

GEORGE-LITTLE ROCK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

The George-Little Rock Board of Education met for special session on Wednesday, October 7, 2020 in the Superintendent Office/Board Room in the GLR district building in George. Board President Kristi Landis called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. Board members present were Kristi Landis, Wade Netten, Andrew Sprock, Jason Fugitt, and Austin Lloyd. Also in attendance were Superintendent Tom Luxford, Board Secretary Cathy Bonestroo, Principal Tyler Glanzer, and guest Valecia West. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the meeting was also held through zoom with Brian Luenberger and Principal Karie Aeikens joining through the zoom option.

A quorum was established. President Landis opened the meeting for public comment. No paperwork was received for public comment and no public comment was made.

A motion to adopt the agenda was made by Netten, seconded by Fugitt, and carried 5-0.

Superintendent Tom Luxford thanked everyone for having the special board meeting and reviewed COVID numbers for the district noting our attendance is good recognizing the procedures implemented to put the district in a good position for learning face to face. Plans continue to be in place for A) being in school, B) hybrid learning if numbers warrant, and C) online learning as a last resort. The meeting is to discuss Governor Reynolds press conference from a week ago with new recommendations for quarantining if masks are worn.

Luxford recommended that masks be required to be worn for grades 6-12 when not socially distancing 6 feet apart mainly in the hallways and lunch lines and in classrooms that can't be socially distanced. Middle school and high school staff have already been addressed by Luxford to share the proposed requirement. Luxford shared he wants the district to be a good steward of the county, community and school district focusing on the safety of our students and staff. With neighboring schools requiring masks, he feels it is a good gesture for GLR to also require to hopefully prevent people from giving COVID to other districts. It was noted that Central Lyon is requiring masks for 5th-12th, West Lyon requiring for 7th-12th, Sheldon requiring for K-12th, Sioux Center requiring for K-12th since the start of the school year, and Sibley-Ocheyedan requiring masks for K-12th, with MOC-FV currently not requiring masks.

Classrooms that can't socially distance will look at alternative locations to move the classes when needed noting the auditorium, 2 commons areas, gym, district ICN (training) room which could also assist with lunch space. Luxford stressed the district has not done anything wrong, but he wants to add another layer for keeping the students in the classroom for the year noting it is the first modification for COVID protocols and procedures with another review after the next 9 weeks of classes or as needed. Attendance and grades matter whether in class, hybrid, or online learning which is different than the spring and the focus is to keep kids in school for their education first, but also to allow them to participate in extra-curricular activities. Teachers are prepared for online learning and are implementing when necessary for those students who are quarantining.

Discussion was held regarding the mask requirement and what would take place for students not following mandate. Students not wearing masks will be encouraged with a mask given if they forgot one with the principal and superintendent addressing with parent for students to remain comfortable in school. Intent of the meeting is to be proactive and put more things in place to be in school for the long run. Fugitt asked how it would be handled for those adamant about not wearing masks, with Luxford sharing

the principal and superintendent would handle by situation and background. It was recognized that many believe this is political. Classrooms were questioned for how many or a percentage for those not able to socially distance. Approximately 3-4 classrooms were shared that would be affected for social distancing challenges in the MS/HS with it noted they are not affected all day every period. Campus allows us to use other rooms was again shared. Sporting events, practices, and on the bus for 6-12th students were also recommended for masks. Landis addressed faculty and the extra work required to prevent student absences and additional work for online learning and keeping our test scores high. Landis stated more protocols in place can't be a bad thing. Luxford shared that academically a lot of work in professional development with the district climbing academically and have better opportunities and more normalcy for students when they are in the classroom.

Luxford shared the new quarantine guidance for mask to mask vs non-mask to mask or non-masks. Discussion was held with Sprock questioning if quarantine should still take place even with masks to prevent the spread of the virus. Contact tracing was questioned with the school nurse doing the tracing with the help of principals and the teacher's seating charts. Sprock shared fear of don't just say it but do the due diligence to make sure masks are worn and worn correctly and recommended still practice regular quarantine as best practice. Don't just rubber stamp if get sick no one has to quarantine was the concern. Netten questioned if still quarantine with masks is questioned, then why mandating mask protocol. Wearing masks properly (covering nose and mouth) and still recommend quarantine was suggested by Sprock to focus on preventing the spread. Luxford shared that as the school district leader and educational team leader masks are another layer of protection to move forward and not backwards in the district. School is a safe place recognizing most won't get it in school, but hours somewhere else likely where contract virus, but the intent is to slow down the spread of the virus.

Luxford shared teachers will model the expectations and he will have a meeting with 6th-12th grade students focusing on not just the individual but the well-being of their peers and families. Sprock shared the CDC still recommends quarantining whether mask or no mask noting he is ok to try the mandate and will support decision 100% but suggests reevaluating if there is a community spread increase then go back to quarantining the way it was. If numbers see an increase, the board will need to revisit and adjust as needed for quarantining. Lloyd expressed that adding the masks and wearing more often is another route for protection and not a bad idea. Landis shared it is a focus for all other districts and a starting point with larger data points for requiring masks and new quarantine guidelines to monitor situation. Concern was expressed for those not wearing masks and situations to avoid wearing with notation that some districts have seen an increase in requests for doctor notes to try to find ways to get out of wearing masks. Discussion was held that it is hard to sell for staff and student morale to make wear masks but not change quarantine in place.

Luxford clarified that the requirement is not masking 24/7, but in hallways and lunch lines and when not socially distanced and will look at moving classrooms if can't socially distance. Mask mandate but opportunities to not have to wear all day when socially distanced. Vocabulary and comprehension were recognized as possible struggle with priority to socially distance. If the district can socially distance, we will find a way to socially distance. It was noted to be good stewards of our counties and area and not lone district in this decision. Lloyd expressed agree with intent to strictly be at middle school and high school level and not elementary level for now with board noting concerns of distraction for younger students.

A motion to follow recommendation and mandate masks for grades 6-12 when not socially distanced with board to re-evaluate periodically as medically needed or at end of 9 weeks for increased cases, was made by Lloyd, seconded by Fugitt, and carried 5-0. Luxford stressed he cares about the kids and their well-

being and wants them in school as long as possible and this is an extra insulation step to keep kids in school. Luxford shared administration will work with the students for acceptable forms of masks noting gators and face shields are not endorsed.

A motion to adjourn was made at 6:09 pm by Fugitt, seconded by Lloyd, and carried 5-0.