



**Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Monday, August 16, 2021**

The Board of Directors held a Regular Board Meeting on Monday, August 16, 2021. The meeting began at 6 pm and was held in the theatre at Mead High School. The meeting was also available via a Zoom webinar link with login information posted on the Mead School District website. Directors Burchard, Denholm, Olson, Cannon and Green were present. Also attending were Superintendent Shawn Woodward, Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson and Assistant Superintendents Heather Havens and Jared Hoadley.

I. Approval of Agenda

Director Denholm made a motion to remove the Executive Session from the meeting agenda. Director Olson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Green made a motion to move the Department of Health Reopening Report to earlier in the agenda - immediately following approval of the June 28, 2021, Minutes. Director Denholm seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Cannon made a motion to add, under *New Business*, Resolution 21-10, State Mask Mandate. There was no second.

II. Approval of Minutes

Director Green made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2021, Regular Board Meeting, as presented. Director Olson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Department of Health Reopening Report & Remarks for the Good of the Schools

Prior to hearing from Business & Operations Assistant Superintendent Jared Hoadley on Department of Health K-12 COVID-19 requirements for the 2021-2022 school year, Board President Chad Burchard set forth the following parameters for Public Comment under Remarks for the Good of the Schools that will follow the DOH report. These included:

- A time limit for remarks of 3 minutes.
- The announcement that if those in attendance were not civil the meeting would be adjourned and, following a 30 minute break, would resume as a Zoom meeting with login information posted on the district website.

Additionally, Director Burchard shared each board member would have the opportunity to comment on the information shared by Dr. Hoadley before opening the floor for Public Comment.

Listed below is a summary of Department of Health requirements shared by Dr. Hoadley and a brief review of district implementation plans:

- No daily attestations for students or staff are required.
- Regarding masks, when outside masks are not required. When inside all students and staff must, like last year, wear face coverings/masks, regardless of vaccination status.
- While masks are not required while waiting outside at the bus stop, masks must be worn while riding the bus. Students will have assigned seats on the bus like last year.
- Breakfast at elementary and secondary schools will follow the same protocols as last year.
- In class physical distancing of 3 feet is required.

- The recommended physical distancing during lunch is 6 feet. Like last year, secondary schools will have three lunches. At elementary, in most cases, K-2 will eat in their classrooms with grades 3-5 eating in the cafeteria.
- Elementary outdoor recess will take place like it did pre-COVID . . . no masks or cohorts are required. Like at the start of each school day, there will be an orderly process to mask-up and return indoors following recess.
- At all schools there will be an orderly exit from the building similar to how fire drills take place.
- Regarding athletics at the secondary level, masks are not required for outdoor sports. For inside sports (wrestling, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball) athletes, when not participating, based on current requirements must wear a mask.

In conclusion, Dr. Hoadley explained the information shared is based on the most current DOH requirements. He will share updates as they become available. A link to the DOH requirements was included in recent communication sent to all Mead School District families.

Superintendent Woodward spoke about the difference in last year's recommendation from the health district to start the school year virtually and the mandated legal requirements set forth by the Department of Health for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year. He additionally referenced the survey that was sent out to parents a few weeks ago asking them to indicate their preference regarding the wearing of masks. The survey was sent to 13,000(+/-) email addresses. Approximately 2,100 responses were received with 73% indicating they prefer the wearing of masks to be optional. All survey data has been sent to OSPI, DOH and the Governor's Office.

Superintendent Woodard shared it is the opinion of district counsel that the Department of Health has the legal authority to mandate the wearing of masks. While there are exemptions to this authority they do not apply to schools. If an entity does not comply it is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Director Denholm, who has served more than 20 years on the Mead School District Board of Directors, shared he is personally against mandates. He did note wearing a seat belt and his decision to stop smoking once it became illegal to smoke indoors in public places are laws that helped him break bad habits. While he is an advocate for local control, he also acknowledged the importance to him personally of the oath he took as an elected school board member to uphold state laws. He is committed to being an active participant in lobbying the state for more local control.

Director Olson thanked patrons for attending. He is concerned about the safety of children and the community because of the recent rise in delta variant COVID cases. He, like Director Denholm, is not a fan of mandates. He is especially worried about the loss of state funding that would result should the district not follow the DOH requirements. He would like to explore ways to better advocate for the district at the state level.

