeting parents and staff through surveys, we have had forums and student panels. There have also been focal group surveys where we have specifically surveyed the under-represented population and a budget survey.

We are looking to address some mental and behavioral health and safety for all students by adding some behavioral support staff at elementary, campus monitors at all of our high schools and an additional school nurse for the district.

In terms of reducing class sizes, we would add a teacher at an elementary school and adding staff at middle and high school as well as special education teachers and an autism specialist to help with some transitioning things we are doing with our SPED population.

As we look at providing more well-rounded education, we hope to add elementary specialists. Adding teachers for elective courses at the middle and high schools, intervention teachers to help kids stay on track, instructional coaches at the elementary and secondary levels and some P.E. teachers at the high school to reduce some of the class loads.

We are also looking at reducing the cost of pay to play. We have a lot of students that just can't afford to engage in some of our extra-curricular activities and sports and would like to remove that barrier.

We have also included an administrator to help support the grant. This is a constant re-up and is a non-competitive grant, but we are required to submit an inordinate amount of data and reports. There is also a lot of professional development for our staff.

Superintendent Valenzuela said if approved, the application will be submitted to the state tomorrow. He also thanked Director Durrant for all of her hard work on this application. He then asked the board to approve the SIA application for submission.

- Mr. Kelly made a motion to approve the Student Investment Account Application. Ms. Johnstun seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

- **Four Day Week**

- Superintendent Valenzuela provided an overview of the path and process to date so far. He reported that there is not a lot of evidence about the impact of the four-day week on student achievement. We believe one of the benefits of the four-day model would be the ability to recruit high quality educators. He does know that a four-day week, if implemented, would provide us with an opportunity for a consistent calendar. Currently there are a lot of interruptions due to conferences, clerical days and professional development. A four-day week has a great potential for us to put those interruptions on the fifth day. That would provide a consistent calendar, and a higher quality of education to our kids because the number one indicator of student success is a high-quality educator standing in front of your child. He shared that it is almost time for him to write his budget message for 2021. He has written three so far, and in every single one there has been cut days. The funding from the state does not match what our expenditures are. We celebrate our ruralness – but it comes at a price. We are spending a little more than \$25,000 a day to get students to and from school. A cut due to a four-day week reduces transportation costs. Over time, this creates a system where the district should be financially sustainable. The four-day week is a step that Three Rivers could take to be financially sustainable in the future. The SIA funds are a grant that is not general fund dollars. SIA funds can't save the day and be used in the general fund. The funds are separate. He believes we have to go to a four-day week because Three Rivers' foundational structure is not sustainable. He has had conversations with parents that are adamant that this has to happen, and he has had parents say that it just doesn't make sense. There are a lot of concerns from elementary. He believes what his professional colleagues say in that they are worried about the idea of going to a four-day school week because we can't answer the question of what is this going to do to our kids? Some principals and teachers are terrified. Some are asking if we have to do this right now? The last poll that he took from the union groups was that they are interested in a four-day week, but in an all or none model. In an all or none model that would require us to take some schools along that he doesn't feel are ready to go. There is also the question of do we have to do it now – or can we do it in the Fall of 2021? The most popular conversation is the idea of a two-year implementation model. There are schools that have demonstrated readiness and then there are the schools already talked about that are not ready. Then there is the option of just staying with the five-day week. He asked if there were any questions from board members? There were clarifying questions asked by board members.

Mr. York expressed concern that a partial implementation would create a Human Resources perfect storm because you would never be able to satisfy everyone. He also stressed that we are not sustainable in our current model. Living rural comes with some trade-offs. We have this amazing opportunity to do it. He believes we can have huge successes in this.

Mr. Kelly said he was along the same lines as Mr. York. We have to just push ahead. We have an extremely talented staff at every level and whatever challenges are going to come forward they, as a board, expect to hear what they need to be successful. Putting the district in a four-day model is going to be far more sustainable to do it now while we have the resources coming in to make it right before we have to do it.

Ms. Johnstun shared that this has been one of the most challenging things. What she keeps

coming back to is that she feels an obligation as a board member to make sure that we can financially sustain the district in a way where school is open, and we are meeting the minimum operational needs for our kids. She does not know that we are there right now with some of the cuts that we had to make last year. She does not know that we are doing the best that we could for our kids and for our employees because of what we have had to cut. She is not comfortable with that. They have an obligation as a board to pay attention to becoming financially sustainable – but she also worries about implementing this correctly. She believes either way they decide, they are a little bit wrong for some population of people. She is more in favor of a staged implementation so that those places that don't feel ready can get ready but is concerned that they do not have the union support for that, and working collaboratively with the unions is really important to her.

Mr. Halsted stated that you need to take the emotion and the anecdotal data out and you have to go with the hard facts. He was on the Budget Committee before the Board and he has never seen a message where we haven't let go positions. These are cuts we take away from the kids - we don't have music, we don't have P.E. The math tells him that they have funded the district by hook and crook over the last couple of years. A lot of grants, which means that teachers aren't in classrooms. They are at the District Office doing the things that the grant asks. He did some basic math, and if we have 85% attendance and the teacher is in the classroom 70% of the time, you come down to 59% of the time students are in contact with their teacher while they are at school. That is unacceptable – but that is how we have to pay for our school district. The stock market is down 20% in the last couple of weeks which means our PERS bill is going to go up. PERS is one of our biggest expenses, which will devastate the school district. Ten thousand miles a day on busses – as a parent, that is unacceptable. We have kids that are riding busses an hour and a half each way to school. We would give them three hours of their life back! We have teachers that are driving from Ashland out to the Illinois Valley to teach because they are dedicated. We are going to give them a little bit of life back. He does believe the older the student is, the more this makes sense. He too, would be in favor of a two-year implementation to figure out the elementary issues.

