

BOARD NOTES:

July 14, 2020, Regular Board Meeting:

Consent Agenda: The Board approved the Consent Agenda, which included the minutes from the June 9th Regular Board Meeting, the monthly bills and salaries, and the approval of Board Policy sections 400 and 500.

Communications: Superintendent Dr. Ed Stange shared a thank-you note from Sunset Ridge teacher Mrs. Heather Johnson, a letter from Sunset Ridge teacher Mrs. Michele Widdes urging the Board to reflect on its policies and procedures in order to eliminate any areas of implicit bias, an email from District parent Mr. Charlie Pick suggesting that there be an option to “opt out” of in-person learning in the fall, an email from District parent Mr. Bob Goldstine asking if the District had considered using outdoor tent classrooms, an email from District parent Mr. Nino Miceli requesting the District go to full remote learning in the fall, and an email from District parent Mrs. Maria Mastroianni asking for information on appropriate masks for school. Dr. Stange also shared a draft copy of the quarterly Board Newsletter that will be arriving in mailboxes later this month.

Old Business: The Board discussed the Board Meeting calendar, noting that the June 2021 meeting may be changed so as not to conflict with the last days of school. Also noted was the fact that the July 21, 2020, Education Committee meeting has been changed to be a special Board Meeting.

Audience Comments: District parent Mr. Kyle Iverson urged the Board to consider going with a full-remote plan for opening school in order to avoid bouncing back and forth between in-person and remote if the District starts to see COVID-19 cases in its student body. District parent Mrs. Heather Corral advised the Board to open in-person at least to start in order to establish student-to-student and teacher-to-student relationships.

Board Open Discussion: The Board discussed making the monthly Board Meeting Packets available to the public. It was decided to consult legal counsel to gather more information.

New Business: In response to the new mandate that Election Day be a non-attendance day, the Board approved the 2020-2021 School Calendar with the first student day being moved up a day to August 25th.

Return to School Task Force Committee: Board Member Mr. Adelbert Spaan thanked the Task Force members for their thoughtful and comprehensive work creating the continuum of learning plans in support of a safe and healthy return to school for both staff and students. Recognizing that while no plan could possibly please everyone, he urged all stakeholders to exercise flexibility and patience as we refine a plan that is best for District 29. Dr. Stange started by describing the structure of both the Task Force (comprised of Board members, teacher union leadership, teachers, staff, and administration) and the Advisory Committee (comprised of District parents and local experts in related fields). Dr. Stange described the resources the Task Force used to guide the creation of the back-to-school plan, which include guidance documents from leading institutions, current updates from the CDC, ISBE, and the IDPH, collaborative work with leadership from surrounding districts, and survey data collected from our school community. Dr. Stange emphasized the key principles that guided the Task Force’s difficult work, which are:

1. To promote a healthy physical learning and working environment.
2. To provide meaningful academic engagement.
3. To address social/emotional needs.
4. To facilitate connections with students and families.
5. To provide appropriate training and resources.

Dr. Stange reiterated that while we cannot predict how the opening of school will go, the District remains committed to providing a plan that mitigates known risks, is implemented logically and systematically, is continually evaluated for efficacy, and is driven by data.

Dr. Stange presented the proposed Back-to-School Plan, which is made up of 4 stages:

Stage I, Full Remote

- 8:30-3:15, all instruction is provided remotely through eLearning

Stage II, Partial In-Person Learning (28 days)

- 8:30-12:30, in-person instruction at school, lunch is not included
- 1:30-3:15, remote instruction provided through eLearning

Stage II, Graduated In-Person Learning (14 days)

- 8:30-1:30, in-person instruction at school, including lunch and an Elective class
- 2:00-3:15, remote instruction provided through eLearning

Stage IV, Full In-Person Learning (evaluated on a 14-day schedule)

- 8:30-3:15, all courses are taught in person at school.

