

**DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-4A
BOARD OF EDUCATION MONTHLY STRATEGIC MEETING MINUTES
DISTRICT BOARD ROOM**

Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – The Dolores School Board meeting was called to order at 6:00pm on November 12, 2020.

ROLL CALL – Members present were: Maegan Crowley; Casey McClellan via Zoom; Kay Phelps via Zoom; Lenetta Shull; Clay Tallmadge. **QUORUM** was present. Also in attendance: Lis Richard, Superintendent (via Zoom); Justin Schmitt, Secondary Principal; Mary Weiss, Secondary Assistant Principal; Lurleen McCormick, Elementary Principal (via Zoom); Doreen Jones, Finance Director; Alesa Reed, Curriculum Director; staff and community members (in audience and via Zoom).

PLEDGE

The Board Secretary read the vision and mission statements.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (DSD Policy BEDB)

A motion was made by Lenetta Shull and seconded by Clay Tallmadge to approve the agenda, with the exception of moving Business Item “COVID Update from Local Health Officials” from VII.1 to II.A. in agenda.

Votes: Crowley - aye; McClellan - aye; Phelps - aye; Shull - aye; Tallmadge - aye.

Motion Passed

A. COVID Update from Local Health Officials

A panel of health officials from Montezuma County attended via Zoom in order to provide an update on the current and developing COVID-19 situation in Montezuma County, discuss their recommendations for school districts, and answer questions from the Dolores School Board members.

Health officials that attended via Zoom included:

- Dr. Marc Meyer - infection control at Southwest Memorial Hospital
- Dr. Kent Aikin - Southwest Memorial Hospital
- Bobbie Lock - Director of Montezuma County Public Health Department

- Clinton Gropp - Indian Health Services
- Kerri White-Singleton - Southwest Health System
- Anthony Sudduth - CEO of Southwest Health System
- Lindsey Rohlik - Public Health nurse, working on COVID w/ Montezuma County Public Health Department

Health officials shared with the board that COVID-19 cases had risen exponentially in the county in the previous 4-5 weeks. Officials from both the Montezuma County Health Department and the Southwest Memorial Hospital explained the current pressure that health care services were experiencing, including a growing spike in the number of positive cases and community spread, ICU beds at or near capacity, difficulty being able to transport patients elsewhere for crisis care, and lack of resources to be able to provide for non-COVID-related community healthcare needs because of the rising volume of COVID-related cases. They expressed concern that gatherings during the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday would be the source of more exposure and community spread, putting more strain on health services, putting vulnerable community members at risk, and lessening the ability of the healthcare system to meet the needs of all members of the community. They explained that this current increase in transmission and heightened risk of further transmission after the holiday informed their recommendation to school districts in the county to transition to remote learning between Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays and for a few weeks after the New Year holiday.

Health officials emphasized both their appreciation for the dedication of the board members and administration to maintaining health and education of students and staff, and their understanding of the fact that any decision to shift to alternate modes of learning is a difficult one with no easy answer. They answered questions from board members about the particular demographics currently seeing the largest rise in cases in the county, positivity rates, death rates, testing data, contact tracing and quarantine protocols, vaccine possibilities and timelines, etc. They shared that local cases include all age brackets, including children and infants, that the largest percentage is currently age 20-44- parent age, that contact tracing is showing that transmission is happening in schools, businesses, churches- anywhere that people are gathering.

III. REVIEW OR CORRECTION OF OCTOBER 8, 2020 MINUTES (BEDG)

A motion was made by Clay Tallmadge and seconded by Lenetta Shull to approve the October 8, 2020 meeting minutes.

Votes: Crowley - aye; McClellan - aye; Phelps - aye; Shull - aye; Tallmadge - aye.

Motion Passed.

IV. DISTRICT RECOGNITIONS/CELEBRATIONS – Dolores Elementary School - Principal Choice

Elementary Principal Lurleen McCormick shared a “fall highlights” video created by staff at the elementary school to celebrate what students have been doing, since parents haven’t been able to come into the school due to COVID protocols.

