

**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 13, 2020
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

October 13, 2020

1. Opening Items

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in the Gymnasium at Edward C. Reed High School, 1350 Baring Boulevard, Sparks, Nevada.

1.02 ROLL CALL

President Malena Raymond and Board Members Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Sharon Kennedy, Ellen Minetto, and Angela Taylor were present. Superintendent Kristen McNeill, Student Representative Victoria Gomez, and staff were also present.

1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Heather Kerwin, Washoe County Health District, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.04 ACTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA

It was moved by Trustee Simon Holland and seconded by Trustee Caudill that **the Board of Trustees moves Agenda Item 5.01 to be heard after public comment and approves the agenda as revised.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Sharon Kennedy, Ellen Minetto, Malena Raymond, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

2. Consent Agenda Items

Trustee Simon Holland requested Consent Agenda Item 2.14, Approval of the Agreement with Van Woert Bigotti Architects, be pulled for additional discussion.

Trustee Minetto remarked that she had various concerns with the requirement of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) as part of teacher evaluations and included in Consent Agenda Item 2.15, Renewal of the Power School Contract for My Professional Growth System, but would vote to approve the contract renewal as they were currently required by Nevada Revised Statutes.

President Raymond noted the District's Bill Draft Request for the 2021 Nevada Legislative Session was related to the temporary suspension of SLOs.

Trustee Kennedy requested Consent Agenda Item 2.09, Professional Services Agreement between the Washoe County School District and the Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education Path to Independence Program, be pulled for additional discussion.

It was moved by Trustee Taylor and seconded by Trustee Minetto that **the Board of Trustees approves Consent Agenda Items 2.02 through 2.08, 2.10 through 2.13, and 2.15 through 2.19.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Sharon Kennedy, Ellen Minetto, Malena Raymond, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

- 2.02 The Board of Trustees approved the minutes of the July 7, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees.
- 2.03 The Board of Trustees approved the Award of Bid #277-03-09-21, Title 1 School Performance Support Services, to Catapult Learning West, LLC in the amount of \$175,000 for a term of one (1) year beginning September 23, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021 with four (4) optional one (1) year renewals.
- 2.04 The Board of Trustees approved the award of Request for Bid #040-04-08-21, Warehouse Delivery Truck, to Silver State International in the estimated amount of \$107,766.85.
- 2.05 The Board of Trustees awarded Bid #21-11-B-08-AA, Fire Alarm Upgrades at Sarah Winnemucca Elementary School, to Triumph Electric, Inc. for \$132,200.
- 2.06 The Board of Trustees awarded Bid #21-10-B-08-AA, Fire Alarm Upgrades at Esther Bennett Elementary School, to Baldwin Electrical Installations for \$147,864.
- 2.07 The Board of Trustees awarded Bid #21-09-B-08-DA, Synthetic Turf Replacement at Robert McQueen High School, to SPRINTURF, LLC for \$881,500.
- 2.08 The Board of Trustees awarded Bid #21-07-B-08-AA, Emergency Response Signage at Twenty-Two (22) Schools, to Bruce Purves Construction, Inc. for \$119,714.

- 2.10 The Board of Trustees approved the renewal of the District-wide OnBase Hosted-Solution Agreement with Precision Document Imaging (PDI) in the amount of \$216,942.38 for the Document Management System.
- 2.11 The Board of Trustees approved the payment of the 2019-20 membership fees to the National School Boards Association Council of Urban Boards of Education in the amount of \$12,975.
- 2.12 The Board of Trustees approved the Student Behavior Matrix and directed the Superintendent to submit a report identifying the Behavior Matrix as the Progressive Discipline Plan for the Washoe County School District to the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Nevada in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes Chapter 392, Pupils.
- 2.13 The Board of Trustees accepted the information collected from the NoVo Foundation related to Nevada Revised Statute 386.390.
- 2.15 The Board of Trustees approved the renewal agreement between the Washoe County School District and Power Schools in the amount of \$176,983.20.
- 2.16 The Board of Trustees approved the additional funds for services outlined in the staffing companies contracts for the Fiscal Year 2020-21 in the amount of \$400,000 for special education related services.
- 2.17 The Board of Trustees approved the Scope of Work and Quote with The New Teacher Project in the amount of \$591,082 for services to be performed at William Anderson Elementary School, Libby Booth Elementary School, Rita Cannan Elementary School, Desert Heights Elementary School, Glenn Duncan Elementary School, Echo Loder Elementary School, Bernice Mathews Elementary School, Natchez Elementary School, and Mariposa Dual Language Academy pursuant to the Nevada Department of Education's Partial Continuation Grant for Title I School Improvement Section 1003(a).
- 2.18 The Board of Trustees approved the purchase of student computers from CDW-G for in-person, hybrid, and distance learning in an amount not to exceed \$115,200 in state grant funds through the Victory Grant Program.
- 2.19 The Board of Trustees approved the Amendment for Professional Services Contract for Design and Construction Administration Services between H+K Architects and the Washoe County School District for the Wildcreek High

School for the increased cost of \$1,018,294 for a new total contract fee of \$3,825,294.

2.09 CONSIDERATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION PATH TO INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, NEVADA CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN DISABILITIES (NCED) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60,000 FOR THE 2020-2021 FISCAL YEAR

Trustee Kennedy noted the Path to Independence Program was for six (6) students. She requested additional clarification on how students were selected for the program and what benefits the District received. Jen Van Tress, Area Superintendent, explained the District was required to provide special education services to students ages 3 to 22. The Path to Independence Program was a transition program for students who had completed high school with an adjusted diploma that allowed the students to enroll in college classes, while at the same time receiving vocational training. The students were selected through a collaborative process between the District, Path to Independence Program, and a school-site team.

Trustee Kennedy asked if there were more applications than available spots for the program. Ms. Van Tress remarked the program was fairly new and not as well known as similar programs offered in other counties and school districts in Nevada, such as the program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

It was moved by Trustee Simon Holland and seconded by Trustee Kennedy that **the Board of Trustees approves the Memorandum of Understanding with the Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education, to support the dual enrollment and participation of Washoe County School District students with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in the Path to Independence (P2I) Program at the University of Nevada, Reno during the 2020-2021 School Year in the amount of \$60,000.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Sharon Kennedy, Ellen Minetto, Malena Raymond, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

2.14 APPROVAL OF THE AGREEMENT WITH VAN WOERT BIGOTTI ARCHITECTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$9,601,920 FOR THE PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES ON THE DEBBIE SMITH CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION FACILITY PROJECT

Adam Searcy, Chief Facilities Management and Capital Projects Officer, provided an overview of the agenda item. The contract was related to the remodel of the current Procter R. Hug High School that would occur when the new Procter R. Hug High School

opened, so the projects at each location were closely linked. The Board had previously approved the educational specifications for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming and the current agenda item would allow the architects to begin the design and engineering services through construction. Van Woert Bigotti Architects had been selected through a competitive request for proposal process. The dollar amount was on the higher end of the anticipated budget; however, it was important to note the contract was through construction and some of the work would be occurring while students were on campus so they would need to work to mitigate any possible impacts to the learning environment.

Trustee Simon Holland appreciated the information. She had requested the item to be pulled so the community could hear more about the project and celebrate the changes that would be occurring to benefit students in the District.

It was moved by Trustee Simon Holland and seconded by Trustee Taylor that **the Board of Trustees approves the agreement with Van Woert Bigotti Architects in the amount of \$9,601,920 for the professional architectural and engineering design services on the Debbie Smith Career and Technical Education Facility.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Sharon Kennedy, Ellen Minetto, Malena Raymond, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

3. General Public Comment

3.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

Jennifer Leja was a teacher in the District. She noted she had been out-spoken in her disagreement with the District not allowing Pride Flags to be flown in classrooms and wanted the Board to understand why she believed that way. She was originally from a very small town in Arizona and did not feel safe telling others about her sexuality until she was 22 years old because of how LGBTQ+ were treated and referred to in her hometown. As a current middle school teacher, she no longer heard the same comments and references from students and had students feel safe enough to come out as transgender to the entire school. Additionally, she had many students come out in their getting to know you letters at the beginning of the year because they knew they had an ally in a teacher that was out and proud. LGBTQ+ youth were more likely to be chronically absent and not report harassment because they did not believe schools cared about them. Additionally, LGBTQ+ youth were 5 times more likely to attempt suicide. The display of the Pride Flag in her classroom was one way she was able to show her support for students so they would know they could talk with someone. She agreed with many aspects of the policy banning political speech in classrooms, but had serious concerns about what was considered political if it meant that human rights. She was frustrated

that the District advocated for social and emotional learning, then tell teachers they could not love and accept all students for who they were through the display of symbols.

Kasey Smith was an employee in the District and expressed concern over the prohibition of Pride Flags in classroom. She believed the ban told students, teachers, staff, and families that they were not free to be themselves and that their lives had no place in school. She had faced various forms of discrimination because she was gay, including being kicked out of restaurants and having slurs yelled at her while walking down the street. For her, the prohibition felt as though her own employer would not provide a safe place for her because of who she loved. She stated that the Pride Flag was a symbol of her identity and her life was not a political matter. She felt that even if the District did not support their own employees, they should at least support the students who saw the flag as a symbol that someone else cared about them and who they were. She provided information highlighting over 50% of LGBTQ+ students did not feel safe at school or would not report harassment because of the slurs they had heard from teachers. She was frustrated LGBTQ+ students were repeatedly dismissed or told to ignore harassment when they did report a problem. She noted Superintendent McNeill had previously stated it was important that all students and families felt welcome in the buildings, and she agreed, but that could not occur if a group of students and staff did not feel safe and continued to be marginalized because of their sexuality.