Director Cannon, who pointed out he chose not to wear a mask at the board meeting to show his solidarity with those in attendance, agrees with those who do not want to wear a mask. He believes the mask mandate is not legally enforceable as this requirement was not passed by state law makers. He believes the wearing of masks in school should be optional and that holding this position does not mean an individual does not care about people. He additionally shared that science is not the issue . . . the issue is who has the authority to mandate the wearing of masks. He believes the board should do everything it can to express the desires of the Mead community. The board should send a clear and direct message. He acknowledged there are differences of opinion on the board, noting the resolution he put forward for consideration that was not added to the board meeting agenda. While standing solidly with those who oppose a mask mandate, he shared the importance of advocating in ways that do not close schools.

Director Green shared her number one goal/mission is to make sure the district is open and providing daily in person instruction for students. She has reached out to the health department and inquired about the evidence they are using to support their requirements. It is personally frustrating to her that recommendations from the CDC, a national organization, are influencing local decisions. She is a solution oriented, bridge builder who is committed to working together to get where we want to be. Knowing the metrics used by the health department to institute a mandate, as well as the data that will be used to lift the mandate, is important information that should be made available to school boards and their communities.

Director Burchard likes that school board positions are intentionally non-partisan. He is committed to representing the entire school district and providing full time, either in-person or virtual, instruction to all Mead students. While in favor of pushing the state to reconsider the mask requirement he is not willing to risk that schools are unable to open. In reference to the recent survey he noted it was a very short, three question survey with responses received from a fairly small sample of the community (2,100 out of 13,000). He believes most families just want their kids in school. He expressed his care/concern for those students and families who support the mask requirement and, in many cases, have health situations that place them at greater risk should they get COVID.

Public Comments

Lauren Gooler - Opposed to the mask mandate. Wants to know what the board/district is doing. She is tired of waiting and "exhausted" co-parenting with Governor Inslee and Chris Reykdal. Referenced mixed messages about when masks are required (schools) and when they are not (restaurants). She believes COVID is not a direct threat to children.

Rich Gockley - Opposed to the mask mandate and a potential vaccine mandate. The issue is not about masks it is about taking a stand and voting for freedom. The situation comes down to freedom and control.

Rachel Black - Mead High School student who supports the mask requirement. She is a member of a high risk family including her mother who is undergoing cancer treatment and a special needs brother. She referenced the effectiveness of masks in controlling the spread of COVID at school last year as compared to the spread of cases traced to outside of school activities.

Helen Black - Mother of three students who attend Mead High School. Her son is high risk and the mask mandate makes it possible for him to attend in person for the upcoming school year on a hybrid schedule. She wonders why wearing a mask is so hard when it makes attending school possible for her son. She compared the protection of wearing a mask to child car seats.

Brenda Goehring - Evergreen Elementary Assistant Principal and mother of three Mead School District graduates. Shared how, based on her observations, students adapted to wearing masks last year. She likes that masks are not required outside this year. She wants kids to be in school and is excited to welcome them back.

Brandy Sears - Opposed to the mask mandate. Last year she taught in a private school (80 students). There was no mask requirement and no one came down with COVID. She believes the abuse of requiring students to wear masks needs to stop and that all deserve a choice.

Tracy Taigen - Addressed the district's COVID Board that decides which activities will be allowed and which will not. She advocated for expanding representation on this board to include parents. She also encouraged a "compassion and grace" approach to handling mask violations versus strict/rigid consequences.

Kori Baker - Supportive of the mask mandates as set forth by the Department of Health. She believes wearing masks will help keep schools open and kids healthy.

Sarah Scarpelli - Opposed to the mask mandate. Addressed the mental health issues and harm associated with wearing a mask and the ridiculousness of kids standing outside 20 feet from the door without a mask and then, once they step inside, making them mask-up. She cited child death and hospitalization statistics from Spokane Regional Health District (3 deaths in children 0-19 and 64 hospitalizations). She believes the withholding of funds for school districts who do not follow the mask mandate is an empty threat.

Michael Scarpelli - Opposed to the mask mandate. Shared the recent email from the district stating "we will always comply with state law" left him with a bad taste in his mouth. He referenced the psychological impacts of wearing a mask and asked that the board "stand up" and make the wearing of masks optional.