V. CITIZENS’ COMMENTS (BEDH) – Comments were received both in person by community members in attendance and through email communication in advance of the meeting.

There were a very large number of comments submitted to the board; comments by community members in attendance were heard first, followed by a selection of email submissions read aloud by Clay Tallmadge.

IN-PERSON COMMENTS:

Dr. Sue Garlick presented a comment on behalf of the Dolores Education Association, stating that teachers are ready to meet the needs of ALL students if we transition to online learning. The board then heard comments from nine community members in attendance, including 8 parents and 1 high school student. These comments were in support of continuing in-person instruction, and expressed concerns about student mental, emotional, and physical health; student academics; and parent work schedule, childcare, and support needs.

ONLINE COMMENTS:

Clay Tallmadge read email submissions from 20 community members, 19 of which expressed support for continuing in-person instruction, citing the same concerns as those expressed by community members who spoke in person, and 1 of which expressed support for the consideration of teacher and para needs and thanked teachers for the work they’ve done to make the transition to remote learning work if it ends up happening.

Mr. Tallmadge shared that there were over 20 other submissions, many of which supported transitioning to remote learning, which were not read aloud, and acknowledged that community comment submissions were much more varied and more evenly split in opinion than the selection read aloud would indicate. Board members emphasized that they had read and considered ALL comments submitted, not just those that were read aloud.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA (DSD Policy BEDB)

1. Approve Disbursement of Checks for Payment of all Bills/Debts for October 2020

A motion was made by Lenetta Shull and seconded by Casey McClellan to approve the disbursement of checks for payment of all bills/debts for October 2020.

Votes: Crowley - aye; McClellan - aye; Phelps - aye; Shull - aye; Tallmadge - aye.
Motion Passed.

VII. BUSINESS ITEMS

~~1. COVID Update from local health officials~~

see above - item moved to II.A.

2. Board Member Reports (DSD Policy BIB)

Maegan Crowley - provided a reminder about upcoming board linkages.

Casey McClellan - nothing to report.

Kay Phelps - provided a BOCES report: BOCES is working hard to adapt services given the COVID-19 situation. highlights: rolled out para academy; is continuing work to support behavioral health initiatives- particularly new projects focused on restorative practices; the Southwest E-School has had a good start. The board discussed including a written report from BOCES in board documents starting at the next meeting.

Lenetta Shull - provided a reminder about the “coffee with the board” event this month, which may be cancelled- updates will be provided on the website; provided a legislative report: the Western Slope is looking at being redistricted, and could be lumped in with Grand Junction or with a different district, which will change state representatives.

Clay Tallmadge - provided a reminder that Safe2Tell is on the website, and encouraged all community members to utilize it.

3. Finance Report – Doreen Jones (DSD Policies BBA, DAB)

Finance Director Doreen Jones provided this month’s district finance report.

- October Revenue: \$579,663
- October Expenditures: \$862,368
- Dolores State Bank Balance: \$447,998
- Colotrust Balance: \$5,326,588

Dir. Jones explained that this month's deficit is due to the facts that 1) this is the month of the bond payment, which is \$247,000, and 2) the district has not yet received any payment from the state on Lunch Fund reimbursement. It is unclear at this time when those funds will arrive. She also shared how the COVID funds are being spent- primarily for teacher salaries- and reiterated from last meeting's report that the funds will be used before the deadline at the end of December.

4. Superintendent Report – Lis Richard (DAB)

Superintendent Richard provided a report on the most recent Governor's Team Call, during which officials indicated to superintendents that local factors should shape local decisions, and emphasized the importance of prioritizing in person learning based on need and risk; of ensuring that extracurricular activities did not take priority over core instruction; and of implementing additional safety measures.

The Superintendent also provided an update on how the secondary restructuring is going so far. She shared that the restructuring has allowed administrators to work more closely with teachers and students, to support new teachers, and to fill gaps. She shared that because of high COVID transmission risks, the library is now closed, so that portion of the restructuring plan has not been fulfilled at this point, and that the GT transition is still being smoothed out.

