

**DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-4A  
BOARD OF EDUCATION WORK SESSION MINUTES  
DISTRICT BOARD ROOM**

**Tuesday, August 31, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.**

Members present were: Maegan Crowley; Casey McClellan; Kay Phelps; Lenetta Shull; Clay Tallmadge. QUORUM was present. Also in attendance: Reece Blincoe, Interim Superintendent; Doreen Jones, Finance Director; Alesa Reed, Curriculum and Assessment Director; members of the community in the audience and via Zoom.

**I. COVID TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS / PROTOCOLS**

At the last Board meeting there was a motion to create a COVID task force committee made of staff, local health professionals and community members, which would be tasked with revisiting the protocols the district currently has in place and the protocols that were used last year, and with providing recommendations.

Sup. Blincoe explained that he met with the district's Wellness committee (WISCAT), which has been reestablished to work not just on this issue but on other health and wellness issues throughout the school year. He stated that the Board had received over 40 "Talk to the Board" submissions, many of which asked how health protocols are part of the Board's/ the district's business. He looked into policy, and found three that directly relate to that question. He referred to Policy ADD, which ensures that safe schools are a priority for the district, and two additional policies.

He stated that he had consulted with local health department officials, CDPHE, Montezuma County Health Department as well as the Taskforce members. The Taskforce convened for two meetings, which were held August 23rd and 30th; standards were set for how meetings would be conducted. Members received copies of protocols from last year and of the current plan. On August 23rd, the committee reviewed the provided materials, set a direction, and tasked Sup. Blincoe and Curriculum Dir. Alesa Reed with putting together drafts of a revised protocol. On August 30th, the committee discussed those documents and reviewed and edited them in real time during the meeting, until they reflected a plan that the full committee agreed upon.

The document itself is structured in 2 parts, consisting of a narrative at the beginning, followed by a color-coded chart. Sup. Blincoe stated that the goal is in-person learning as much as possible. The draft document appears below.

(CAN WE EMBED THE DOCUMENT HERE?)

Dr. Blincoe talked through the document and each of the phases. He explained that the learning modality for level orange would have to vary based on which school was affected due to differences in space- elementary has room to possibly be able to distance enough, while middle school definitely does not, and high school may not either.

Dr. Blincoe stated that there is a legality to the Board making a decision about health rules; the Board could be held liable if something were to happen, and liability insurance will not cover if someone gets sick and the district is determined to have "willingly and wantonly" not met health and safety needs of the students and staff.

Casey McClellan asked how many current cases we have. Dr. Blincoe responded that in the last 7 days we have had four active cases, all in the 6th grade. Two students came to school and exposed others, so quarantines had to be put in place; two more students tested positive on Saturday- one had come to school, and one had not. We have also had problems on the buses- one was not running this week because of COVID exposures.

Casey McClellan asked where Dr. Blincoe believed we are in the chart at this point. Dr. Blincoe responded that we are currently operating at the blue level, because we do not have permission to make any decisions that would shift levels. He stated that we would probably be in the yellow level if these were adopted protocols.

Casey McClellan asked about the definition of community that was used for this document, and why. Dr. Blincoe and Maegan Crowley explained that the "community" was Montezuma County, because only county numbers are available, and Montezuma County now reports COVID numbers directly to the state.

Lenetta Shull stated that she had talked to a representative at the county health dept, and that those numbers are very fluid. She suggested that the Board allow another person on that committee or within that group that is fluent in deciphering numbers to translate that information. Dr. Blincoe stated that there are health experts on the committee that is able to understand the numbers, and Maegan Crowley stated that the bottom line is that the data just needs to be from a clear and consistent source.

Clay Tallmadge stated that the definition of community needs to be clearly stated within the document, and reiterated that since we can only get clear data at the county level, the community on which the document is based has to be the county.

Kay Phelps asked for clarification about liability, and whether individual Board members are liable as well as the district. Maegan Crowley confirmed that individual Board members are also liable.

Kay Phelps asked about the quarantine procedures, and whether the procedure described also applies to teachers who have been vaccinated. Dr. Blincoe responded that per Jen Gaddis, the district nurse, there is a flow chart that determines quarantine procedures depending on whether the exposed individual has been vaccinated. If a fully vaccinated individual is exposed, they can come back to work as early as the next day, if all criteria are met; if they are unvaccinated, they have to quarantine for much longer.

Kay Phelps stated that she has heard from a number of parents that they want to know if there has been an exposure in the student body, even if their student has not been directly exposed. Sup. Blincoe stated that passing periods in the Middle School are particularly concerning, as there is a huge chance of exposure, with crowds in a confined space. He confirmed that something can be communicated, and said that letters have been sent home to all parents when there have been quarantines.

Clay Tallmadge asked why the document shifted from 'one case /one family' terminology in the yellow category to percentages in the orange category, and asked whether it would be possible to say '3 cases, 5 cases,' etc. in all categories, just to clarify. Sup. Blincoe stated that the wellness committee discussed this, and clarified that because of the shared space at the middle and high school, they are considering both as a single secondary campus; 6, 9, and 12 students would be the exact numbers on that campus for the percentages currently given in the orange category. However, the percentages would be different in the elementary or in the preschool. That is why the wellness team will be brought together to discuss before a call to shift levels is made.

Casey McClellan asked what drove the decision for percentage thresholds, particularly 2%, 3%. Sup. Blincoe stated that the attorney's document had percentages in it, as well as the CDE's, though the percentage they used was higher..

Clay Tallmadge asked about measures for protection for privacy regarding vaccination status, etc. Sup. Blincoe stated that the district never shares names.

Lenetta Shull inquired how this committee was formed. Sup. Blincoe stated that they had used a committee that had already been started, and that Alesa Reed called parents to get volunteers to serve on it.