Md. Dwyer made a statement that protecting student teacher contact time is a major benefit of this plan. Can we commit to making it a board goal to rigorously monitor teacher-student contact time for the fewest interruptions? Would there be a board agreement as we proceed to make that vigilance a board goal?

Mr. Valenzuela's asked Mr. Alderson if there have been any conversations with the union groups about the concept of a two-year implementation? He asked if either of the union groups would talk about that?

Classified President Sara Evans commented that she does not know how the teachers feel, but she shared that they responded to the demand to bargain and appreciate they the district agreed to keep the classified staff whole. However, she does not think that it would be accurate to say that they would be opposed to a transition of the implementation. They want what's best for kids. They do agree that this could be a potential nightmare for Human Resources.

Certified President Julia Richardson shared that they would support the move to a four-day week, but all or nothing. They cannot support a two-year implementation.

Mr. Valenzuela summarized things up and expressed that he shares the concerns that some of his colleagues have around elementary implementation. The older the kid, the more sense it makes. There isn't something out there that he has seen that this staff can't overcome. There will be some bumps in the road, and we will learn a lot. We will do everything in our power to create and provide the most amazing educational experience for our kids.

- Mr. York made a motion for a full implementation to a four-day week in the Fall of 2020. Mr. Kelly seconded the motion. There was some discussion. Board Chair Halsted called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Board Chair Halsted called for a five-minute recess at 7:45 p.m.

Board Chair Halsted reconvened the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

- **Board Policies – Second Reading (SB 479 & SB 155)**
  - GBA – Workplace Harassment
  - GCA – License Requirements
  - IICC – Volunteers
  - IICC-AR – Volunteers (*Delete*)
  - JHFE – Reporting of Suspected Abuse of a Child (*Delete current and adopt new version*)
  - JHFE-AR(1) – Reporting of Suspected Abuse of a Child (*Delete current and adopt new version*)
  - JHFF/GBNAA – Reporting Requirements Regarding Sexual Contact with Students (*Delete current and adopt new version*)
  - GBA – Equal Employment Opportunity
  - Director Alderson reported the revised policies are in response to Senate Bills 155 and 479 that were past the last legislative session.
  - Ms. Johnstun made a motion to adopt board policies GBEA, GCA, IICC, JHFE, JHFE-AR(1), JHFF/GBNAA and GBA and delete policy IICC-AR. Mr. Kelly seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously (5-0).
  
- **Board Policies – Second Reading (SB 415)**
  - BBF – Board Member Standards of Conduct
  - BBFC – Reporting of Suspected Abuse of a Child
  - Superintendent Valenzuela stated these revised policies are in response to Senate Bill 415 that now make school board members mandatory reporters.
  - Mr. Kelly made a motion to adopt board policies BBF and BBFC. Ms. Johnstun seconded the motion. Board Chair Halsted reminded the board members to complete their online mandatory reporting training. Mr. Halsted called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.
  
- **Hidden Valley HS and Illinois Valley HS Final Seismic Contract**
  - District Accountant Lisa Cross explained back in January the seismic grant contract was awarded to Ausland Group. The documents in the packet are their official contracts and have been reviewed by our project manager.
  - Mr. York made a motion to approve the Hidden Valley High School and Illinois Valley High School seismic contracts. Mr. Kelly seconded the motion. There was some discussion. Board Chair Halsted called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously (5-0).
  
- **JCEF Donation Fund**
  - District Accountant Lisa Cross explained that they have a 999 fund and not all of those funds were awarded out. They would like to use the dollars that are left in there to start a seed scholarship fund, one for each area, for kids that don't get scholarships otherwise.
  - Mr. Kelly made a motion to approve the JCEF donation fund. Ms. Johnstun seconded the motion. There was some discussion. Board Chair Halsted called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **SUGGESTED FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Mr. York asked about the food service ending fund balance. Mr. Valenzuela responded that we are currently in the RFP process for food service as this is a big concern for everybody.
- Ms. Johnstun asked if we can talk about how we can set some indicators of progress for next year so that we can look at how we are doing in a four-day week? She feels it is important to create a baseline of student/teacher interface time and then comparing it next year. Mr. Valenzuela agreed that we need to set metrics as a school board. Mr. Kelly would like to have a work session where they talk about different things around the four-day week. They want to figure out their role in helping support with the implementation. There will be more discussion about this at the April 1<sup>st</sup> work session.
- Ms. Johnstun would also like to talk about support for families after school and on Fridays for

childcare. How we can work with community partners to help create childcare options for that fifth day.

### **FUTURE MEETING DATES**

- Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. – District Office – School Board Work Session
- Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. – Hidden Valley High School – School Board Regular Session
  - Student Panel at 2:00 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Board Chair Halsted adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

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Rich Halsted  
Chairperson of the Board

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Dave Valenzuela  
Superintendent-Clerk