Elizabeth Cadigan was a teacher in the District and had previously provided comments regarding the lack a funding and resources available to teachers. After one such meeting she saw an opinion piece written by Dr. McNeill regarding the lack of funding for education in Nevada and urging teachers and parents to advocate for additional funding. The piece made her feel as if the District were finally listening to the teachers who had come before the Board and she had urged other teachers to continue to speak up for themselves. While she appreciated the opinion piece, she believed it was only a first step and additional steps would be needed to increase education funding, such as collaborating with other groups when the Nevada Legislature convened to advocate for additional funding and speaking with neighbors to send letters to their representatives urging them to increase the amount of money school district received. She pledged her commitment to speak out and rally others to do the same until education in Nevada was properly funded. She urged the Board and District leaders to continue advocating for additional funding and do what was right for all students in Nevada.

Calen Evans was a teacher in the District and president of Empower Nevada Teachers. He was present to continue the push to urge the Board of Trustees and District leaders to advocate for increased funding for school districts. He presented information Empower Nevada Teachers had developed so the Trustees could provide information to the community on how the lack of education funding had hurt Nevada students and the economy of the state. He explained Empower Nevada Teachers would be working to

bring awareness to the community about the lack of funding and how they could help the students through advocacy.

Isabel Peralta was a recent graduate and member of Washoe County Students for Change and Diversify Our Narrative. She urged the Board to reconsider the section of Board Policy 1310 that did not allow teachers to support Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ+ in the classroom as they were viewed as partisan political issues. The Board had previously expressed their support for progress and equality with their stance against all acts of systemic racism and vowing there could be no tolerance for mistreatment. She wondered where the vow went when the Board contributed to the mistreatment by not allowing the symbols of support and putting up barriers to student success. She urged the Board to challenge themselves to see how their decisions related to Board Policy 1310 impacted students of color and LGBTQ+ youth.

Superintendent McNeill appreciated the comments provided by Ms. Peralta and her involvement in working with Washoe County Students for Change. She noted the group was working with the District on a new anti-racism resolution and the action steps associated with the resolution.

The Board also received comments from the following:

- Zane Taylor
- Tanya Coleman
- Morgan Moseley
- Akasha Iaulualo
- Matt Morrison
- Dallas Hulseley
- Mia Albright
- Isla Morrison

5. Items for Presentation, Discussion, Information and/or Action

5.01 REVIEW OF DATA INDICATORS OF COVID-19 COMMUNITY RISK TO INCLUDE, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, RISK ASSESSMENTS, TEST POSITIVITY, COMMUNITY WIDE CASE RATES AND HOSPITALIZATIONS, CASE INCIDENCES IN SCHOOLS, ADEQUACY OF STAFFING LEVELS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE FACTORS, AND, IF INDICATORS SUGGEST VERY HIGH RISK OR GREATER FOR UP TO 7-DAYS, CONSIDERATION BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES RELEVANT ACTIONS INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, CHANGES TO LEARNING MODELS

President Raymond remarked that she appreciated everyone taking the time to present the item. While the data previously placed Washoe County in the “moderate risk” range, the numbers had increased and the region was now considered “high risk.” She was

impressed the District was able to keep their numbers lower but it remained important for the Board to continue the conversations surrounding the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Dr. Paul La Marca, Chief Strategies Officer, reviewed the current data used for the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency (TMRPA) COVID-19 Risk Meter. Currently, the data placed the number at 7.0, which was in the "High risk" or orange range.

Heather Kerwin, Chief Epidemiologist, Washoe County Health District, provided additional information on risk assessments, which were previously related to the screening and testing of possible COVID infections but now used more for contact tracing purposes. The risk assessments were considered a first indicator if cases were increasing because they were based on demands for testing.

Dr. LaMarca continued with a review of the metrics behind the COVID-19 Risk Meter. He presented the District's COVID Data Dashboard and explained where the District received their data from. The District used the broad community data from the Risk Meter, information on school age children throughout Washoe County, and information specific to Washoe County School District students, schools, and staff. The difference between the data for community wide school age children and District specific students was explained. It was important to highlight the numbers would not match since there were school age children in Washoe County who did not attend District schools.

Trustee Taylor requested additional information on the new daily cases per 100,000 people and if there were any reasons why the numbers had not really come down after the Labor Day Surge. Ms. Kerwin indicated there was not a specific reason or action the community took that resulted in the increase in cases. The Washoe County Health District had seen an increase in work place cases, an increase in cases ages 18-24, and a couple of widespread outbreaks in long-term care facilities.

Trustee Simon Holland noted the difference in case numbers between school age children in the community and then specific to the District showed how hard the schools were working to ensure students remained healthy and schools stayed open. She wondered if the Health District was concerned about a spike in cases following Fall Break and then the Thanksgiving Break. Ms. Kerwin stated there were concerns since health agencies had seen spikes in cases after holidays and long weekends. A large concern she had noticed was the community had seen additional large gatherings becoming a more common occurrence since Labor Day weekend. Dr. LaMarca added there were some additional factors higher education were considering than the District would typically see, such as increased travel.

Trustee Simon Holland expressed concern over the 30-day analysis because the numbers were increasing. She wondered if there were additional precautions the District should

consider taking to help ease the burden on the community numbers. Dr. LaMarca mentioned the District was looking at working with Student Voice and having students who had influence with their peers provide reminders regarding social distancing, mask wearing, and washing hands. Ms. Kerwin hoped the School District would continue the open channels of communication with the Health District because that did allow for the Health District to prioritize pediatric cases.

President Raymond agreed it would be helpful to continue providing education regarding COVID precautions during holidays and long weekends. She believed students would be willing to speak up if they saw a concern with their friends and families.

Trustee Caudill requested additional information on the exclusion process in the School District, especially related to how the process helped decrease the chances of a school-wide outbreak. Ms. Kerwin cautioned that the concern with the virus that caused COVID-19 was that once someone started feeling sick, they had already been contagious for 2-3 days prior. Contact tracing became even more important for those days prior to the individual feeling ill so contacts could be excluded for the incubation period of the virus, which was 2 to 14 days. She noted it was important the excluded individual remain out the entire 14 days since the Health District had seen cases where someone felt fine until day 12 or 13 of the exclusion period. Dr. LaMarca added the exclusions included on the District's dashboard were close contact exclusions as identified by the Health District and not self-isolation the District asked staff and students to enter if they believed they could be sick. He believed the isolations were helping to keep the spread down.

Trustee Caudill noted some flu symptoms were similar to COVID. He wondered if there was a communications plan in place for students and employees on the difference between flu and COVID. Ms. Kerwin agreed many of the symptoms were the same, so it would be important for individuals to follow the self-screening guide. She indicated in conversations with pediatricians, the best advice was to self-isolate and then seek testing to determine flu or COVID. Dr. LaMarca added the District's response plan treated everything as COVID until informed otherwise.

Trustee Kennedy asked if the District knew the number of student learning days and staff working days had been lost due to COVID exclusions. Dr. LaMarca explained he did not have the exact information but would work with the Office of Accountability to see if they could provide additional information.

Trustee Caudill mentioned college and professional athletes were utilizing the rapid testing 2-3 times per week. He wondered if there was a way forward for high school athletics to begin either with or without the use of rapid testing. Ms. Kerwin cautioned against rapid testing because the tests were not as accurate and could provide a false sense of security, especially if someone was asymptomatic. Dr. LaMarca highlighted athletics was a difficult balance since the school districts could not put their athletes in a

bubble and had to follow the guidance from the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA). The District anticipated the seasons would be shortened and begin with winter sports after the Winter Break, but there remained some concerns and challenges to be addressed.

Superintendent McNeill presented her recommendation, which was for schools and students to remain on the current education models.

President Raymond opened the meeting to public comment.

Natha Anderson, Washoe Education Association, expressed her appreciation for all the information provided. Teachers remained concerned about how numbers were reported and the accuracy of the information from the Health District since some students and staff might go through a private lab. She would also hear anecdotally from members that the number of people out in the schools was larger than what was being reported. She was concerned about the contact tracing and people not being contacted if they were exposed. She hoped additional information would be provided to staff regarding the difference between flu or the "kindergarten cough" and COVID so staff would have a better understanding when they should be excluded or isolated.

Selena LaRue was a teacher in the District. She expressed frustration in the conversation and bewilderment of the Board as to why the numbers were going up. She believed the answer was evident and that the community numbers were going up because students were back in school. She was frustrated that the numbers being reported were different than what she would see in her classroom. She knew students were coming to school sick or staying home only for a day or two and allowed back because they did not have a positive COVID test. She did not think the community was responsible for ensure safety over the schools and the Board should make the decision to move all schools to distance learning to protect the health of students, staff, and the community.

President Raymond requested clarification on the discrepancies in the numbers being reported on the District Dashboard and what teachers might be seeing in schools. Dr. LaMarca stated he would be happy to speak with any staff member who was concerned about the information being reported and would look into any areas that might have been missed. He noted the 450 close contact exclusions reported by the District were not positive COVID cases. Additionally, if a student or staff member was not feeling well, they should not be told to "suck it up" but should stay home and isolate. If the individual was complaining of multiple symptoms, they should wait 48 hours and then seek a COVID test. One of the lessons learned during the reopening process was that there were nuances to each case and contact tracing was not always as fast as everyone would like it to be for various information. Ms. Kerwin added the numbers reported were related to someone who had attended school while infected. She reviewed the numbers from mid-September that showed 47 children with positive COVID tests listed in the community

data were not included in the District's numbers because they did not attend school while inflected; there were 38 children who had tested positive and did attend school, so those close contact exclusions from the school were included in the District's information.

President Raymond asked if the results from private labs were reported to both the Health District and School District. Ms. Kerwin mentioned the information was reported but not always timely because of various challenges, such as weekends or holidays. Individuals were always able to email the results to the Health District to start the process, with the results from the lab eventually catching up in the system.

President Raymond wondered what the definition of an "active" case was and if that also included those who were excluded. Dr. LaMarca explained an active case was someone who tested positive for the virus. The Health District also provided information on when a case was closed and no longer considered active. Part of the challenge was the timing of the information was not as up to date as anyone would like. He provided an example of receiving information from the Health District of 8 new cases, but 5 of them were already closed.

