

## **Special Board Minutes (Draft)**

Friday, March 27, 2020 @ 12:00 p.m.

Administration Conference Room

**Present:** Donna Yellow Owl-Chair, Wendy Bremner, Brenda Croff, Brian Gallup (via telephone), James Evans (via telephone), Jess Edwards (via telephone), Rae TallWhiteman. Edwards. Absent: Kristy Bullshoe.

Ms. Yellow Owl called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion by Ms. Croff to approve the agenda with no changes. Second by Ms. Bremner. All in favor/Motion passed.

**Public Comment:** None.

### **Items of Action**

**Staffing Issues:** Ms. Yellow stated that the Governor has stated that schools are not to worry and to pay all staff. MTSBA sent confirmation with the Governor's directive that applies to certified and classified staff critical/essential functions. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that BPS will continue as it has for the past two weeks, i.e. providing meals, educational paper packets, and online work for students. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that the district cannot make people volunteer and also stated that although there is the option of unemployment, she suggests that the Board approve to pay staff as they have been doing because the district has already budgeted the wages for this school year.

Ms. Bremner stated that she wants to make it clear that the discussion is to try to find a remedy for shortage of staff to come in and do essential work. If a position has been deemed essential, someone has to come in and do the essential duties. Ms. Bremner stated that the district will pay everyone regardless, but whoever is deemed essential should report to work.

Tonia Tatsey stated that her essential staff list has an assigned timeframe for some staff to help with breakfast and others to help with lunch through April 10.

Ms. Yellow Owl asked if hours of 8-4 is necessary or if essential staff can work from 8-12 and have custodians in to clean and disinfect from 12 to 4 daily. All staff who work will earn personal leave for the hours worked.

Superintendent Hall stated that the unions have MOUs in place that say anyone can be called in to work with some exceptions. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that staff cannot be required to go to the doctor and get a note for not being eligible to work according to the Governor and the Tribes proclamation. Ms. Bremner stated that this is an emergency situation if the Governor can shut down everything except essential duties; also Ms. Bremner stated that the school should require staff to work and get done with what needs to be done and go home.

Ms. TallWhiteman stated that she doesn't want people to come in to work if they have health issues; she knows we want them to have a doctor's note but it is not feasible right now and they should not be disciplined. The district should have the safest environment possible for those who have to come into the buildings. Staff should be allowed to work from home if possible or park near the school to use the school Wifi. Administration should make sure essential things are happening in the school district and be productive in the most productive way. Ms. TallWhiteman asked if all staff have been communicated to. Tonia Tatsey stated that she called all her staff and 90% can come in. Jennifer Wagner stated that she has contacted the classified staff and she has identified the high school's basic needs. Sicily Bird stated that custodians have been notified to be in the buildings disinfecting as needed and they can be called in when necessary; TAs are okay to come in as needed; secretary can work from home and be on campus for certain duties (flexible); chromebooks will be out for staff next week. Tonia Tatsey agreed and stated that she can schedule 5-6 staff in building at a time and also help with meals; custodians can clean in the afternoon; secretary can be in a few hours each day. JoAnn Powell stated that Babb teachers have

been coming in to collect what they need and are working from home; packets have been mailed out; custodian is working as needed; bus driver as needed; TAs are not required to work except in the food pantry. Sheila Hall stated she is not comfortable making a decision of who is essential and who is not. She has not communicated with staff. The only staff affected by this plan is TAs and the attendance person and she can have them mandatory to help with meals and copying and delivering but would rather follow the Governor's orders. Ms. Bremner stated that administration should not think about who is essential but what is essential that needs to be done in each building and limit those needed to be in each building and still get essential jobs done. Maureen Stott stated everything can be done remotely for special education; web contact with students and interaction with teachers; packets are taken care of. Ms. Stott stated that OPI has required that documentation is essential. Superintendent Hall stated that the message is to do all virtually and on line if possible; limit the time for those willing to come in; all essential staff need to be held accountable if they are not getting information for the packets or getting online work for students. Superintendent Hall stated that it is a priority, and essential, to provide food for kids and to continue education.

Mr. Evans stated that keeping food service manned is a big concern as well as a plan to communicate with kids to do their work; also, how do kids know who to contact to help them do their work. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that the principal's presentations at the board meeting showed that offsite learning would have communication to kids through telephone, email, google classroom, etc. Kids do need to know who to contact and how to contact someone for assistance or help. Mr. Evans stated that no one is answering the phones at the schools and suggested there be one central phone number to call. Ms. Yellow Owl suggested to mandate the administration phone be the contact number.