She also shared that the district is providing options for parents if they don't want their students to stay in person; this is easier at the elementary than at the secondary level, because of the online learning platform being used. In response to board member questions about options for teachers for whom continuing in person is not a safe option, she said that if the board votes for a continuation of in-person learning, administrators will work with teachers to attempt to work out a solution.

VIII. ITEMS FOR BOARD DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

A. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Revisit Strategic Plan (Section A)

Clay Tallmadge had given recommendation at the previous meeting to revisit the strategic plan at every meeting, in order to provide an opportunity for any member to bring up anything that needs to be on the board's radar.

Maegan Crowley inquired how the district is doing in responding to social-emotional needs of students and staff. Superintendent Richard responded that the SEL staff is very dedicated this year and is meeting every week with their building leaders; that we have full-time counselors; that we have a part

time social worker/ counselor that goes between buildings; and that we have BOCES. She reported that the teams are working beautifully together this year, and that counselors have used Safe2Tell to intervene in tragic situations and provided support to staff and students. Kay Phelps also inquired about the new SEL curriculum being implemented at the secondary; Principal Justin Schmitt responded that grades 6-8 have a study skills class every day, which includes the “character first” curriculum- anti-bullying, CFE’s (units) that focus on character traits- and that “TGFD” (too good for drugs) will be implemented in the school in January.

Clay Tallmadge pointed out that we have achieved facility and maintenance goals, and that it is good to see that much needed repairs are happening. He recommended that everyone should read the transportation director’s recommendation.

Lenetta Shull requested that a workshop be held on how to read student performance data, and that the DAC be involved.

Kay Phelps referred to the part of the plan that includes establishing a plan for retaining quality staff, and pointed out the importance of giving voice to teachers, particularly in the issue at hand- that we need to make sure the district and the board honor our teachers and hear their voices. Superintendent Richard informed the board that there are going to be staff representatives elected to attend board meetings.

Casey McClellan inquired whether there has been professional development set up for GT. Superintendent Richard informed the board that PD was provided to all teachers on how to read and interpret ALPS as part of their pre-service this year, and that administration is anticipating doing more training. We are currently in the process of doing annual screenings for GT- because of COVID we are screening last year’s cohort now, and in the spring this year’s cohort will be screened.

The board discussed having a regularly updated page set up, equivalent to the strategic plan, that reports what has been achieved and how it maps onto performance goals.

2. Cost Analysis of Secondary School Restructuring (DBD)

Finance Director Doreen Jones and Superintendent Richard presented a cost analysis of the secondary school restructuring, showing that the shift is effectively cost-neutral:

- Former structure cost (10 month): \$116,693

- Cost with Restructuring:
 - Full 10-month: \$92,524 without librarian, \$117,524 with librarian
 - Prorated 10-month: \$87,784 without librarian, \$105,069 with librarian

(Librarian position currently unfilled because the library is closed due to COVID)

The board called a 10-minute break at 9:45pm.

3. Facility Repairs (FBC, FBC-R)

Superintendent Richard provided an update on current facility repair projects:

- The MS roof repair project has been bid at \$36,530; it has been pushed into November, but the contractor is confident that they will be able to complete it.
- New exterior doors have been bid at \$73,645.95.
- New blinds for secondary and elementary have been bid at \$19,951.07, and have already arrived. They will be installed starting 10/30.
- Gutters will be repaired or replaced on 10/30.
- All exterior wall packs, exterior lighting and interior emergency lighting and signs have been examined and we are awaiting a bid.

4. DAC Follow-Up (AE, AE-R, AE-R-3)

- a) DAC members - roles
- b) Staff feedback on leadership needs
- c) Strategic plan - expenditure input

The board discussed the need for student and elementary representation on the DAC, as well as better representation of the school community, such as ESS students and minorities, to ensure that it is a cross-section of the school body and that everyone's voices are heard. Superintendent Richard informed the board that the DAC will be submitting a report to the board, which will come with other director's reports via the Superintendent.