President Raymond asked if there were protocols for teachers if they suspected a student was coming to school infected or was considered a close contact but did not want to be excluded for the 14 days. She also wondered if there were ways for principals to provide information to Student Health Services on the number of exclusions they were seeing so the information could be compared. Dr. LaMarca indicated he was concerned about a back and forth flow of information because the District had received information from schools regarding positive cases that turned out not to be positive. He would conduct additional discussions with staff to determine if there were more ways the District could provide support to the schools in terms of ensuring students were staying home if they were feeling sick or there were concerns about violating exclusion protocols. He would also work closely with the Washoe Education Association to ensure their concerns were addressed and if there were additional questions that could be answered.

Trustee Kennedy wondered if the Health District received information from California labs and doctors since many who lived in Incline Village would receive health care out of state. Ms. Kerwin stated the Health District had very good relationships with all neighboring counties, including those in California. Epidemiological guidelines had the reporting of infectious diseases housed in the location of residence, so the information would be provided to Washoe County. She noted the information from out of state labs did account for some of the longer delays in the reporting of information.

Trustee Taylor asked if there was anything the Board could do to provide additional information to the community regarding what was occurring in the schools and why it was important students and staff remained home if they were sick. She knew the numbers showed the rise in cases were not because of what was occurring in the School

District because the numbers did not reflect that nor had there been any reported cases of spread at a school, that she was aware of. She was impressed with the efforts of everyone in the schools to wash their hands, disinfect surfaces, wear masks, and remain socially distanced because they were illustrating the prevention measures did work if followed. Superintendent McNeill remarked that she understood the concerns raised during public comment because it was confusing and there were many concerned about schools reopening. She felt there was additional messaging the District could provide regarding staying home if sick. She did not want staff members to feel they had to report people but they should know where to go if there was a concern. She was very proud that the Washoe County School District was the first school district in Nevada and the Western United States to have a COVID meter on the front page of their website because it showed the transparency the District was willing to provide the community.

President Raymond indicated the District could provide additional transparency and clarification if a time stamp was added so the community would understand exactly when the information was updated.

Trustee Simon Holland mentioned she would like to see any motion include direction regarding increased messaging on safe practices during holidays. She expressed discomfort in making a motion because she had previously been a "no" vote on the hybrid education model for secondary schools and continued to remain concerned about the age group.

It was moved by President Raymond and seconded by Trustee Taylor that **the Board of Trustees directs the Superintendent to work with the Washoe County Health District surrounding safe practices during upcoming holidays and breaks, adds a time stamp to the District's COVID data dashboard, and works to fill in communication gaps with staff on the difference between exclusions, isolations, and the number of reported cases.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Ellen Minetto, Malena Raymond, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

President Raymond recessed the meeting for 25 minutes.

4. Budget Items

4.01 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE NUTRITION SERVICES FUND, FISCAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS TO INCLUDE OPTIONS FOR POTENTIAL REDUCTION OF EMPLOYEE POSITIONS, REDUCTION IN EMPLOYEE HOURS, AND CONSIDERATION OF FURLOUGHS RELATED TO MEAL SERVICES TRENDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-21, AND PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Superintendent McNeill stated the Washoe County School District was facing various challenges during the pandemic. One of those challenges was how the District provided nutrition services for 62,000 students with the three different learning models. The presentation would provide additional information on the level of service being provided in the schools and the number of reimbursable meals, which had dropped considerably since the start of the pandemic.

Lianka Soliz, Director of Nutrition Services, began the presentation with information on the Nutrition Services Fund and the intent of an enterprise fund. About 22% of the 354 Nutrition Services Department staff members were considered administrative staff or central kitchen staff, with about 78% of the total staff being located in the schools. The meal counts prior to the closing of schools in March 2020 were reviewed and compared to current averages, with meal counts surrounding each learning model. The number of total meals had decreased by about 60%, while the staffing model remained the same. Some additional challenges that impacted meal counts were changes to the service model to a curb-side pickup, receiving guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) surrounding the school lunch program, and multiple days where school was cancelled due to smoke. Nutrition Service staffing levels for Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) elementary, middle, and high schools were compared to staffing levels at traditional school sites. Approximately 75% of all meals currently being served were at the in-person elementary schools. The hybrid students were challenging because many were not taking their to-go meal for the next day with them, which reduced the numbers by about half for the learning model. The largest gap was with full distance learners, with about 3% of eligible students picking up their meals. The Department was working with the schools to determine improvements to be made. It was important to note the information provided was largely until mid-September so the universal free meals were not in place during that time. Since the beginning of universal free meals, the Department had started to see an increase in the number of meals served, especially related to students on the distance learning model, with the number of meals being served prior to Fall Break at close to 25,000. She cautioned that while the numbers were moving in the right direction, the Department needed to serve about 44,000 meals per day to break even.

Mark Mathers, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the financial status of the Nutrition Services Fund. He began by explaining the majority of revenue for the fund came from meals reimbursed by the National School Lunch Program and received no state tax support, so if meal service decreased the revenues decreased. The District provided information to the Board in May 2020 because there was a concern about the Fund with the shutdown. The Fund was on-track to exceed the guarantee provided by Aramark in March, but lost over \$3.2 million in the final 3 months of the school year. The Fund began the current fiscal year with about \$3.5 million and was projected to continue losing money, with a net loss for the current fiscal year expected to be \$3 million by November 30, 2020. Because the Fund was burning through cash at such a fast rate, it was difficult

for staff to recommend waiting for an additional stimulus bill from the federal government that could provide some bridge financing. The losses would be mitigated somewhat with the increase in meal counts since the implementation of universal free meals, but not enough to where the Fund would not be losing money. If the Board and District did nothing to reduce expenses to the Nutrition Services Fund, staff was projecting a \$7 million - \$8 million loss by the end of the current fiscal year. Since the Fund did not receive any state or federal tax dollars, the District's General Fund would be required to support the losses.

Ms. Soliz presented four options for the Board to consider. Each option included a different impact to staffing levels, service levels, and impact to the Fund. Option 1 saw minimal impacts to the services provided to schools and students. About 44% of administrative support and central kitchen staff would be impacted and about 23% of school site staff. The option would see a loss to the Fund from December 20, 2020 through June 21, 2021 of about \$2.5 million. Option 2 would include impacts from Option 1, plus eliminate traditional breakfast service at sites serving fewer than 30 breakfast meals per day. Additionally, remaining staff would experience a reduction in hours and possible reduction of benefits due to loss of hours. The service impact would mean the impacted school sites would be provided with pre-packaged breakfast meals a couple of times a week that the school staff would be responsible for providing to students. The fiscal impact for the December to June timeframe would be a \$1.7 million loss. Option 3 built upon the impacts of Option 1 plus eliminated staffing at school sites that served a total of 50 or less meals per day, about 32 additional staff members, but there were no reductions in hours for remaining employees. The service impact would be that traditional breakfast and lunch service would be replaced with pre-packaged meals that would be delivered a couple of times per week and served by school site staff. The projected loss for the December to June timeframe from Option 3 was around \$2 million. Option 4 increased the number of positions eliminated from administrative support and central kitchen to 51% instead of 44% and a 45% reduction in school site staff, up from 23%. Additionally, 52 staff members would see a reduction in hours, impacting over 217 staff members. The service model changed at many sites to more of a café meal service. The impact to the Fund from December through June would be an \$880,000 loss.

Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, explained how employees would be supported with any of the options. She emphasized it was important to remember the losses would be to positions and not the individual. The District would then work with impacted individuals to determine if there were other positions in the District they could transfer to if that was their desire. There were three different employee groups that could be impacted and the District would need to follow the processes in place for each contract or handbook. If the Board took action at the current meeting, Human Resources would begin meeting with employee associations to review contracts and discuss next steps. Human Resources would also hold a meeting for all employees in Nutrition Services to review the decision and provide next steps information. The difference between

furloughs and reductions in force were explained. The primary difference was that a furloughed employee remained an active employee within the District but was placed in an unpaid status. Currently, employee contracts did not include references to furloughs so the terms would need to be negotiated with impacted employee negotiations.

Pete Etchart, Chief Operating Officer, mentioned he and Superintendent McNeill had received an email from members of the Nutrition Services team that included three questions they wanted to address during the meeting so the community would have the information. The first question was if the Nutrition Services Department was out of money and looking at laying off employees, why was the District continuing to contract with a management company (Aramark) to run the Department and should that contract be reviewed before District employees let go. The District contracted with Aramark for management of the District's Nutrition Services program, which was decided through a competitive bid process and approved by the Board of Trustees. Part of the contract included 8 Aramark employees in the District. The number of Aramark employees had already been reduced by half due to the pandemic and the remaining employees had taken on the duties of the 4 vacant positions. One aspect he wanted to highlight was that even though the District utilized a management company to run the Nutrition Services Department, all employees were part of the same team, including the 4 current Aramark employees. He also knew Ms. Soliz considered all Nutrition Services employees part of her team, even though she was technically an employee of Aramark. It was also important to remember the food service was conducted at over 100 sites and there were Nutrition Service employees located at each site.

Mr. Mathers addressed the second question from the Nutrition Services team which asked why, if the District had previously received over \$9 million from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Nutrition Services was not included as one of the programs receiving those funds. The amount received by the District was about 10% of what other local governments received and the amount of funding did not meet all of the needs of the District. The uses of the funds could have been used to address payroll shortfalls, as well as other needs associated with the Coronavirus, such as addressing the educational needs of minority or disadvantaged students, technology needs of students, costs related to COVID responses, school preparedness, and other services used to maintain continuity of operations. The list was extensive and showed the various needs of school districts in order to address the challenges of the pandemic. The District also lost \$16 million in funding from one of the Special Sessions of the Nevada Legislature conducted over the summer and had additional costs related to reopening schools in August. The District applied for CARES Act funding from the state in May 2020 and the 60% drop in meals was not anticipated at that time so was not included as part of the grant application; however, even if the District anticipated the reduction, the cost would have been \$7 to \$8 million and left little funding for all other needs and programs. Additionally, the funding was a one-time infusion and would not continue into future fiscal years.