Regarding bullet point 2 in the document, referencing 'health department rules,' Lenetta Shull stated that the county cannot mandate what the district does. She reiterated her request to have someone from the health department vet the numbers being used. Sup. Blincoe replied that the committee has consulted with someone from the local health department, including Bobi Lock and Lindsay \_\_\_\_, and that he could provide the names of others who had been consulted.

Casey McClellan and Lenetta Shull stated that they believe the district needs to follow the CDE percentages. Lenetta Shull stated that there was a particular person she would like to see on the committee, who would be helpful with data, but did not provide the name. Maegan Crowley stated that she wanted to clarify that the Board has tasked the Superintendent to form and run committee, and not to appoint particular members to it.

Regarding the privacy issue that comes up with quarantining, Maegan Crowley stated that the document needs to clarify quarantining procedures, so that it's very clear how it will work- particularly since it creates privacy issues. Sup. Blincoe stated that when the district first had a positive, the district nurse was told by the health department what the rules are for quarantining, specifying procedures for vaccinated vs. unvaccinated individuals. He said that a flow chart seems like it would be most helpful- specifying both quarantine procedures and close contact procedures. He said that the committee would work to create those.

Casey McClellan stated that percentages that the team came up with allow the district to get to 'red' too quickly, whereas the CDE has 10% instead of 4%. He asked why the numbers don't match. Sup. Blincoe replied that that number is way too high- it would mean 30 students on the campus. He asked whether Mr. McClellan would be ok with that high a number of infected students. Casey McClellan responded yes, and that he is not worried about liability either. He stated that the public health order expires tomorrow, a new one is not in place, and there are no mandates; that the CDE suggests following county public health, and the county health dept has given the decision to each individual district; and that we have had no local deaths of school-aged children.

Sup. Blincoe stated that a pediatrician in the area has provided a different perspective on the effects on kids, even if they are not dying. He stated that as superintendent, he wanted to emphasize to the Board that they do need to be worried about liability. He stated that he wants the record to show that he has clearly stated that if we are willingly and wantonly not following rules and regulations, we will be held liable.

Kay Phelps stated that she also would not be comfortable with 10% being the threshold for red; she stated that the Board and district are responsible for the health and wellbeing of students, and that infection number is too high.

Clay Tallmadge asked how the district would determine the number of cases on a campus at a specific time, and how the wellness committee would decide to move up and down the spectrum. Sup. Blincoe agreed that there is a need to clarify that in the document, and explained that there is a schedule of collecting that weekly data. Once a case is resolved via a negative test, resolved symptoms, etc., it is no longer counted. He stated that the wellness committee would clarify how that metric is determined.

Clay Tallmadge stated that it would be best for the wellness committee to also hash out the threshold percentage, somewhere between 4% and 10%, rather than the Board attempting to do so.

Lenetta Shull stated that clear reminders to families to keep children at home if they are sick should also be added to the document. She asked for clarification about liability for each contingency. Sup. Blincoe agreed that that reminder should be added, and stated that if the district puts forth good effort- i.e. has a plan, is trying to mitigate the spread of COVID, etc.- they will not be liable. He suggested that the lawyer review the document.

Casey McClellan stated that the lawyer has emphasized that we should be in sync with the local health department. He stated that he doesn't believe we are in sync, because the local health department has allowed the district full control, so we can do what we want. Sup. Blincoe stated that we are in sync, as this document was created with local health department input. He clarified that commissioners do not have local authority over the local health department.

Maegan Crowley stated that there are proactive things that the district can do within the schools, such as outdoor learning when possible. She asked how these proactive measures will be employed more specifically, and for elaboration on how this will be ramped up.

Clay Tallmadge asked that the three policies that were used be put directly in the document for people to reference when looking at the protocols. Sup. Blincoe stated that the committee will put them in.

Lenetta Shull stated that it was mentioned that students who were quarantined or tested positive (bullet 7) have to test negative to come back to school, but that this return procedure is not stated clearly in the document. She asked how that process works and whether that is a part of CDC

requirements. Sup. Blincoe stated that the district nurse has and implements that specific information, and that it will be covered in the flowchart that will be added to the document.

Maegan Crowley stated that this situation is constantly changing, and is currently very different from last year, as so much more is placed on individual districts, and that she believed this discussion was helpful.

## II. COVID TESTING PROGRAM

Superintendent Blincoe explained that the state is offering a free testing program, with the option of either testing kits or full service. He stated that we probably need the full service option because the school nurse is already overworked. He explained that the program is free and voluntary. Mancos is participating, and signed an MOU today, and Cortez is doing it as well. He stated that he thinks it is a good option.

Clay Tallmadge asked for clarification about parental permission, and whether students whose parents gave permission would be required to participate every week. Sup. Blincoe confirmed that students under 18 would need parental permission, and that they would not be obligated to participate every single week if they were on the permission list.

Maegan Crowley asked whether this program would impact instructional time. Sup. Blincoe replied that this is a good question, and that they certainly wouldn't want it to.

Lenetta Shull asked whether it was possible to use the district's own clinic for this. Sup. Blincoe stated that he will look into that possibility.

Clay Tallmadge asked whether there is a deadline for adopting the program, and whether CDPHE would help to coordinate logistics. Superintendent Blincoe stated that yes, there is a timeline, and that we would need to decide soon. Clay Tallmadge asked whether the superintendent saw any negatives other than the loss of instructional time; Sup. Blincoe responded that no, that loss is the big issue.

Board members discussed the type of testing that would be used- card vs machine- and speculated that machine is probably what's provided on the bus.

Clay Tallmadge asked what ensures the privacy of family and students, and asked that the Superintendent ask CDPHE more about that. Superintendent Blincoe stated that the testing bus would let the district know of any positives, and would let parents know as well.