Angie Heavy Runner stated that middle school secretary will work until noon so that kids are able to call in and the home school coordinator will work to contact teachers or kids; TA positions are open and teachers will do remote learning; custodians will be in to clean in the afternoons and students have been sent teacher's numbers to contact for help. Matthew Johnson stated that certified staff can work remotely at WBH; a few have come in to help with lunches; classified staff only need one to come in, if needed. Mr. Johnson stated he can do what is needed if someone is sick. Natasha Siliezar stated that there are 5 staff working in colonies and she is the only essential staff; she does not have remote ability to work and will have to help make packets.

Ms. Bremner thanked all for the outstanding work and asked the board to lean toward supporting schools to be online and have a central calling phone to the administration; the principals can communicate with administration phone and they will not need people to be in to work and answer phones. Ms. Bremner asked principals to do their best to consider certified and classified staff to do online work and training and also noted that she would rather not have administrators in if not necessary because there will be cases in our community soon enough and *we need to keep people out of the buildings*. Buildings don't need to make packets in bulk for students, only make them for those without online capabilities. Ms. Bremner reminded all that germs can spread this way and discouraging congregating is necessary. Everyone needs to try to think outside the box and *have limited interaction with staff or others; just consider that BPS is shut down*.

Reid Reagan stated that he has 3-5 staff working as needed and on call throughout the week.

Lynne Keenan stated that all her staff is essential and she doesn't have any employees showing up to work. Ms. Keenan has offered them to be in the building by themselves for 2 hours each day plus earning extra leave in the amount of time they work. Ms. Keenan stated that cooks are done by 12:30 but there are too many in one area and it is unsafe for the them to all be working in one kitchen and to have volunteers there too. Ms. Keenan prefers each cook go to a different school to cook, no volunteers, and noted that staff won't come in if they are being paid not to work. Ms. Keenan stated that she is high risk and worried and has small children at home and she could work from home but still needs someone working in the warehouse and copy center; right now, she has subs that are learning to do the work and one cannot drive. Ms. Bremner stated that the district should not require high risk staff to come in and work, and suggested that the board make an adjustment with this. Superintendent Hall stated that Ms. Keenan needs help and suggested to contract out for services. Ms. Yellow Owl asked if anyone else in

district can do the work and if maintenance can drive supplies to the school/s if their work is done. John Salois stated that if the service is contracted out, they will need a tribal business license, an independent state license, a food handlers' certification, then advertise and get board approval. Superintendent Hall suggested to offer one of the cooks to be in charge. Mr. Salois stated that administration needs to look at the position as being essential; not the person. The district can check to find out who is willing to work the program and give them an incentive to do the work. Mr. Gallup suggested offering staff 5% plus annual leave. Ms. TallWhiteman suggested that building staff work to help food service: KW/VC on Monday, BES on Tuesday, Napi on Wednesday, etc. Change Ms. Keenan's hours to 4 hours. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that Housing is paying double time and a half for these hazardous times. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that council approved overtime only. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that personal leave won't always work for some and staff is asking when can they use this leave and stated that they can't see it on their checks. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that people who volunteer will do it because they can. Lynne stated she can work from her office but cannot go from copier, warehouse, postage, to schools, etc. She needs someone in warehouse 4 hours; copiers 2 hours, postage as needed, and someone to deliver to school/s. The district cannot depend on just one person to feed all the kids, every day, when staff will not come to work because they are not required to work. Ms. Croff asked if the district could look at essential staff getting hazard pay which is 25% of their hourly pay on top of their wage. Mr. Salois stated that he will have to look into what is hazard pay covers and review positions and work with legal. Ms. Croff insists that Ms. Keenan be working in one place alone or working from home. Ms. Keenan stated she can be at work but not around people. Mr. Salois stated that the administration can be the central area for answering phones but he will need lists from each building for the student contact person/s; the board secretary can work as needed, and custodian works same as everyone else when the building is empty. Mr. Salois prefers to work from home. Ms. Yellow Owl stated that she wants to see Ms. Keenan's responsibility from her department being taken care of by the administration, such as copying, mail, warehouse, etc. Mr. Salois stated that he will make the positions essential and get someone to work.

Mr. Salois stated that Teri DeRoche did contact all transportation staff and has phone numbers for all who would be doing working; transportation has 24 staff and 11 are working. Ms. DeRoche stated that her staff is concerned that they will be given personal leave and not annual leave. Mr. Salois stated that classified staff can use personal leave the same as annual leave. Ms. DeRoche stated that her staff works from 7:30 to 2 pm; when lunch is over at 1:30 they clean buses and sign out at 2 pm. Ms. DeRoche asked that her staff be considered for hazard pay because they are out in community every day.

Robert Hall asked that all principals encourage their NAS staff to reply to him and stated it is critical that Carolyn Zuback and Mike Daychief, who are fluent speakers and are valuable, work remotely and respond to his calls/email. Also Mr. Hall asked board, superintendent, and principals reply to him; other staff have been cooperative. Mr. Hall stated he created a you tube page for B/NAS and he is uploading a video once every day.