Mr. Mathers provided information on the final question posed: why the current proposal was effective only to the Nutrition Services Department and not the rest of the District. The reduction in revenue was directly related to the decrease in the number of meals served. No other area of the District had seen a reduction in the number of services provided, so it was difficult to have the remainder of the General Fund address the needs of one department. Other programs did rely on specific funding, such as grants, and if those sources decreased or eliminated the funding, the programs were forced to make cuts to services, which had at times included positions. The District also eliminated numerous positions over the summer when the Legislature reduced the budget by \$16 million. Historically, the District had seen budget cuts of \$60 million over a number of years, which also required the reductions to positions. It would be difficult for him, as the finance officer, not recommend a reduction in staffing based on the reduction in service and funding for any department or program.

President Raymond opened the meeting to public comment.

Toni Maresjo, Washoe Education Support Personnel (WESP), hoped the Board would delay making any decisions related to Nutrition Services. Employees in Nutrition Services were provided very little notice of the meeting where the options were provided to employees and then went on Fall Break so WESP did not have an opportunity to discuss the proposed changes. WESP had received several comments and concerns from members and would like an opportunity to meet to discuss the options and provide information to the Trustees on which option would be best for everyone.

Natha Anderson, Washoe Education Association (WEA), agreed that the Board should delay making any decisions. WEA believed WESP deserved more time to review the options and discuss the possible cuts with their members. She had various concerns about who would provide the meal services to students in the schools if Nutrition Services employees were pulled out of the schools and felt the duties would fall on other members of WESP, such as secretaries and custodians, who were already stressed over additional duties due to COVID. The impact to students would be more than just the removal of Nutrition Services workers, but could mean a student would not receive timely care in the health clinic because the aid was serving meals to a classroom. The WEA stood with WESP in requesting additional time from the Board before any decisions were made.

The Board also received comments via email from the following:

- Diane Nicolet
- Anonymous
- Christine Ray
- Wrangler
- Cheri Sloan
- Jackie Wilson

Rayelle Porter
Julie Hitchcock

Trustee Kennedy thanked staff for their compassion and empathy during the meeting with Nutrition Services Department employees. As a former principal, she needed clarification related to options 2-4 and what the food service and paperwork involved would look like at the schools where Nutrition Services positions were eliminated. Ms. Soliz stated Nutrition Services would be relying on school site staff to distribute meals to students. Depending on the demand, Nutrition Services would work with the school administrator to set up a staging area in the cafeteria for meals that would then be distributed, either through a serving line in the cafeteria or delivered to classrooms. The only paperwork involved would be to provide the number of meals served for breakfast and lunch to Nutrition Services so they could plan on how many meals would be delivered in the future.

Trustee Kennedy expressed concern because any food would have to be maintained at a certain temperature. She wondered what would happen to any meals not served. Ms. Soliz remarked the schools where Nutrition Services positions would be eliminated were schools with low meal participation numbers already. Any meals not served would likely be wasted because the Department would not want the schools to continue to monitor temperatures to determine when a meal was no longer considered viable.

Superintendent McNeill requested clarification on how the schools were selected to be included in the options presented. She wondered how the meals would be packaged for distribution. Ms. Soliz explained the meals would be packaged similar to how meals were provided during the recent smoke days, with all meal components placed in a sack and handed to a student directly. The schools were selected based on the number of total meals served per day, which was less than 60 total meals. The revenue from the total meals served at those schools accounted for the largest losses in the Department based on employee and overhead costs.

Trustee Minetto asked about the paperwork involved that would need to be completed. Ms. Soliz mentioned the Department was currently following their "summer service model" that had less paperwork. Students were not required to run through a specific point of sale since all students received free meals. A process would need to be developed to provide Nutrition Services with the number of meals served. Nutrition Services would monitor the numbers to ensure there was as little waste as possible.

Trustee Minetto wondered what would happen if the Board decided to wait 2 weeks to decide. Mr. Mathers indicated the Department was currently losing an average of \$700,000 per month, so about \$350,000.

Trustee Minetto asked what would happen if more students started coming back into the buildings and requesting lunches. Ms. Soliz noted employees would be hired back if the number of total meals continued to increase. One of the challenges was that meal counts had begun to increase, but not to pre-pandemic levels. The Department anticipated meal counts to continue to increase with universal free lunches, but due to the current financial losses, the District could not recommend maintaining staffing levels at the current levels until the numbers stabilized.

Trustee Taylor wondered how an average meal count of 30,000 would change the projected losses. Ms. Soliz commented the projection was any jump of 10,000 meals served would increase revenue by about \$750,000 per month; however, there was a concern about the current losses and where the Nutrition Services Fund would be when any of the options were implemented at the end of November. She was also concerned about projecting into the future since she would usually look at the entire 1st quarter numbers prior to make any predictions about trends for the remainder of the school year. Mr. Mathers clarified, if the Board were to select Option 3, based on 18,000 meals, the total loss for the current fiscal year would be \$5 million but because of the \$3 million in reserve, was listed as \$2 million. If meal counts were to increase to 28,000 and remain at that level for the rest of the school year, the total losses would be about \$1 million.

Trustee Taylor requested clarification on the timing of the meetings with employees. Ms. Ellison announced the District conducted meetings with WESP and the employees as soon as they could because staff was looking at all options related to funding and revenue. It was important for staff to meet with the employees prior to the posting of the agenda item so they were not blindsided, and the agenda had to be posted during Fall Break per Open Meeting Law. The timing was not ideal but could not be helped because staff was still trying to figure out the impact and come up with solutions.

Trustee Simon Holland expressed her appreciation for all the efforts of Nutrition Services during the shutdown because they stepped up to provide meals to students. She knew they were essential personnel and should be treated as such. The decisions the Board would need to make were not easy and she was leaning towards delaying a decision because the numbers were skewed, and more data was needed on the universal free lunch numbers. While she understood the numbers would not be as high as they were prior to the shutdown, she would like to see a few more weeks of data. She also believed the November 3 General Election could change the dynamics in Washington regarding another COVID relief package, which could also impact the finances of the Department.

President Raymond agreed the decision was more about the numbers. As a parent, she knew the importance of Nutrition Services employees in the schools because they made connections with students every day and provide additional social and emotional support. She asked if the schools serving 50 meals or fewer per day were primarily elementary

schools. Ms. Soliz indicated the schools impacted were a mix of elementary and secondary schools.

President Raymond observed that if elementary schools were included then there could be locations where a larger number of students actually began returning to the building and there would be no Nutrition Services support to assist. She wondered, if furloughs were used, the employees would be brought back as needed when schools moved to over 60 meals for a certain amount of time or how that would work. Ms. Soliz noted a sustainable trend would need to be evident before she would be willing to commit to bringing positions back. Ms. Ellison mentioned it would also depend on the contract in place. Mr. Mathers added that the options would provide the parameters in which the Department would operate. At the present time it was difficult to predict what might occur because things were happening quickly during the pandemic, so it was important to have something in place. Staff should also provide regular updates to the Board so there were no surprises at the end of the fiscal year on where the Nutrition Services Fund would end.

President Raymond asked if the schools serving 50 or fewer meals currently had always had lower numbers or if there could be other issues the Board might need to address. Ms. Soliz indicated the schools did traditionally have lower participation numbers and the 60% drop in meals just highlighted the numbers. There were some schools where there were changes to school processes that the Department was trying to work through, such as students not being allowed into the buildings early in the mornings and wanting to miss spending time with their friends versus having breakfast. Mr. Etchart added the real challenge was with students on distance learning and students on the hybrid model not taking their meal for the next day. He believed with some of the changes being implemented the meal counts would increase; however, since the Department no longer had daily access to all students it was difficult to increase the numbers to where the Department would be able to break even.

President Raymond remarked she would be willing to consider delaying the decision but wondered how much more data the District would be able to gather during the 2 weeks. She was not willing to wait on the results of the General Election because those might not be known right away and even after that there could be a longer delay in any type of relief package. She could understand wanting to put out additional information regarding the universal free lunches because many families were likely unaware of this ability.

Trustee Caudill agreed with the prior comments made by Trustees because Nutrition Services employees were so vital to the mission of the District. He felt a delay could be warranted; however, he was not confident the numbers would grow to financially sustain the Fund through the end of the fiscal year. He was also concerned about what could occur with the General Fund budget since there were a variety of unknowns, such as the

Incline Village settlement, additional decreases to enrollment, a new funding formula, and a state budget that could be facing their own crisis that would affect the District. If the District was confident an increase would occur, he could agree to a delay in the decision, but hard choices might still need to occur. He expressed his support for furloughs versus a reduction in force since that would allow the District to recall people quickly. Mr. Mathers stated that based on the current education models, especially hybrid and distance learners, there were only so many meals the District could expect to serve for the remainder of the school year.

Superintendent McNeill remarked that when she decided to apply for the position of Superintendent of the Washoe County School District, no one could have predicted the world would be dealing with a global pandemic and that the challenges would continue. As a former teacher, she knew the importance of Nutrition Services in the schools and their support and caring for all the students. As a Chief Executive Officer of a school district, she had to be concerned about the financial health and viability of the organization. She agreed with many in the community that conversations had to occur at the state level in terms of how education was funded and would continue to fight for additional revenue. However, at the present time, she was extremely concerned about the financial health of the District over the next several years because of the drop in enrollment, various unknowns in the upcoming Legislative Session, questions surrounding a "hold harmless" provision with respect to the drop in enrollment, a new funding formula, and the use of the Fund Balance to cover losses. She noted that throughout her 27 years with the District, the decision before the Board would impact the largest number of employees at one time. The recommendation was not an easy decision and one that no one on the Leadership Team or management team in Nutrition Services wanted to make. She understood concerns surrounding the timing of the information provided, but everyone wanted those in Nutrition Services to know what was occurring prior to reading about an agenda item in the newspaper. She appreciated and understood the desire to delay making a decision until there was additional data, yet that could cost the Nutrition Services Fund an additional \$1.5 million. She thanked Human Resources for working on options that would allow employees who would be impacted to remain in the District.