Susan Marshall - Opposed to the mask mandate and any vaccine mandate. Expressed concern the public is not being told about deaths associated with receiving the COVID vaccine, does not want teachers to feel pressured to get vaccinated and does not want to worry some state official will try to convince her children to get vaccinated without parental consent.

Megan Kelley - Opposed to the mask mandate. 2008 Mt. Spokane graduate who, despite the higher taxes in Mead, moved back so her kids could attend school in the district. She stated wearing a mask causes damage and there is no statistical difference in infection rates with or without a mask. She read a long list of what can happen from a disease standpoint if you wear a mask and stated enforcing such a mandate is cruel. She believes academic performance is compromised by wearing a mask.

Raygon Hymas - Opposed to the mask mandate. Moved to the Mead School District from out-of-state and paid more for a home to live in the district. They selected Mead because they were told the district "listens and works with parents." Kids are suffering in silence. Parents/students should be able to assess risk and make their own choice.

Sarah Roper - Opposed to the mask mandate. With regard to this issue she believes the state is trying to convince the public that $2 + 2 = 5$. Referencing Mead School District Policy 1005 she asked that the board treat students as "whole people." She wants the board and parents to work together to educate students and do what is best for them.

Mike Welch - Opposed to the mask mandate. Complimented the board on their leadership last year in offering several learning options for families. He lives in Mead, rather than in Spokane, because he does not like the weird things Spokane embraces. He shared his belief that we, as a society, have gotten soft and remembered that his high school history teacher taught him to question authority. In comparing COVID to the flu he stated, "We haven't fixed the flu." He additionally shared that, as women know, bacteria grows in moist places and therefore will grow in a moist mask. No one loves children more than their parents. He is asking for a choice when it comes to masks.

Jennifer Killman - Opposed to the mask mandate. Wonders about joining a coalition to make the wearing of masks optional. Also wonders what the financial impact would be if the mask mandate was not followed.

Derek Rimestad - Opposed to the mask mandate. Referenced flu deaths in children. Talked about the psychological damage associated with wearing masks and shared he believes the mandate is child abuse. He contends no one wears their mask properly.

Shawn Howard - Opposed to the mask mandate. While appreciating the objective to get and keep kids in school he shared "without freedom nothing else matters." The government won't stop with masks . . . all rights will soon be gone. He is a high school teacher and wrestling coach and

has seen first hand the mental anxiety for students associated with COVID and wearing masks. Shared that in talking with an Idaho wrestling coach he learned no deaths or hospitalizations occurred because of COVID and student athletes did not wear masks.

Stephanie Naccarato - Opposed to the mask mandate. Does not believe the mandate is a law because it did not go through the standard legislative process. Hopes the board will stand up against this mandate.

Gina Howerton - Opposed to the mask mandate. As a grandparent she believes it is time for adults to stand up. The forced wearing of masks, plexiglass barriers, etc. are not normal. Science proves that masks do not work and that COVID causes no risk to students. Masks should be a choice. Encouraged the board to stand up and do the right thing for children.

Sam Tran - Opposed to the mask mandate. Came to the United States from Vietnam as a refugee and lives in Seattle. Shared that pharmaceutical companies (he used to work for one), for financial reasons, want to “treat” conditions not “cure” them. He is concerned, based on what he sees, that the United States is headed in the same direction as Vietnam was when his family immigrated.

Jamie Myers - Concerned about mandated vaccines for kids. Shared the story of a vaccine requirement to be foster parents that resulted in such a bad outcome they are no longer foster parents.

Deidre Melanson - Opposed to the mask mandate. She is an unvaccinated health care worker who has not gotten sick. She believes this is a fight for freedom, masks are restrictive, the mandate is contradictory and that we are “seconds away” from being mandated to get the vaccine. The school board has a powerful voice to advocate for students as does the teacher union.

Mike Davis - Opposed to the mask mandate. Dad of four children . . . three who currently attend Evergreen and one more who will start next year. Cited a national study from England . . . 3105 children died in the country, 25 of COVID out of a population of two million. Based on these statistics a child has a better chance of getting struck by lightning or getting a perfect score on the SAT than dying from COVID. Bottom line . . . It is his right to use his own moral agency in making decisions for his children.