Nikki Hannon stated that some of her staff are making packets but she needs technology to stay in contact with students. Ms. Hannon is depending on others a lot as she is working remotely.

Everett Holm stated that technologies biggest struggle is getting people connected and noted that he is not going to be able to get some teachers connected because of where they live; some can connect outside of the school buildings. 3-Rivers is getting services installed for students. Mr. Holm will be receiving 20 jetpacks on Monday to get out to students and 120 will be on back order; they are scarce. William Kennedy and Mr. Holm will support all remotely. There are some teachers who have said they won't get internet connected...Mr. Holm does not know what he can do for those individuals. Teachers need to purchase jetpacks and pay for the monthly service. If the board waives this for teachers, the district will have huge Verizon bills, \$40 pays for unlimited data. Mr. Holm has written letters to the congressional delegates regarding the districts haves and have nots and is working to encourage erate that they will pay for the jetpacks. All schools had technology out yesterday and being picked up. Mr. Holm has ordered 200 more chargers to give out.

Ms. Bremner stated that we are not in a weather situation where people can't leave their homes; they can just park outside the schools to use internet if they are not willing to purchase it. The requirement is to provide the school work to kids and if in their own car, they are safe.

Everett Armstrong stated that MHSA is sending reminders to be safe, stay isolated. The Activities Secretary is working at BHS helping with packets. The AD meeting has been rescheduled to April 19 and 20 to discuss schedules for next year and he has been in contact with others for scheduling for fall and winter. Senior pictures are going on and he has to get a plaque and a Warbonnet. All gyms are closed, weight room is closed, wrestling room is closed. All requests to use gyms have been cancelled. Mr. Armstrong stated he is working from home. The AD Secretary will continue to go in as needed to pay bills and help office staff.

Ms. Yellow Owl stated that a couple of senior students need iPads and she will get the names to Principal Wagner or have them contact her. Ms. Wagner has given her cell phone out for public to contact her.

Ms. Yellow Owl stated she is hearing that essential duties need to be identified and staff volunteers should go to other areas to work. Lynne Keenan needs help hauling supplies, sorting mail and each cook should be in their own buildings preparing food. Administration receptionist and board secretary will answer calls forwarded from each building. All schools need to provide information to John Salois with 1) name of contact person for each building (home contact) and 2) cut down hours from 8-12 for staff and 12-4 for custodians. Ms. Bremner stated staff should work only the time it takes to get essential jobs done and get out of buildings. Ms. Bremner stated that the district cannot pay hazard pay and should look at contracting out work in food service/warehouse and find a way to get people in to help.

Amanda Flammond stated that classified staff are calling and asking why they can't work and others get to. Classified staff feel that some are being given the chance to build up their leave others don't get to and suggested to make a schedule so that all classified staff can all work the same amount of time; be fair to work all classified for work. Ms. Flammond stated that a schedule will give classified a chance to work a couple days, stay home and work, etc. Ms. Bremner stated that the request is out there and the district couldn't get workers. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that the district didn't turn any people away. Ms. Flammond suggest to have a schedule so staff know they have to come to work. Ms. Bremner asked what is the true story; some staff have been saying they won't come in and now they are saying they have not been asked to come in. Mr. Salois stated that they haven't had people showing up; the areas that are essential have been put out to all district employees to come in and work. Superintendent Hall stated that she has sent out emails for needs in all essential areas and has asked individuals, and begged them, to come to work. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that in the past 2 weeks she has been very disappointed in classified staff. The Classified MOU was signed with the board says that staff had to keep in contact with their place of employment and when they were called to work, they had excuses not to come in and they refused to come to work when it wasn't in the area they wanted to work. They had two weeks to work and during this time, Ms. TallWhiteman stated that she saw the same people volunteering to work every day and very few are classified staff and noted that classified staff needs to realize that the new MOU is iron clad. The district had jobs for classified staff and we have struggled because of staff not stepping up. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that the shelter in place needs to be taken serious; it means they are staying in their homes. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that staff not coming in when called is not okay; they are affecting our students and we can only get 400 meals out daily instead of what is needed. Ms. Flammond stated that she has told classified staff this same thing and she let them know that the school is looking for volunteers and she has also told them to read their emails daily. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that she spoke to the Classified President and that person is very upset with classified staff because they won't contact their supervisors; they need to stay in contact with their employer and if they are capable they should come in to work when needed; we should not have a shortage for breakfast and lunches to kids; the district is also looking to start a supper program because we are food insecure in Browning; we have starving kids out there right now. Ms. Keenan stated that she is here and she is not worried about having extra time/leave because she cares about the kids; our kids need this support and stated that what concerns her is that she calls her staff and sends them text messages and they won't return calls or contact her. Ms. Bremner stated

that this needs to be approached in a trauma informed way because some people have anxiety over this; we need to find people who are willing to work.