Trustee Calvert thanked everyone in Nutrition Services for their hard work. As a food service worker, she understood the concerns and challenges the Department was facing because all food service establishments were seeing similar challenges. She was extremely hopeful there would be a turnaround soon and urged everyone to work together to find the best solution for the District.

Trustee Minetto stated, based on the information and discussion, she would need to support the recommendation of Superintendent McNeil, which was Option 3.

Trustee Kennedy mentioned, as a former principal, she also knew of the importance of Nutrition Services employees in the schools. In all her years in the District, Nutrition

Services staff members were considered part of whatever school they were housed at and were treated as such by school employees; there was never an us or them mentality. Those employees serving the meals were the first ones in the buildings to know every child by name and face in the school, which was one of the many reasons the decision before the Board was so difficult.

President Raymond asked if Option 1 saw an impact to the service levels at schools and if there was a certain number of meals that would reduce the losses if that were the choice selected by the Board. Ms. Soliz believed the District would continue to see the number of meals served increase and that the Department would likely reach an average of 30,000 meals per day. She did not have the information in front of her because much of the data related to the increases was not long-term. The options provided to the Board were based on more conservative numbers and did not take into consideration of additional smoke or snow days, or if schools were to close again, so there were additional unknowns that could impact the meal counts. Mr. Etchart noted there was a time delay built into the process, with any changes not occurring until the end of November. If the District were to see continued increases, they could adjust from there and bring employees back as needed.

President Raymond mentioned part of the reason she wanted to keep Nutrition Services employees in the schools where fewer meals were served was because the students receiving the meals were likely some of the more disadvantaged students in those schools. She would not want to decrease the level of services to students and if they were use to receiving a specific type of breakfast, see that change to a grab and go breakfast that might not be appealing. She asked what would be included in grab and go options. Ms. Soliz remarked the options would be cold options because Nutrition Services staff would not be at the school to heat meals and continually monitor temperatures. She agreed with President Raymond that the impacts would be to students who were more likely to be part of a lunch program and that only receiving cold, grab and go meals would be a significant change.

President Raymond commented that she would be interested learning more about how an increase in meals served would impact the financial side of Option 1. She requested additional information on the impacts to the students and schools for those schools serving 50 or fewer meals.

Trustee Taylor expressed sorrow in having to have the conversation because she knew the importance of Nutrition Services employees in the schools and would always make a point to visit and spend time with them when she went to the schools. Currently, the only option she was comfortable taking action on was Option 1. She appreciated the recommendation of Superintendent McNeill and also believed staff would be able to continue increasing the number of meals served by promoting universal free lunches, which should bring the losses close to the \$2 million included in the recommended option.

She felt Option 1 would also allow staff to continue to review the data over the next month or so and provide options for those employees impacted to move into other positions in the District if that was their choice.

Trustee Simon Holland stated she would prefer utilizing furloughs, even though the terms would have to be negotiated, because it was better for staff. Since it would take time to negotiate furloughs, she believed that would provide the additional time needed to continue a review of trends, provide alternatives to impacted employees, and promote the universal free lunch option. She would support bringing an additional action item back to the Board for considered in November when a final decision could be made.

President Raymond requested additional information on the proposed timeline presented and then what the impacts to that timeline would be if the Board delayed action. Ms. Ellison stated the November 30 date included in the presentation was used to provide some context in the data and not intended to be a definitive date. There were also different timelines associated with different employee groups in terms of notification and other factors, so a specific timeline would be determined once the Board made a decision.

Trustee Caudill noted he would be comfortable with Option 1, but expressed some concern about the process since it sounded like the Board would need to take action before anything in terms of negotiations could begin. If the Board chose to do nothing so more data could be collected, the financial situation could be even worse because the negotiations would not even have begun when the next update was provided. He understood the concerns expressed by other Trustees and their desire to see what would happen in a month, but did not want to not do anything and make the situation worse. For him, Option 1 seemed like the best place to start and then alter plans as needed based on additional information. Ms. Ellison agreed with Trustee Caudill's assessment. If no action were taken by the Board at the present meeting, the District would not be able to work with employees on looking for different positions or begin negotiations regarding furloughs.

Superintendent McNeill requested additional information on the possible amount that would be needed to subsidize health insurance for furloughed employees and if that subsidy would be required if Option 1 were selected. Mr. Mathers indicated the cost would be about \$30,000 per month. Ms. Ellison added the subsidy would be part of the negotiations surrounding furloughs. The Board would need to determine if they wanted to move forward with furloughs or a reduction in force first.

Trustee Simon Holland explained she would want to see a conditional vote to approve Option 1 that would provide direction to staff to begin the process and then return to the Board in November to provide additional information on meal count trends, at which point the Board would make a final decision on the timeline for implementation. Ms. Ellison expressed a desire to have more information to be able to provide employees to help

with the uncertainty. Ms. Soliz agreed with Ms. Ellison. The Nutrition Services employees wanted to serve students and know the direction they were going in. She was frustrated with the timing of the first staff meeting as well because it left a lot of questions unanswered for employees.

Trustee Kennedy requested clarification on the recommendation as related to furloughs since all options presented looked at a straight reduction in force. She also wondered how long staff was thinking in terms of providing health care subsidies to employees. Ms. Ellison indicated the idea was to provide health care subsidies through the end of the calendar year, but it would depend on negotiations. Staff had only included reductions in forces in the options because they were confusing enough without including additional information regarding how furloughs could impact the options. The intent was to always include furloughs as an option for the Board to consider.

Trustee Caudill asked when implementation of an option would occur if the Board approved anything at the current meeting. Ms. Ellison remarked the date would depend on the action taken by the Trustees. Since a negation would be required with any option, staff would need to return to the Board to provide an update on the negotiations and for final approval of any changes to employee agreements.

It was moved by Trustee Simon Holland and seconded by Trustee Taylor that **the Board of Trustees conditionally approves Option 1 with furloughs and support with health benefits for 90 days after the beginning of the furlough with direction to begin negotiations regarding the necessary elements and a review of meal count trends and other influencing factors on November 10, 2020 with direction to begin planning with individual employees and a final date of implementation to be determined based on contracts and other provisions.** The result of the vote was 6-1: (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Malena Raymond, and Angela Taylor. Nay: Ellen Minetto) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

President Raymond recessed the meeting for 12 minutes.

5. Items for Presentation, Discussion, Information and/or Action

5.02 PRESENTATION, INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE DIRECTION ON THE LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE RE-OPENING OF SCHOOLS FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Dr. Kristen McNeill, Superintendent, reviewed the process and guiding principles used by the District when decisions were made about the re-opening of schools. District employees continued to provide their all to ensure schools were able to remain open to not only provide learning, but also safe places for students, which did take both an

emotional and physical toll. As such, it was critical the District, Board, and community heard from staff regarding their thoughts on reopening: good, bad, and ugly. She wanted to ensure everyone was able to see the positives and negatives.

Dr. Laura Davidson, Director of Research and Evaluation, began the presentation with information on the survey distributed to staff. The survey was open for 2 weeks and saw a 59% response rate, with 79% of respondent certified staff members. The information in the presentation would focus more on the comments provided as part of the survey but the survey data was available with the meeting materials for those who were interested in reviewing the information. The information would be used to improve processes in the future throughout the District and provided to individual departments so they could address additional concerns as needed. The first open ended question was surrounding the measures and protocols the District had taken to keep students and staff safe; 35% of respondents indicated there was insufficient or inadequate cleaning and safety supplies available. The second question was related to what the individual or District should have done differently at the beginning of the school year and 31% of the comments were related to devices and ensuring technology was adequate. The third question was similar and requested feedback on what challenges staff was continuing to experience, with 38% providing remarks regarding technology and devices. She noted under the question that 30% of respondents expressed concerns related to stress, burnout, workloads, and/or feeling under-valued.

Superintendent McNeill requested clarification on the number of respondents included with the open-ended questions and why that was different than the survey as a whole. Dr. Davidson indicated respondents were not required to fill out the open-ended questions. In general, questions providing options to select from did receive higher response rates than open-ended questions.

Dr. Davidson continued the review of the survey results. The District asked about work stress in various forms and through various surveys throughout each school year so they were able to show there was a marked increase in the stress staff was feeling since the 2019-20 School Year, up to around 75% in all employee groups. The results on the effectiveness of the learning models in the schools was presented and led into the forth open-ended question on recommends on fixing some of the challenges associated with the different learning models; 38% of respondents mentioned providing better and more consistent technology and platforms would help both students and staff. The final open-ended question asked what were some areas that were working well in the schools and 38% mentioned the support they were receiving from other staff members, then 29% commented on the strong school-based leadership they were seeing. She noted the District would continue to collect staff survey information throughout the year, as well as release student and family surveys to gather similar information on how they viewed the re-opening of schools.

Superintendent McNeill explained the next part of the presentation would be focused on the puzzle of putting all the departments and offices back together since the shut down and how each piece played a part in the re-opening of schools. Each area would provide information to the Board and community on what they learned and how challenges were addressed.

Ben Hayes, Chief Accountability Officer, provided information on the student populations participating in the different learning models. One challenge was the District did allow families to move in and out of the different models depending on exclusions or family requests. In terms of race, there were large differences in who was participating in distance learning versus the in-person/hybrid model, with African-American students more likely to choose distance learning and Caucasian or multi-racial students more likely to select in-person/hybrid. In terms of special populations, while more students were likely to be included in an in-person/hybrid model, groups of students who might require additional assistance or resources were seeing larger percentages of students opting for distance learning. Additionally, those students considered to be at a higher risk for not graduating were also more likely to select distance learning as their preferred model. Staff was looking at different options on how to keep students engaged, especially if they were on a distance learning model because the District did not want to see the students give up.