The full draft document of the Back-to-School plan is available on our website at

https://www.sunsetridge29.org/news/what_s_new/d29_return_to_school_plan

The Board discussed the plan, agreeing that the Task Force did a thorough and thoughtful job under impossible circumstances. The Board agreed that, at this time, the District is unable to provide a parallel fully remote program that students could choose to opt in to, instead of attending in-person school, due to staffing needs and efficacy concerns. Dr. Stange added that the draft plan and an accompanying survey would be sent to District families on Wednesday. The next meeting is July 20, 2020, at 1:30pm.

Finance and Facilities Committee: Board member Mr. Scott Subeck reported that GDI has started custodial services in our buildings, and regularly scheduled maintenance, along with a deep cleaning, is almost completed. The Board discussed the potential project of replacing all or some of Middlefork's mini blinds with roller shades. Director of Buildings and Grounds Mr. Corey Dreher described the PPE, and other necessary equipment, that the District has either procured or has on order. This includes disposable and washable facemasks, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, touchless towel dispensers, touchless soap dispensers, face shields, and desk shields. The Board approved an increase to the rate of pay for sports game officials. Chief School Business Official Mr. Tom Beerheide presented the Tentative 2020-21 budget, after which it was approved by the Board. The next meeting is October 13, 2020, at 6pm.

Education Committee: Board member Mrs. Anne Peterson reported that the July 21st meeting has been changed to a Special Board meeting, at which the Back-to-School Plan, and its survey data, will be discussed. A Resolution to accept the plan officially is also scheduled. The meeting will take place at 6pm.

Policy Committee: The Board had a first reading of Board Policy section 600 (Operational Services), with special attention to policies 640 (Curriculum Research, Development, and Adoption), 650 (School Wellness), 667 (Teaching about Controversial Issues), 681 (Remote Educational Programs), and 682 (Extra Curricular Activities). The next meeting is July 17, 2020, at 9am.

IASB: Board member Ms. Amanda Alpert Knight reported that the Board employed a representative from IASB to mediate a Board Self-Evaluation, during which best practices were discussed. The process is ongoing.

PTO: Board member Mrs. Anne Peterson reported that she will be reaching out to leadership regarding the concerns mentioned by Mrs. Michele Widdes' in her letter to the Board.

NSSED: Board member Mr. Bill Hayes reported that their teacher union agreements have been approved, and they are making their back-to-school plans.

Northfield Park District: Dr. Stange reported that they are interested in partnering with the District in order to fill the need for childcare as we move slowly to in-person school.

Village of Northfield: Dr. Stange reported that he is in communication with Village leadership regarding our back-to-school plans, and will notify them of the details of our finalized plan.

Foundation Fund: No report.

Administrative Reports:

Dr. Stange: Dr. Stange welcomed Mrs. Jennifer Kiedaisch officially as Middlefork Principal! There were no FOIA requests this month. Enrollment remains steady. Dr. Stange reiterated to the Board that we will be staying with 4 sections of Kindergarten and not going to an AM/PM model. We have posted two open positions, Sunset Ridge School Art Teacher and Junior High Math Teacher.

Dr. Sukenik: We are reviewing our snack policy and procedures in preparation for going back to school in the fall, and evaluating how our student cohorts will be formed.

Mrs. Kiedaisch: Everyone is working hard towards the goal of opening school and collaborating on plans.

Ms. Emily Dunham: The staff is reviewing our food allergy prevention and response practices.

Mrs. Sheri Styczen: Work continues on the new online parent resource site.

Recommendations: The Board approved the closed Session Minutes from June 9, 2020, the resignations of Ms. Amanda Martinsen, Ms. Nisa Fayyaz, and Mr. Jason Meger, the non-renewal of Ms. Stephanie Gelber, the maternity leave request from Ms. Sarah Dengsavang, and the employment of Ms. Molly O'Brien (Kindergarten) and Ms. Jillian Wiedrich (1st Grade).

Official meeting minutes will be posted on the website following their approval at the August 18, 2020, Regular Board meeting.