

WEBER SCHOOL DISTRICT
5320 Adams Avenue Parkway
Ogden, UT

Study Session
July 29, 2020

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 4:00 p.m. The following Board Members and Superintendency were present:

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

Superintendent Stephens updated the Board on the decision to suspend attendance credit and perfect attendance awards in order to encourage anyone feeling ill to stay home. Also, the Chinese Immersion program update regarding J1-Visas and the state departments freeze on the process. Our options suggested by the state, were to bring in long term substitutes, which we did not agree with due to our previous 10 week soft closure. This option would have young children coming back indefinitely with long term substitutes. Therefore, we hired certified English speaking teachers, not immersion teachers to teach during the interim period, which has been received well by both the Uintah and Bates communities. We will honor those contracts of the English speaking teachers. Four classes at Uintah, two classes at Bates. Within the last two weeks the Utah Congressional Delegation successfully convinced the administration to allow the processing of J1-Visas but it will take time. Once the Chinese teachers arrive, we will have two teachers in those grades for this school year. We will pay for extra teachers with some of our fund balance or with additional CARES money. Board member Janis Christensen asked if online Chinese would still be available. It was noted that it will not be offered as we have no curriculum developed at this time. If a family chooses to purchase a program to help with Chinese vocabulary they may. If a parent chooses to have their student stay at home and do online, their dual immersion spot in the program will be held. Board member Dean Oborn mentioned that he has been asked about homeschooling by parents. If parents choose to keep their kids home and access Weber School District services and resources, they are not homeschooling in the traditional sense. When homeschooling on their own, parents have signed

an affidavit and separated from the District. Following are options included in an email sent out to parents today:

1. In person
2. Short term (between one and three weeks for an illness, etc.)
3. Long term online (term or quarter)
4. Check out of their school and check into Weber online where curriculum is provided.

President Ritchie asked if we have what is considered a blended model. Lori Rasmussen, Assistant Superintendent, explained that we have what is called our flexible learning plan. As an example of flexibility, Superintendent Stephens shared that he had met with some parents today that are choosing a blended model which will include their son taking core curriculum, (English, Math, Science and Social Studies) through Weber Online and attending lunch at his Jr. High school, then attending his 5th, 6th & 7th hour classes which will allow for some social interaction. Superintendent noted that we want to be very agile with families that have concerns and let them know we have options for them. It is recommended for the first term, school times be shortened by 45 minutes to give teachers time to work with students that are online and to give more time for custodians to properly sanitize. Students will declare quarter by quarter which learning option they choose so as to provide some stabilization for teachers and their classrooms.

Board member Paul Widdison stated that most of the emails he has received are from parents who do not understand the options. We are continuing to explain our framework and flexible schedule that was sent out today, along with the presentation at tonight's Board meeting. It was also noted that we will be working with teachers that have concerns about their own safety.

High school principals and athletic directors are working on their athletic plans. It is likely that there will be recommendations to possibly reduce the overall schedule and maybe eliminate a couple of preseason games at fifty percent capacity. Also, ushers will help seat people and distance groups.

Superintendent Stephens mentioned that Jared Ganske, Tech Services Network Manager, applied for and received a \$1.2 million grant. This grant will allow us to expand our wireless network from all of our school buildings to parking lots and other areas of the campus as well as upgrade our current wireless network.

Tax Rates and notices were briefly discussed. Some taxpayers have asked why their taxes have gone up even with kids not in school. It was explained that rates for Weber School District have gone down, but home values have increased.

Superintendent Stephens prefaced the discussion regarding our Safe Weber Framework. He noted that we have a comprehensive plan that consists of three levels:

1. Our district framework and five components: facility and sanitation, personal protection and hygiene, distancing and social gathering, academic learning and digital technology. With these components there are the three levels of precaution depending on the condition of the virus at the time. They are Moderate, Enhanced and Intense. We will move based on the recommendations from Weber-Morgan health department.
2. School wide action plan allows for every principal to look at requirements inside the framework to address specific areas within each of their schools.
3. Classroom mitigation plan where teacher and parents will be trained. Every teacher will be asked to consider other situational characteristics inside his or her classroom to enhance the three things we know that help prevent the spread of the virus; distance, personal protection or masks, and hand hygiene. Enhanced characteristics are respiratory output, and controlling undirected movement.

Lori Rasmussen, Assistant Superintendent, briefly explained to the Board our Safe Weber Framework. Governor Herbert had five components to plan from on requirements to reopen schools. We developed the three levels of precautions instead of color coding because the state code system didn't apply specifically to schools. Our framework must be approved by the Board at tonight's Board meeting so it can be submitted to the State by their August 1st deadline. All requirements in the states outline are included in our moderate level of precaution in order to reopen. The Governors mask mandate is also built into our framework and we added how we will identify high risk employees. Our plan is more robust because we addressed the unfinished learning and the academic piece developed by the Curriculum department with over 150 lesson plans for elementary teachers.

Administrators will be trained on August 4th on the levels and will then train their staff. We have safety response protocols in place for emergencies and we will more than likely have similar protocols with the health department and our framework. If a situation arises in our schools we will have health department experts guide us, assess the situation and give recommendations based on our framework.

Steve and Dan Waldrip, with Rocky Mountain Home Fund, gave a presentation on their program regarding mortgage options for new teachers in Weber School District. The funding source for this program is a portion of the reserves that are already in place in the state treasury portfolio. The District participates in the upside on the triggering event, whether it is a sale or a refinance. District will make 4-6%. This can be used as a tool to attract and retain teachers. This is not an expense but actually an investment for the District. The proposed process by Larry Hadley, Human Resources Director, is to introduce it to new teachers at New Teacher Training on August 7th & 10th with a disclaimer that this has not yet been approved by the Board. The District will be able to set up the criteria with a cap preliminarily discussed at about eight families. Our auditors Squire, have looked into the program as well as our attorney, Heidi Alder. It will function like a benefit program. For example, if you have health insurance and you leave the district, your premiums will rise. The hope is that it will help with retention and be an incentive for new teachers. They are targeting a pilot program with \$1 million from the districts' investment fund and America First has committed \$1 million to start the program. This is a

legislatively led directive program. There is a zero down payment and the people that are working on it are not being paid while getting it off the ground. The name on the deed would be held by the fund until the teacher refinances and in the event that it fails there would not be a foreclosure event. The question was asked if money was put into this fund would it still show that we are 100% funded in the GASB program. Robert Petersen, Business Administrator, has worked closely with our auditors and noted that we have deferred tax revenue and other assets. Robert Petersen, Heidi Alder and Board member Doug Hurst were asked to follow up in a couple of weeks and to get our auditors approval.

In closing, Superintendent Stephens noted that we normally don't have a public comment section at our Board meetings, but tonight we have decided it would be wise to allow public comment which is included on the agenda. Following Lori Rasmussen's presentation on our Safe Weber Framework, we will open the meeting up for public comment. We have taken measures to maintain social distancing and provided masks for those needing one. We want to make sure that questions are answered and patrons are heard. The Board will not be voting on how we will reopen but voting on our overall framework we have developed.

After determining no further business need be conducted, President Ritchie adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m.