Debra Biersdorff, Deputy Superintendent, reviewed the lessons learned in terms of academics. She presented information on what went well, which began with people from various areas coming together to support students for an unknown period of time. Learning packets were quickly developed and distributed to families by members of Transportation and Nutrition Services. Staff also became quite proficient in new technology, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, to continue the work of educating students. The Academic team also began looking at different learning model options for when schools were allowed to re-open and how each of those models would impact different levels and groups students. In terms of what could have gone better, there were issues surrounding how attendance could be taken when students were not in a classroom or did not have the ability to check in at a certain time because of lack of technology, not providing new learning during the spring and effectively missing the final quarter of the school year, and then having to narrow the content offerings to students because they did not lend themselves to distance learning options.

Dr. Troy Parks, Chief Academic Officer, presented information on what the District learned. While the intent behind "do no harm" and not lowering grades was made with the best intentions, the reality was that many students became disengaged, especially if they were already satisfied with their grade. Additionally, as summer approached, inconsistent practices occurred related to attendance for both teachers and students. The greatest lesson was the exposure to the community on the inequities of technology and connectivity in the District for students. Some areas that continued to present challenges

the District was still trying to work through included the structures needed to support both the distance learning model and the hybrid learning model and how students should be supported when they were not in the school building. Finally, the District was still trying to determine the extent of student learning gaps. He continued with a review of some of the things that went well, include the additional professional development days, expansion of 21st Century learning modules, creation of the Teaching and Learning Committee, and the cross-department collaboration occurring with the focus on serving schools. Some additional areas that could be better in terms of academics was the use of Edgenuity as a full distance learning program, providing better targeted professional development and guidance for distance learning.

Ms. Biersdorff highlighted the District did learn there needed to be a stronger focus on providing support for distance learning for English language learners since many families had selected to keep their students home at the present time. Planning and grading were also presenting challenges for teachers because teachers did not have the same amount of time to plan for their lessons and how they would support specific students. The time for planning and grading continued to puzzle the District, but schools were looking at different manners to support teachers so they could support students. The District was also looking at how assessments should look during the unique situation everyone was in at the present time.

Trustee Simon Holland wondered if specific examples related to assessments could be provided. Ms. Biersdorff provided information on finals and assessments for Edgenuity and then looking at take home finals that would focus on cumulative learning. Superintendent McNeill added there were conversations surrounding equity between the different learning models and providing parity throughout.

Dr. Parks presented the path forward for the Office of Academics. A new department had been created to focus specifically on distance and blended learning, which would include developing professional learning specific to distance and blended learning. Additional information on the new department would be provided at a future meeting of the Board of Trustees. It was important to note the department was created because the District believed distance and blended learning opportunities would continue after the pandemic. Academics would continue the focus on professional learning communities (PLCs) and the establishment of essential standards for all grades and courses, as well as the completion of online curriculum guides for high school grades.

Trustee Kennedy appreciated the information provided on the Office of Academic moving forward; however, she was still concerned about hearing teachers were currently operating in "survival mode" with everything from being able to engage students and families to just taking time for themselves. She wondered if the District was looking at different supports for teachers. Ms. Biersdorff indicated the question was challenging because she automatically wanted to respond with a yes, but the supports sometimes

depended on what was occurring at the individual schools. There were also concerns surrounding resources and how the District could support the principals if they wanted to change something in their schedule that would support teachers and students. She was working with principals to determine what changes could or should be made for the second semester that would help relieve some of the stress on the schools and teachers. Some solutions were specific to certain schools, while other changes could be made District-wide. Dr. Parks noted the academic team was comprised of former teachers so they understood the normal stresses teachers faced on a daily basis; none of them could imagine the stresses teachers were now facing so it was critical they listen to the concerns and provide answers to questions whenever possible.

Lauren Ford, Area Superintendent, reviewed what went well during the spring from the Office of School Leadership. The Office began with daily, then weekly, communication with schools to provide the most current information on how to provide quality instruction to students. Social and emotional learning supports were also being provided to students by both the District and community partners. The schools were providing different opportunities for PLCs to occur within the school verticals, as well as grade levels or subjects. The Office had worked to develop different learning model options for students and collaborated with the Offices of Human Resources and Business to set allocations based on the needs of the schools and the learning models they were providing.

Jen Van Tress, Area Superintendent, presented what went well for special education. The reorganization of the Office of School Leadership was continuing to provide additional supports and trainings to the schools. Training was provided to staff on how to meet the needs of students through distance and blended learning models. Additionally, all students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) were provided the opportunity to attend school in-person, 5 days a week.

Joe Ernst, Area Superintendent, highlighted that the District was working on brand new learning models for students and they were now 9 weeks into the development of those models. The Office of School Leadership and schools were continuing to work together to refine procedures and regulations to ensure they were equitable to all students, such as making changes to the attendance procedures to allow for more teaching time. In terms of what could have gone better, providing additional opportunities for learning in the spring was an improvement the District could have made and looking at how and what to assess. The schools were continuing to determine the amount of learning loss that occurred, while at the same time getting the students reacclimated to the school environment. Moving forward, it would be important to look at how additional prep time could be provided to teachers so they could prepare for the different learning models; as well as looking at how to continue to provide the emotional connections with students, especially those on distance learning.

Ms. Van Tress presented where the District could have been better during the spring for special education. While the District was able to provide more training opportunities, it was clear additional, specialized training was needed for teachers and the intent was to provide opportunities at least once a month. It was also important the District provide the supports and resources teachers needed to continue moving forward since they were all facing challenges both at home and in the workplace. With a higher percentage of IEP students on distance learning, the District needed to look at how the supports could continue to be provided to families as well as the teachers and students.

Mr. Ernst explained an important difference the District learned since March was the difference between electronic connectivity and physical connectivity. The results did improve when there were face to face connections occurring between students and teachers, as well as between staff members. The District learned essential standards were even more essential now than before and seeking feedback, as well as acting on the feedback, was critical for everyone. A refresh plan for outdated technology was critical and had to be developed sooner than previously anticipated. Most importantly, the District learned the perseverance of teachers and students in adapting to new models of learning and behaving in a short period of time, which was highlighted by the willingness of students to wear masks and practiced enhanced hygiene practices while in schools.

Ms. Van Tress noted the District also learned how telehealth programs could be extremely effective for students with IEPs. While some services would need to be provided in person, the telehealth opportunities allowed for focused sessions that included working with families. Additionally, the reorganization was proving beneficial in providing additional supports to schools and faster responses to questions. One area that continued to challenge the District was how to provide specially designed instruction over distance learning to address the individual learning styles of students with IEPs.

Ms. Ford mentioned that moving forward, the Office of School Leadership would continue to collaborate with the Office of Academics of grading policies and the structure of finals. The Office would also allow the principals to control the direction of the professional development occurring in their schools so the learning would be targeted to the schools' specific needs. The work with WestEd would also continue for special education and they would continue to provide resources and supports for teachers to provide effective distance learning to students with IEPs.

Trustee Simon Holland asked if the challenges of providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for special education teachers had been resolved. Ms. Van Tress noted Capital Projects had placed orders as soon as learning of the concerns and the District did have a healthy supply available for schools when they need more items, such as gowns and gloves.

President Raymond wondered if the challenges surrounding teacher prep periods were beginning to work themselves out now that everyone was beginning to settle into their schedules or if additional resources continued to be needed for schools, especially related to the ability to recruit and retain guest teachers at the present time. Mr. Ernst remarked time was currently one of the larger challenges the schools were facing. The Office of School Leadership and schools were making changes to instructional and master schedules as needed to try to allow for additional time for teachers. The lack of guest teachers was a concern and schools would always ask for volunteers first to fill in but there remained challenges with filling all areas each day.

Trustee Taylor appreciated the work occurring in the District and in the schools. She understood the challenges were continuing and thanked Superintendent McNeill for providing all the information to the Board and community because it was important to see where additional improvements needed to occur. She urged staff to look for ways to thank the teachers because they were continuing to move forward even though the process was not what they expected or what was planned.

Dr. Paul LaMarca, Chief Strategies Officer, reviewed the successes, challenges, and next steps for Student Health Services. The Department had provided information to the schools and families on conducting daily self-screenings, added employee nurses to provide information and support of staff, and closely collaborated with the Washoe County Health District and other community partners. In terms of challenges, the District could use clearer guidance from all levels of government in terms of education on disease spread and mitigation, providing more resources and access to testing, and improved metrics for decision-making. The District learned students and staff were willing to comply with enhanced safety measures and the resilience of staff, including their willingness to continue to place the needs of others before themselves. He was also impressed with the heightened awareness in the community of the importance of public education and their willingness to do what was needed to allow schools to open. Some of the continued challenges had been raised by others, such as what the next steps were and what the "new normal" would be. Similar information was reviewed for other departments housed under Strategies, with a focus on the emotional health needs of students, intervention services provided to students, and the highlighting of long-standing inequities in the schools and society that required attention.

Pete Etchart, Chief Operating Officer, presented the lessons learned for the Departments of Facilities Management, Transportation, and Nutrition Services. In terms of Facilities Management, the District was able to provide continuity of operations for staffing levels and supplies and present a clear message surrounding the layered approach to enhanced cleaning. The District could have been better at the ordering of PPE earlier because it did not spoil; however, all school districts, governments, and businesses were also trying to order the same items in bulk at the same time. The District learned plans needed to be in place for a year-round fire season that could impact school operations. Since the

Board had received a presentation earlier on Nutrition Services, the lessons learned for the Department was quickly reviewed. He was impressed with the collaboration that occurred within the community to allow for the needs to be met in terms of food security since the area did not see the extremely long lines other communities faced. The District learned better plans need to be in place to pivot to a full distance distribution model for all students. Some of the challenges the District continued to work through included decreased enrollment and why full distance students were choosing not to take advantage of the meal pick up service. The information for the Transportation Department for both the end of the 2019-20 School Year and the beginning of the 2020-21 School Year was reviewed. He praised employees for their interest and willingness to do whatever was needed to support students and schools, including handing out packets to students and families, even when there was no availability of masks and gloves.

