

BOE Meeting Highlights

Board of Education Meeting October 14, 2020

The Board of Education encourages the public to attend the meetings held on the second Wednesday of each month. There is an opportunity at the beginning of each meeting for input from the public. After that the Board conducts the School District's business, including the Superintendent's and Principals' Reports, position appointments, and issues to act upon.

Public Participation

- Lisa Pyykkonen, second grade SRE teacher, thanked the Board and Administration for the work they are doing during the pandemic. In the 29 years she's been teaching, she feels as the last 7 months have been the hardest because of all the chaos for the students. She feels students need to be at school to get the routine, learning, and love they get and they need to be there without masks. She understands it a risk but she doesn't expect kids to be protecting her from illness and that decisions are being made to protect adults instead of children. In her classroom she has seen kids exchanging masks, losing them in bathrooms, being sucked on, and played with. For some kids, she can see the stress and anxiety it gives them. She is asking the Board to consider options for students.
- Morgan Larson, a senior, spoke against the masking policy. She cited the 9th amendment as her right to not put anything on her body. She spoke about the stress and uncertainty that adults are going through which is the same for the students, but students are not being allowed to have a voice or role in the decision process. Instead of being asked how they are, they are being told to do as they're told and sometimes worse things from teachers. She always thought that Jeffers had the best staff that thought of students first but doesn't feel that is the focus this year. She understands that there is a virtual option but that doesn't work for many students as they need a teacher in front of them to learn, they need the interaction, they may not have Wi-Fi, and for some, it's their only safe place. Teachers as adults have a choice to be at school, students do not. She asked to let the students help in the decision process.
- Kimberly Hayrynen, a parent of a SRE student, asked the Board who was the entity that decided a kindergartener should wear a mask all day. Her son listens to adults and would wear a mask even if he felt he couldn't get a good breath until he passed out. Mr. Keteri answered that after the governor's order, the MDHHS passed orders. They are the ones that are enforcing it, he doesn't know how they can or if they could shut down the schools. He has been talking with the district lawyers about all the options the district has.

Superintendent's Report-Tim Keteri

- School is back in session after a two week shut down. The longer the schools can be in session, the better for students. He will be working with Mr. Lishinski and Mrs. Harris on a better process, such as a hybrid model, in case the schools get shut down again.
- Mrs. Larson, third grade teacher, requested a leave of absence for the remainder of the year for her family. Mr. Keteri wanted to recognize that that is important and fully supports her decision.
- The masking policy is in effect because of the MDHHS order which is in courts now. Every action has a reaction and the state isn't focusing on the reactions that are happening. Over 100 students in the district have moved to online learning and at least 40 have left the district completely to homeschool. He wants to get every kid back to being taught by the best staff around. Masking is a safety control issue and the district needs to find a solution for both sides, which hasn't been found yet but they will continue to push and strive as they move forward. He complimented Morgan Larson on her presentation and acknowledged that there were issues with teachers' wording in the beginning of the year and it was addressed. He apologized for it and assured he will not allow that kind of talk to continue. If we went to no masks, the district would lose state funding and wouldn't be able to operate. All aspects of the issue need to be recognized. He has been in contact with the lawyers about medical waivers, ADA requirements, and workplace safety.
- One hundred new chromebooks were ordered.
- The state budget is looking good. 75% of the funding came from a previous year. This year the district has 40 less students and the budget from that would be unattainable with the current staff. The fund equity is up in the air with so many unknowns.
- He has been dis

Principal's Report-Kim Harris, South Range Elementary

- It is challenging times, but they're trying to be as regular and normal as possible at school.
- The Booster Club is running their fall fundraiser, selling Rada Cutlery this year.
- The club purchased Mrs. Raffaelli, music teacher, ukuleles for class.
- The 2 weeks of virtual learning went smoothly. The staff was phenomenal working together. Mrs. Lishinski, technology teachers, is great and they couldn't have done it without her.
- On Monday when the new masking policy went in place, 12 students switched to virtual. Three have come back to school. The teachers are doing extra work for the virtual learners by uploading videos and work for them but it is working well for the students.
- They had a virtual professional development day last Friday.

- It will be very hard to see Mrs. Larson gone for the year. They have a long term sub in place and will post the position.
- Mrs. Laban has been doing a good job of helping with Mrs. Normand, 4-6 English teacher, teach remotely.
- A sensory path was put down in the lower el hallway and is great for the kids.

Principal's and Athletic Report-Steve Lishinski, Jeffers High School

- Mr. Lishinski was not present.

Action Items

- The Board discussed several action items.

Submitted by Valerie Dobson, South Range Elementary