Elementary Student - He is scared to go back to school. He wants his freedom back and he doesn't want to wear a mask.

Stephanie Orr - Opposed to the mask mandate. Concerned grandparent who sees nothing positive in the reopening plan Dr. Hoadley shared earlier in the meeting. She believes this is a watershed moment for the school district. The board should call Governor Inslee's bluff and the community would support that decision.

Grandfather - Opposed to the mask mandate. Encouraged all in attendance to stand up to Governor Inslee and he will back down.

Board Response

Director Denholm thanked individuals for their comments. As a veteran of the United States Navy Director Denholm took issue with comments that appeared to call into question his patriotism.

Director Olson also thanked individuals for their comments.

Director Cannon believes the board can and should do something symbolic to address the overstepping of authority by Governor Inslee and Chris Reykdal. The board should let them know they are operating out of their lane. He additionally questioned the legality of Reykdal's threat to withhold state funding for school districts that defy the mandate.

Director Green thanked those whose shared noting in particular the students who spoke. She is a proponent of proposing solutions including carefully considering what the district "can do" and what the district "can offer" toward that end.

At 8:20 pm Director Burchard called for a ten minute recess before proceeding with the remainder of the board meeting agenda.

IV. Public Hearing – 2020-2021 General Fund Budget Extension

Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson shared information regarding the proposed 2020-2021 General Fund Budget Extension the board will be asked to adopt by resolution later in the meeting. This extension revises/increases the spending limit in the General Fund for the 2020/2021 school year by \$3,940,000. Factors leading to the need to revise the General Fund budget include a decrease in enrollment, increase in revenue because of ESSER funds and increase in COVID related expenditures (additional teachers, substitutes, custodians and para-educators).

There were no public comments on the presented 2020-2021 General Fund Budget Extension.

V. Continuing Business – none

VI. New Business

A. Resolution 21-9 Budget Extension General Fund

Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson presented Resolution 21-9, Budget Extension General Fund, for board consideration. As shared in the Public Hearing on this budget extension, adoption of the resolution revises/increases the spending limit in the General Fund for the 2020/2021 school year by \$3,940,000. Factors leading to the need to revise the General Fund budget include a decrease in enrollment, increase in revenue because of ESSER funds and increase in COVID related expenditures (additional teachers, substitutes, custodians and para-educators).

Director Denholm made a motion to adopt Resolution 21-9, Budget Extension General Fund, as presented. Director Olson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Consent Agenda

In response to a question from Director Olson, Technology Director Doug Edmonson shared the payment to Evergreen School District was for phones on their surplus list (never used) that were installed at Skyline.

Director Green made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. Director Denholm seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

C. 1st Reading Policy/Procedure 2152 Revision Student Travel

Director of Secondary Education Darren Nelson presented a revision to Policy/Procedure 2152, Student Travel, for board consideration. This policy was adopted on November 10, 2003, with one revision approved on August 21, 2019.

The presented revision to both the policy and procedure includes proposed changes to the sections that address Category 3, Extended Field Trips and Category 4, Special Event Trips.

Events that fall under Category 3, Extended Field Trips, include trips that involve overnight stays. Language is proposed that clarifies trips under this category are for overnight stays in Washington, Montana, Idaho, Oregon or British Columbia. An additional change moves approval from the board to the Director of Secondary Education or the Director of Elementary Education, depending on grade level.

Under Category 4, Special Event Trips, language is proposed that states, "All trips to destinations outside of Washington, Montana, Idaho, Oregon or British Columbia fall into this category." Additionally, the last approver at the district level before submission to the school board for final approval has been changed to the Director of Secondary Education or Director of Elementary Education, depending on grade level.

Mr. Nelson assured all trips involving overnight student travel, regardless of category, will be carefully reviewed before being approved at the district level (Category 3) or being forwarded to the board (Category 4) for their approval.

In response to a question from Director Green, Mr. Nelson shared British Columbia is included as part of Category 3 because of reoccurring Jazz Festivals that take place in Vancouver. Director Cannon stated he is not opposed to the board seeing/approving all overnight trips however asked if making this change would help streamline the process. Mr. Nelson responded the purpose of the proposed change is to streamline.