The board also discussed the fact that the DAC is an advisory to the board, and that the DAC's directives come primarily from the CDE, to which the board can add one extra directive. Superintendent Richard pointed out that CDE and DAC policies do not currently align, and that this should be addressed at the next policy meeting.

5. Board Questions on Audit (DIE, DAC)

The board did not have any questions at this time; the auditor is willing to review and discuss the audit with any board member.

6. Policy CCA (CCA)

The board discussed the fact that the organizational chart/ salary schedule on the website does not directly match CCA policy. Clay Tallmadge pointed out that the restructuring has flushed out some of these inconsistencies, and inquired whether changes can be made from year to year without making changes to the policy every year, since we are a small district and need flexibility, and board members agreed that we need a policy that lasts, not one that changes from year to year. Maegan Crowley pointed out that this also provides an opportunity to get feedback from teachers and staff to inform what that sort of update should look like- perhaps by the January meeting, if not by the December meeting.

Superintendent Richard commented that it is difficult as a rural school district to get certified staff in certain positions; that because of this, the state gives leeway; and that it is important to stabilize leadership, so that stability can trickle down to having more highly qualified staff that are retained.

The board directed the Superintendent to task principals with soliciting information from teachers to provide input on what leadership needs to look like in a restructure, specifically related to policy CCA.

B. NEW BUSINESS

1. Response to Montezuma County Health Recommendations

Board members discussed comments that had been heard and information presented by the health department officials, and acknowledged again that there were a lot of comments received via email whose opinion was not represented out loud at the meeting, and that all feedback was heard and appreciated. Each member took turns giving their thoughts and leading discussion.

Clay Tallmadge commented that the need from the health department was very clear, that they sound tapped out, and that while we have been very lucky so far, we need to do something differently and show the community that we are taking responsibility. He expressed concern that the administration's provided position letter did not contain an actionable plan that was different from what we are currently doing. He stated that part of our responsibility is empathy, and coming up with a plan that represents all district voices, which were all over the board. Superintendent Richard responded that we are ready no matter what, and have a plan in place.

Kay Phelps expressed agreement with parent comments that preschoolers can't really attend school virtually, and that parents really want to send their little ones and feel safe sending them; she inquired whether the preschool could be kept open, and asked what we can offer for those more vulnerable students in older grades right now, so that at least for part of the day while in a remote platform they'd be at school. She pointed out that the message from the health department officials was unanimous in its request to do our part to slow the spread for a specific period of time. She discussed that this is a short and fixed period of time during the holidays and during a time of exponential increase in cases in our county, in which we have a brief chance to slow the spread of COVID. She commented that relationships between teachers and students have been forged and can be maintained during this brief window of time, and that this is not like last spring, when everyone was caught off guard; we are prepared to pivot.

Casey McClellan commented that the CDPHE and the Governor's office recognize the importance of in-person learning, and allow for whatever best suits every family. He stated that education has been categorized as a critical business, which allows us to do whatever we want to do locally, and pointed out that we have an online option available for parents who want it, and in-person available for those who want it. He discussed coming up with a hybrid model, with which Clay Tallmadge concurred.

Lenetta Shull discussed the difficulties of trying to interpret COVID data, especially at the local level, pointing out that the county does not have a data analyst. She stated that it is important to look at, and that we also need to be supportive of kids that feel like they need to continue in school. She expressed trust that our administrators are prepared, and a preference for staying in school in person as long as we can, stating that we need to put on a positive front for students.

Maegan Crowley discussed that we have been proud to be part of a small community, and that our community's health department is asking us to take action. She pointed out that the change in language from the state and the Governor's office- with the new dial system- is telling us that we need to make decisions locally, with input from our local health department, and that we have an obligation to follow that.

The board members discussed the difficulty of balancing data, heavy strains on the hospital system, student needs, teacher needs, and parent needs, while responding to the health department's call for help in flattening the curve. They discussed the need for a solution that is a compromise, and that there are multiple ways to achieve the needed balance. Superintendent Richard pointed out that there is no legal obligation to take the request from the health department, and assured the board that the district can meet the needs of students and of staff.