Dr. Chris Turner, Chief Information Officer, reviewed the lessons learned for the Information Technology Department. He highlighted the community support and fundraisers conducted to provide devices to students, as well as collaboration between various District departments to ensure students and staff were also able to connect to the internet. In terms of what could be better, additional training on devices and programs would be needed for teachers, students, and families so everyone would have access or know who to contact if there were concerns. The Department learned it was possible for most everyone in IT to work remotely; however, remote offices did not allow for spontaneous problem solving and collaboration. Short timelines often required immediate solutions, which were not always the best solutions. Finally, emergency and disaster recovery plans should be enhanced and training conducted more often.

President Raymond mentioned the issues raised during the presentation faced by the Washoe County School District were the same issues school districts were facing across the country and even elsewhere in the world. The shortages of devices and delays in shipments were causing challenges for everyone. She was proud of the work of the District to work through the challenges and that the community was willing to support the District and students as much as possible.

Neil Rombardo, Chief General Counsel, provided the lessons learned by the Office of the General Counsel. He was pleased with the collaborative efforts that were able to occur with other District staff and colleagues nationally to review legislation and guidance documents. It would also be important to improve upon the collaboration with the Communications Department to properly inform stakeholders and the community of changes.

Mark Mathers, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the lessons learned for the Office of Business and Finance. The largest challenge continued to remain the lack of appropriate funding and resources for education in Nevada. He would like to see a better way to track all the requests for additional resources, from departments and schools, so a more

comprehensive picture could be created for lawmakers. Moving forward, the Office continued to face numerous unknowns in terms of funding with the revision to the state funding formula and the economy as a whole.

Superintendent McNeill presented the information on behalf of the Office of Human Resources. The District was able to provide a continuity of operations when the pandemic first began and quickly shift to allowing employees to work remotely and the ability to effectively collaborate with employee associations was critical to the rapidly changing dynamics of the pandemic. In terms of what could be better, the Office was interested in reviewing the process used by employees to request reasonable accommodations through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and how unpaid leave provisions were communicated. Additional information was provided on the status of guest teachers in the District. One area that continued to challenge Human Resources were the implications of remote working, including the protocols and processes that needed to be in place to allow the option to move forward.

Jason Trevino, Chief of School Police, and Roy Anderson, Emergency Manager, reviewed the lessons learned for School Police and Emergency Management. While the job of School Police did not change, some of the duties did shift to more traffic control at food and packet distribution. The largest implications in terms of lesson learned surrounded the acquisition, distribution, and usage of PPE.

Trustee Taylor wondered if the acquisition of PPE included items such as cleaning wipes. She had heard from a number of teachers who would appreciate having wipes in the classrooms for quicker cleaning. Mr. Anderson mentioned the District had just started receiving orders of wipes that were originally placed in June. The challenge was similar to that with devices, everyone was ordering the product and the companies could not make them fast enough. Chief Trevino added that just because the District was a large organization, they did not have the ability to purchase products prior to other organizations, including grocery stores.

Irene Payne, Chief Communications and Community Engagement Officer, provided the information from the Communications Department. The District had dedicated emails and phone lines so parents and community members could receive information and answers quickly. The Department was interested in making improvements to the website to allow for instant communication or chat and providing translation services in more languages than just Spanish. Moving forward, the District would continue to look for alternative ways of sharing the District's story and news, including different options to update media partners and social media platforms. The Department would continue to collaborate with other departments to provide information to the community and families.

Superintendent McNeill closed the presentation. The work that took place since March took an entire team from all departments. Additional information on the reports provided

to the Board could be found with the meeting materials and showed the evolution of what occurred.

President Raymond shared the lessons she had learned with the reopening of schools. One of the greatest achievements for her was how the District could provide different educational models to families so they could select an option that was best for them, including shifting models as needed. If she had known the challenges of families being able to shift models, she would not have approved that aspect moving forward because it was so challenging for the schools. She would also have asked for more information on how instruction would be provided under each education model, instead of being so focused on the safety measures. Finally, she would have allowed for an additional week at the beginning of the year for teachers and schools to prepare. She was proud the District was able to open and stated that decision was the hardest decision she had made as a member of the Board of Trustees because of the impact to the schools, employees, students, and families.

Trustee Taylor agreed with the comments of President Raymond, especially related to providing an additional week for schools and teachers to prepare for distance learning.

President Raymond opened the meeting to public comment.

Natha Anderson, Washoe Education Association, thanked everyone for the information and the collaboration of the various departments. However, she disagreed with some of the information and statements based on what she had heard from employees. It was difficult to go through and provide specific examples because all the information was provided during one presentation. She urged the Trustees to dive into the information provided in the survey because it included the perceptions of employees on their work and work environment. Employees were stressed and the students were perceptive and aware their teachers, bus drivers, and others were stressed which impacted student learning.

The Board also received comments from the following:

Selena LaRue

Jenny Snaza

Trustee Caudill agreed the amount of information provided was immense. He would like to see something come forward from the Superintendent that listed five or so priorities that had to be fixed as soon as possible because there were pressing issues.

Trustee Simon Holland agreed and would be interested in seeing the District report back on some of the challenges, similar to what occurred with the Pathway to Positive Progress.

It was moved by Trustee Taylor and seconded by Trustee Simon Holland that **the Board of Trustees directs the Superintendent to bring back an action plan based on the discussion that identifies priorities and includes a method for the Board to review progress and provide additional recommendations in the future.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Ellen Minetto, Malena Raymond, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

6. Reports

6.01 BOARD REPORTS

Board Members reported on their attendance at District and community activities and shared announcements of dates and times of upcoming events.

6.02 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Kristen McNeill reported on her activities including meetings with staff, community leaders and the media.

7. Closing Items

7.01 FUTURE AGENDA ITEM REQUESTS

Trustee Caudill requested an agenda item that would replace the existing Board Policy Committee with a Community Board Policy Advisory Board. The group would consist of 10 members, 5 parents who are not school district employees and 5 school-based staff based on Trustee district. He would like the eligibility for the school-based staff to be based on the location of the school and not an individual's residence. He was interested in continuing the 3-step approval process for policies and would like to have the group in place to begin their work in August 2021. He hoped to hear a draft proposal from staff by the end of the current calendar year.

Trustee Taylor requested a review of Board Policy 1310, Political Activity in Schools.

7.02 PUBLIC COMMENT

The Board received comments from the following:

Jenene Slatt

Adrian Lowry

Joyce Sindar-House

7.03 NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The next Regular Meeting would take place on Tuesday, October 27, 2020.

7.04 ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business to come before the members of the Board, President Raymond declared the meeting adjourned at 12:24 a.m.

Malena Raymond, President

Andrew Caudill, Clerk

From: Zane J Taylor
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:56 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Board Policy Prohibiting Speech

Dear Washoe County School District Board of Trustees,

My name is Zane Taylor, and I am a graduate of the Robert McQueen High School's Class of 2019. Currently, while at the University of Nevada, Reno, I am a Senator for the College of Liberal Arts and the Chair for the Senate Standing Committee on Democratic Civic Engagement in the Associated Students of the University of Nevada. Our job on the committee is to correspond with local, state, and national forms of government on pressing issues.

Recently, after knowledge of trainings given to teachers barring support of Black Lives Matter went public, the Senate of the Associated Students unanimously passed Senate Resolution 88, A Resolution in Opposition to the Washoe County School District's Statement and Trainings on Black Lives Matter. Cited in the resolution are many reasons why Black Lives Matter and other civil rights movements are inherently apolitical and should be allowed to be supported in the classroom. Even more recently, a teacher from Cold Springs Middle School came forward and said she was barred from flying the pride flag in her classroom due to the "political nature" of the subject.

Through the unanimous passage of this resolution, the Associated Students of the University of Nevada ask you to reexamine through future Board of Trustees meetings, what is inherently political and what is not under Board Policy 1310. That resolution serves as a reminder that at least 18,000 of your community members do not believe that what you have done is right and that any language, symbols or any other representation of equality for minority groups are not political and are not exclusive to students of the majority. We firmly ask that you reconsider the issue and hope to see change in the school district that houses the students that will one day attend the University of Nevada, Reno.

Respectfully,

Zane J. Taylor

Senator for the College of Liberal Arts

Chair for the Committee on Democratic Civic Engagement

88th Session for the Associated Students of the University of Nevada
3rd Floor Joe Crowley Student Union | Mailstop 058
The University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, NV 89557

www.nevadaasun.com

From: Diane Marie Nicolet
Sent: Friday, October 9, 2020 3:02 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] USDA free meals extension

Hello - Diane Nicolet here.

With the recent announcement of the USDA extending Free Meals to the end of the 2020-2021 school year, I am wondering how that will **positively** impact the WCSD nutrition program?

Thank you

Diane Nicolet

--

Diane Nicolet, Ph.D.

Educational Leadership

Coming Together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.

-Henry Ford

From: tanya darnell
Sent: Saturday, October 10, 2020 1:21 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agnes Coleman Public Comment October 13

Dr. McNeill. President Raymond. Trustees.

As I reflect on the past 7 months-life. The history of public education in the United States-- I think about the very first time I ever spoke at a school board meeting on behalf of advocating for the exact same things we are hoping to achieve in NV.

I was a fourth grader. Mid seventies. Hawthorne Elementary, San Luis Obispo, California. I never spoke at a school board meeting after that until this summer—literally 40 years later. Even in the midst of a global pandemic the issues are exactly the same. Other than the killer virus part.

My point is this. Although I am not a martyr. I am an educator and there is a deeply personal reason for why I have never left education and why I keep fighting the internal and psychological fight to remain in a profession where we are the puppets to our elected masters— Not to mention sometimes our own building leadership (from Colorado to Nevada) treats us worse or creates toxic work cultures at school sites—yet many of us continue to fight the fight.

I have to ask you why do we have to consider striking and why all of the protests and demonstrations in order to replicate what we have been saying for 40 years as an establishment. Why is it that when nurses and educators are put in positions to advocate for our rights, and for what we all know students need in the classrooms, that the public perception is that WE are betraying our communities? I place this responsibility back on our elected leaders and Trustees. I know for a fact Dr. McNeill and Deb Beiersdorf, having been in the trenches themselves are already our advocates. Not to mention the time and effort Calen Evans and ENT have dedicated toward making our voices heard are inspiring, but I would ask that this Board also recognize and be prepared to support our profession from a political perspective.