Ms. Bremner motioned to reiterate that the school is in an emergency situation and it is closed for all purposes except those providing essential functions the Governor has required, i.e. meals for students and educational work for students. Mr. Salois should provide a list of what jobs are essential and identify the staff who are essential to those jobs and clarify the purpose of those working at home. Staff can be compensated through additional leave. Any position besides essential positions are closed to any personnel. Second by Mr. Evans. No further discussion. Motion passed 7-0 with Donna Yellow Owl, Wendy Bremner, Brenda Croff, Brian Gallup (via telephone), James Evans (via telephone), Jess Edwards (via telephone), Rae TallWhiteman voting for.

**Extracurricular and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Activities:** Ms. Yellow Owl stated that she is getting calls regarding prom and graduation and noted that the district is closed through 4/10/20. If the school opens it will be the same week that prom is scheduled and Ms. Yellow Owl does not feel this is feasible. The district must focus on the kids needs and education. Jennifer Wagner stated that she has let all know that the high school will follow the actions laid out by the Governor and once a decision is made, the information will be sent out to everyone but there will be no prom in April. Ms. Wagner stated that she is not comfortable scheduling prom in May and wants to say there will be no prom. Ms. Bremner suggested to wait until later and discuss. Mr. Armstrong stated that it is too early to decide and many kids have already bought their prom dresses; this is a big event for our students and it is too early to decide right now. Ms. Bremner suggested that the superintendent make a statement that the school will discuss and plan after the emergency is over but all activities are cancelled for the month of April. Superintendent Hall agreed not to cancel and discuss something for the summer. Ms. Croff felt that it will take longer for vaccines/treatment and felt it is not work a life. Ms. TallWhiteman stated she does not see this stopping right away and also does not see the Governor saying that any schools can have a gathering at a graduation which is also a big event for Browning. Ms. TallWhiteman felt that a lot of things will be cancelled and they may be allowed to have graduation remotely. Ms. Bremner suggested to not just cancel or the year. Mr. Armstrong suggest to let governor decide and MHSA will decide on spring sports; that would put the decision for everything out of the district's hands. Ms. Wagner stated that she is crossing off April and May events to be considered for rescheduling and if something can be done, the school will certainly try. Ms. Wagner stated that whatever happens she will need the superintendent and board's support and all be on the same page. Ms. Bremner stated that she makes a motion to cancel all April activities and take everything day by day with direction from MHSA and the Governor. Ms. Yellow Owl suggested that Ms. Wagner work closely with Everett Armstrong and keep the superintendent informed. Second by Ms. TallWhiteman. Motion passed 7-0 with Donna Yellow Owl, Wendy Bremner, Brenda Croff, Brian Gallup (via telephone), James Evans (via telephone), Jess Edwards (via telephone), Rae TallWhiteman voting for.

**Governors Model COVID 19 Plan of Action for Montana Public Schools:** All were commended by the Board of Trustees for working hard on this plan. Motion by Ms. Bremner to approve the Plan of Action for Montana Public Schools. Second by Ms. TallWhiteman. Motion passed 7-0 with Donna Yellow Owl, Wendy Bremner, Brenda Croff, Brian Gallup (via telephone), James Evans (via telephone), Jess Edwards (via telephone), Rae TallWhiteman voting for.

**Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) for Certified and Classified:** Ms. Bremner asked if the MOU can reflect what was discussed today because it sounds like classified does not understand that we are filling essential jobs, not their regular duties. Mr. Salois stated that is the agreement; classified members were asked to see the guidelines which are outside their normal job duties. Ms. TallWhiteman stated that everyone needs to take shelter in place serious; do not be at work unless necessary; she has had a lots of complaints that classified staff felt the last two weeks were holiday time. Mr. Salois will check with legal on what can be done legally. Board members felt that employees need to know that they are not being asked to come in at all; essential positions will be filled by those who are not at risk and can work. Superintendent Hall will send this information out to all staff. Motion

passed 7-0 with Donna Yellow Owl, Wendy Bremner, Brenda Croff, Brian Gallup (via telephone), James Evans (via telephone), Jess Edwards (via telephone), Rae TallWhiteman voting for.

The school board thanked all for their hard work and dedication to the school and to the kids; the focus is all about the kids.

Motion by Ms. Croff to adjourn at 2:00 p.m. Second by Ms. TallWhiteman. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted:

\_\_\_\_\_ Carlene Adamson, Board Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_ Donna Yellow Owl, Board Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Stacy Edwards, District Clerk