A motion was made by Clay Tallmadge that the Superintendent have a meeting tomorrow (Friday November 13th) with the administrative team and come back to the board at a special meeting next week with a hybridized plan to meet the needs of public health.

No second.

Motion Died.

A motion was made by Casey McClellan and seconded by Lenetta Shull to offer in-person, online, and hybrid options for all students pre-K through 12.

Discussion on motion:

- District needs to show something clearly different from what it is currently doing
- District needs to carefully consider our community, and our teachers, and what is being asked of them
- Administration has been working on plans, and has them in place

A motion was made by Lenetta Shull to amend the motion made by McClellan by adding that we give administration direction to show a plan that shows we are working to flatten the curve, and come back next week for a second meeting.

No second.

Amendment Died.

Further discussion on motion:

- Concerns about feasibility of asking staff to accomplish this and come up with a plan 6 days before break
- Administration needs time to talk to staff, and to put together plans that represent them after talking to them
- Reiteration of need to treat this as community responsibility

Votes: Crowley - nay; McClellan - aye; Phelps - nay; Shull - aye; Tallmadge - aye.

Motion Passed.

2. Data Report on Student Achievement (IK, IKA, IKE)

A motion was made by Lenetta Shull and seconded by Casey McClellan to table the next three agenda items (II. B. 2, 3, and 4) until the December meeting.

Votes: Crowley - nay; McClellan - aye; Phelps - aye; Shull - aye; Tallmadge - aye.

Motion Passed.

~~3. Future Building Advisory Committee (FB, FB-R, FBC)~~

Tabled until December meeting.

~~4. Bond Marketing/Initiative Committee (FDA)~~

Tabled until December meeting.

5. Recommendations to Hire (DSD Policy GDE/GDF)

- a) Alicia Williford and Kim Garvin - Preschool Substitute
- b) Cord Proctor and Linda Bock - Bus Drivers
- c) Nathan Witte - Secondary Music Teacher (Jan.)
- d) Josie Clark - Secondary SPED para
- e) Lanea Donahoo - Substitute Teacher

A motion was made by Lenetta Shull and seconded by Kay Phelps to approve all recommendations to hire.

Votes: Crowley - aye; McClellan - aye; Phelps - aye; Shull - aye; Tallmadge - aye.

Motion Passed.

6. Upcoming Board Events

The School Board will hold a special board meeting at 6pm on Tuesday, November 17th to hear from the administrative team about their plan.

IX. AGENDA PLANNING

1. Next Agenda

The Board discussed that the next regular meeting agenda should include:

- all tabled items from this meeting
- a workshop to train DAC and the School Board on how to read NWEA data
 - Superintendent Richard will set up a doodle poll to schedule a data workshop
- feedback from staff on CCA policy
- DAC report, including providing meeting minutes to the board

2. Meeting Recap

Board members discussed that this meeting provided an opportunity to assess practices- in particular:

- Public comment structure and communication could be revised by
 - allowing audience members to share their time with other commenters, and
 - providing clearer guidance around how citizens could give input, since there was real confusion between the “talk to the board” tab on the website, the results of which are not shared publicly, and the “citizens comments” tab. Board members reiterated concern that many who contacted the board about tonight’s meeting were not heard publicly, and discussed putting public comment structure on the next agenda.
- In the future, meetings of this nature should be scheduled as a special meeting, so that there is plenty of time to hear from health experts in attendance and from public comment, without having to table other important items on the agenda.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(g) for the purpose of discussing personnel matters in regard to secondary principal contract.

A motion was made by Lenetta Shull and seconded by Clay Tallmadge to table this item until the December meeting.

Votes: Crowley - aye; McClellan - aye; Phelps - aye; Shull - aye; Tallmadge - aye.

Motion Passed.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned by Maegan Crowley at 11:29pm.

Board President Date

Board Secretary Date