Director Burchard requested the policy/procedure revision be brought forward as an action item at the next board meeting.

**D. 1st Reading Policy/Procedure 5515 Adoption
Workforce Secondary Traumatic Stress**

Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins presented the adoption of Policy/Procedure 5515, Workforce Secondary Traumatic Stress, for first reading consideration. The adoption of this policy/procedure satisfies one of the requirements of Substitute House Bill 1363. This bill requires school districts to address Secondary Traumatic Stress in the K-12 workforce prior to the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year.

The policy states the District's commitment to preventing and addressing Secondary Traumatic Stress for personnel by supporting mental health in the workplace. To promote a positive workplace climate the District will incorporate and share with staff a variety of resources that address Secondary Traumatic Stress, stress management and other health resources.

The procedure establishes the formation of a district-wide Workforce Mental Health Committee. Committee duties include sharing resources related to Secondary Traumatic Stress, when needed seeking staff feedback via an anonymous climate survey and, at least once a year, reporting to the board on the status of staff well-being.

In response to a question regarding current staff wellness programs, Ms. Hutchins shared that this past May a new employee assistant program was made available to staff. Regarding formation of the Workforce Mental Health Committee, Ms. Hutchins assured it will include a good cross-section of staff and that the committee's primary charge is to determine appropriate resources and how best to communicate those resources to staff.

Director Burchard requested the policy/procedure adoption be brought forward as an action item at the next board meeting.

E. Resolution 21-08

Signature Authority Designation for Construction

Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson presented the adoption of Resolution 21-08, Signature Authority Designation for Construction, for board consideration.

WAC 392-344-120 requires that the school district provide the Superintendent of Public Instruction with the certified signature(s) of district personnel authorized by board resolution to sign any and all documents relating to OSPI D-Forms for state construction assistance and other grant reimbursements. With the retirement of Wayne Leonard, Heather Ellingson, who replaced him as Chief Financial Officer, needs to be added to the list of individuals who can sign for the Mead School District.

Director Olson made a motion to adopt Resolution 21-08, Signature Authority Designation for Construction, as presented. Director Green seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. Reports

A. Financial Report for the Month of June 2021

Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson shared a brief financial report for the month of June 2021. As was shared in the Public Hearing on the Budget Extension Resolution, enrollment for the 2020/2021 school year was approximately 475 FTE below budget and, because of ESSER funds, the ending fund balance will be \$4-5 million more than anticipated.

B. 2021/2022 Draft Budget

Note: Prior to the meeting an electronic copy of the 2021/2022 Draft Budget was provided to each board member.

Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson who, at the upcoming August 30th board meeting, as part of the Public Hearing on the budget, will do a formal budget presentation, provided a quick overview of the proposed 2021/2022 budget including the following:

- Budgeted enrollment of 10,084. This is difficult to estimate once again this year because of the impact of COVID. An enrollment decline of 100 students reduces revenue by \$800,000-\$1,000,000.
- In the spring the decision was made to keep staffing levels for 2021/2022 at the same level as the 2020/2021 school year and use ESSER funds to cover any shortfall. Assuming enrollment at the budgeted 10,084 level, the district projects the shortfall would be approximately \$7.2 million. The ending fund balance in 2020/2021 is estimated to be approximately \$15 million.

Answering a question from Director Burchard who expressed concerns regarding enrollment, Business and Operations Assistant Superintendent Jared Hoadley shared, because school office staff just returned to work this week, the district does not yet have solid kindergarten enrollment information to share.

School districts must formally adopt their budget for the upcoming school year by August 31st. Ms. Ellingson invited board members to reach out to her prior to the upcoming August 30th board meeting if they have additional questions.

C. Superintendent's Report and Discussion Items

Superintendent Woodward reported the district, last week, using a webinar format, shared virtual learning opportunities with families who may be interested in that option for the upcoming school year.

Last Thursday and Friday district and school administrators participated in all-day trainings at Highland Middle School. All want to roll-up their sleeves and positively impact student learning while also addressing learning gaps resulting from the impact of COVID. Superintendent Woodward also shared that the first part of last week a cross-section of administrators participated in a two day Solution Tree PLC training. He will share more about this work at upcoming board meetings.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

President

Secretary