

WEBER SCHOOL DISTRICT
5320 Adams Avenue Parkway
Ogden, UT

Study Session
March 3, 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
Bruce Jardine	Board Member
Janis Christensen	Board Member
Jan Burrell	Board Member
Paul Widdison	Board Member
Jeff Stephens	Superintendent
Art Hansen	Assistant Superintendent
Lori Rasmussen	Assistant Superintendent
Robert Petersen	Business Administrator

Also attending WEA President Brandon Baca and virtually, Barbera Whitman, Uniserve Executive Director and teacher Jami Lang.

Superintendent Stephens noted the entire Board is here in person for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, but socially distancing.

Superintendent Stephens began with a follow up to the special study session last Friday. President Ritchie indicated he received a survey put together by Sheri Heiter and Lane Findlay allowing all employees to have input in terms of the bond related to capital projects, growth, replacement building and tax rates. It was noted this will be great feedback for us and want to reiterate the Board has not decided to go out for bond in November. Along with these internal surveys through Qualtrics, Y2 Analytics will begin focus groups with information for June Board meeting. After employees have taken the survey, we will post it on our website.

Cami Alexander, Elementary Education Executive Director presented information on a Level I boundary change needed in the school district impacting Farr West, Silver Ridge, and Plain City Elementaries. Cami noted boundaries in the northwest are changing with many homes being built. According to policy, permission must be granted to look into a study. Pending the Superintendent approval we will move forward. When boundaries were created between Farr West Elementary and Silver Ridge Elementary, there were no homes there. Currently, Farr West has about 800 students, Silver Ridge about 560. They are proposing to move the boundaries further south. The JDC Ranch development is currently in Farr West Elementary boundaries. Neighbors to the west are

already attending Plain City Elementary, so they will adjust this development to attend Plain City Elementary allowing students to ride the bus.

Cami concluded, noting this will make a big impact in the future with the continuing home building. Cami will also present the boundary adjustment at Board meeting. Board member Doug Hurst asked how student numbers would change with these adjustments. It was noted we do not know enrollment numbers because these homes have not been built yet. These boundary adjustments will take effect immediately.

Superintendent Stephens noted this is a proactive stance and beneficial to do before families are moved in and settled. He thanked all those involved on the proposal for the boundary adjustment.

Superintendent Stephens briefed the Board on the end of the legislative session with selected bills impacting public education.

- SB1 – The base budget. This was a unique year with executive appropriations committee meeting in December before sessions began. It included a 6% increase on WPU, teacher bonus of \$1,500 and \$1,000 for school staff members. It is clear who receives it and who does not, only those working in schools with students. There has been so much gratitude for public education with in person instruction. The economy has performed generally better than anticipated. Certain sectors of the economy have been hit harder by the pandemic. Legislators have acknowledged the economy would not have performed as well if schools had not been open. Many districts saw enrollment drops this year due to concerns of those returning to in person instruction. Our enrollment drop was just over 1%. SB1 will hold all districts harmless with base budget funding from 2019-2020 student enrollment, knowing many students will return next year. Another bill will hold transportation harmless also.
- HB428 - This bill can initiate a process for citizens to appeal a decision by a school board. The focus of this bill is directed around a school district for example, that did not provide in person instruction this year. Superintendent Stephens shared his disagreement of this bill noting it seems to work against a basic tenant of democracy, and allowing a group of citizens to overturn elected officials decisions, then turn it over to an appointed panel. This does not reflect what democracy entails. He explained there are many amendments and discussion on this bill.
- SB18 - Property tax that modifies exemptions. This adds to the list of what can be exempted from property tax as this can take away revenue from school districts, a primary revenue source for public education.

- SB52 - Property tax deferral, considered like a reverse mortgage. It does not exempt but defers it at the end.

Superintendent noted we have opposed both of these last two bills but they have moved past the Senate and are in the House. They will continue to work with legislators on these bills.

- SB91 - School accountability permanently removing the letter grade on school accountability. We supported this bill but it does not look like it will pass. Superintendent Stephens noted we have been supportive on the concept of school accountability and have recommended it be reflected on the dashboard.
- SB131 - Taking school construction processes away from local school boards and placing it under state division of facilities and construction management (DFCM). The problem is this is local money generated from local bond elections and school construction should be a local process. With amendments, many things have been pulled back with possible requirements for the state to develop model plans for schools with reports required back to the state. The latest amendment has removed DFCM from it.

Superintendent Stephens concluded noting the Washington Terrace City Inter-Local agreement will be presented for Board approval tonight. Washington Terrace City officials will join us virtually.

Meeting adjourned at 5: 55pm