Perhaps try to learn about the history of teaching, school culture, and leadership approaches at school sites—not with all of the fluff and sparkle—the real nature of what we do. Be our voice, as well as the voice of your constituents, but become forward thinkers about how we can all better understand that the holistic health and wellbeing of your charges is essential for achieving academic success. Do not be fearful of getting to know your teachers. Your staff. Our students and their families and fighting our fight with us. Use your time with us to affect the change we need to see. It should not take another 40 years.

Focus on fostering a supportive caring culture, because now more than ever we all need to recognize and support students suffering trauma. If Onsite staff, faculty, and admin are beaten

down to the point of mental and physical exhaustion—which was already happening pre-pandemic—WCSD will implode on itself.

So why am I here and why do I stay. I am a service connected disabled military veteran and a 4 time cancer survivor. Hodgkins. Melanoma. Basal cell carcinoma. Endometrial. Each time I was diagnosed with cancer, starting at the age of 27, I thought I was going to die. Each time science saved me and my faith sustained me. Each time the doctors and their teams saved me...I made a promise to live my life with the Lord's purpose of serving Americas youth and their families.

Why teaching instead of law or psychology? When I was a kindergartener in Hayward, CA, I remember my teacher trying to physically restrain a strange woman from taking me out of her classroom—a school teacher tried to save me. That “strange” woman ended up being my biological Mother. 3 years later, my 3rd grade teacher, Mrs. Bissell from Santa Rosa Elementary in Atascadero, CA (A first year teacher by the way), must have known the trauma I was living, because she took me under her wing and provided warmth and love and a “safe place” for me in her classroom. When my little brother and I were starving and hungry—schools fed us. I teach, because teachers can be the sparkle in a child's life when everything else can be dark. I teach, because it is my life's purpose and without purpose the life I have been gifted-more than once- is wasted.

I wanted you to know why I teach, because I have had so many people—including my doctors tell me to leave the profession. It isn't that simple. Not from my perspective. As hard as I fight to remain, I also wanted to share with you why WCSD.

It's the people. People like some of you. Our current WCSD leadership gives me hope. The Loder community, admin, and colleagues are beyond some of the most amazing folks I have ever had the pleasure of working with.

Dr. McNeill will lead us down a very good path if the politicians don't interfere too much. Good choice by the Trustees in my opinion. Great educational leaders are authentic, genuine, reflective, accountable, empowering, and have integrity. She has these qualities—many Superintendents do not.

I chose WCSD over CCSD, although I'd be making 10k more annually in Vegas, because our district offered me 2 years extra on the salary scale for my military service-that spoke to me.

WCSD has offered numerous opportunities for professional growth, leadership development, and adequate compensation for continued education -compared to other districts.

The personnel WCSD has in its district level educator coaching department are extremely talented and easy to work with. True coaches.

When my doctors advised me to quit due to Covid and having to return to the classroom, WCSD, Amy Wright, Nicholl Johnson, the VA, and risk management worked so effectively to provide ADA protections for me, so I could return and teach grade 3 distance learning at Loder--Many workers do not have this option, but WCSD provided it for me.

Thankfully, due to Amy and Nicholl's leadership, my DL experience has not been as much of a nightmare as some of my colleagues across the district. Through all of the cancelled

classes due to smoke in the area, my class has been able to continue uninterrupted. Which is so very important for our school demographic.

Finally, although I believe all ZOOM school staff and educators should be given annual stipends and that our salary schedule needs an overhaul...I am in my 19th year of teaching and my salary is almost double compared to what it would have been if I stayed in Colorado.

So this concludes my novella. Think of it as a replacement to me physically being at a board meeting, since I do not plan on speaking again, although I have learned a lot from the last two times I spoke.

My plans are to focus 110% on our students at Loder, as well as my own physical and emotional health. There is so much I have to be grateful for—and during a time when many in our country are suffering WCSD has provided me and my class with some stability.

Thank you all very much for your time. Your commitment. And your service to public education. Please make it better.

God bless.

Tanya Agnes Coleman

Let the beauty of what you love be what you do -Rumi

From:
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2020 7:51 AM
To: Public Comments; McNeill, Kristen; BoardMembers
Subject: playgrounds

Hello,

Can I say something? I want to open all the playgrounds at school. The preschools get to play on their playground, but kindergarten, first grade, second grade all the way up to fifth grade don't get to. No children at the preschools have been getting sick. Their playgrounds have been open this whole time. The city parks are open now and I think that all playgrounds at school should be open too. All kids should be able to go on every playground.

Thank you. From,

Morgan Moseley
First grader at Double Diamond Elementary school
6 years old

Good morning,

My question is, with the Nationwide Waiver extending through June 30, 2021, and the increase in meal participation, how do you plan to accommodate the increase with little to no staff on-site at central kitchen as well as individual school sites? What is the time frame for rehiring our employees that you're choosing to let go of? Are the management companies' positions in consideration as well? Their salaries are paid through the same funding is it not?

What numbers are you pulling from? Before the waiver or current? If it's before the waiver than your numbers are inaccurate and need to be re-evaluated.

What school staff do you expect to serve prepacked meals to the children if there is 0 Nutrition Services staff on-site? As a parent, this concerns me, do you expect my child's teacher to teach as well as be pulled from teaching duties to prep and serve meals? Whether prepackaged or not, it is still a process. One of which they do not have time for. The teaching staff is already overloaded; my child's education is already suffering because of the board's poor decision-making, do you plan to make it worse?

As you sit in your board meeting on Tuesday, I hope you look at the current numbers as they continue to rise, the long-term effect of not having Nutrition Services staff on site, and the backlash you will receive from the school staff and parents. And most importantly each of the dedicated employees and their livelihoods that you will be affecting, remember who was considered essential throughout the entire process, still came in to make sure our district's children were fed.

Thank you.

From: Akasha Asencio laulualo
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2020 9:39 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hybrid Model

Dear Washoe County School District Board of Trustee Member,

I am a teacher at Cold Springs Middle School. I am very concerned about the hybrid model we have in place.

While the hybrid model was created to have less bodies and less exposure in the classroom, it is not working for many reasons. I have been teaching for 16 years and have never felt “May” exhausted in October. The amount of work we have on our plates is insane!

I’m expected to take attendance and post assignments on Teams daily, for those students who are virtual for the day. Many students are choosing to not do the work online or they don’t have the appropriate device to accomplish this work. A cell phone is not a suitable device to obtain and participate in learning. This is inequitable. If students ask me a question on Teams, I can’t always get back to them in a timely manner because I am teaching students in person. Many of my students have parents who are working and unable to help their child during the school day. This is frustrating for everyone involved.

Another issue is allowing full distance students to enter hybrid mode at any time. This is unfair for students because what they were learning on Edgenuity and what is being taught in class does not necessarily correlate. You now have a student who is very behind. I’ve had students come to hybrid as late as the week before fall break. It would be nice if that move can be made at quarter for secondary students.

I feel the BoT should have listened to the health department and started school digitally. It’s very stressful for hybrid teachers to be doing both models. Here are other issues- we are having many hybrid teachers teach a period of Edgenuity for either full distance students or students in person because their teacher is a full distance teacher. I know many teachers who wanted to be a distance teacher and weren’t given the option because nothing was “wrong” with them enough to warrant being a distance teacher. Why does there seem to be such a shortage of distance teachers when I personally know at least 8 at my site who wanted that option? Instead, many of us are wearing the hat of hybrid (both in person and digitally) and distance (teaching Edgenuity). How is this equitable for teachers?

This is a messy situation that needs to be rectified. Hybrid teachers should only have to be responsible for students in person. Having us pulled in too many directions means we cannot fully give any situation our full attention. We were not given a choice, which is disheartening.

I am a product of Washoe County School District. I fully understand a pandemic was uncharted territory for everyone but we had plenty of time to prepare for full distance and to make it equitable. Instead, teachers are expected to pick up the pieces and make everything better. This is not acceptable!

Sincerely,
Akasha laulualo

From: Mia Albright
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 3:30 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Board Policy on Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ issues

Hello,

The district's refusal to reverse the ban on teacher support and conversation of Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ identity is actively harming students right now. As a school district with a rich and diverse student body consisting of more than sixty thousand unique students, why is it that teachers cannot say that over fifteen hundred of those student lives matter? And that's not including the three thousand plus biracial students in WCSD. Furthermore, teachers cannot create a safe space for their LGBT students with this stance. Students have been made to feel alienated within their school, a place intended to function as a welcoming area to learn and grow. The District has stated it prohibits bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and/or retaliation in any of its educational programs/activities, employment, and employment opportunities. But this policy is, at its core, discriminatory. It shows a complete lack of understanding of what the Black Lives Matter movement is about. All lives do matter. The movement's mission was born out of the need to highlight systemic inequity Black people experience. It's not meant to exclude anyone; instead, it aims to see people treated equally.

I understand this upcoming political season has proven to be particularly polarizing and controversial, and the district wishes to avoid criticism and lawsuits. **However, this election season in no way affects the validity of LGBTQ+ identities or Black Lives.** Please, remedy this damaging policy and prove that Washoe County School District is committed to inclusivity. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mia Albright

Washoe County Students For Change

From: Jackie Wilson
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 3:44 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Nutrition Services

Hello Everyone,

My first question would be about the schools serving 60 students or less. When was this number determined before or after free lunches were offered because our numbers continue to go up daily.

Regarding the meals left in the coolers. I realize we have several breakfast options but cold food options the students are left with only a few sandwiches, yogurt snackables and pizza snackables if these items are even offered. The kids are going to get tired of this menu very fast and our numbers will drop even more.

I have heard mentioned that employee hours will be set to meal ratios per site. What is the formula used?

If the health department requires a person on site with a ServSafe Certificate (yes we are asked who has it during inspections) how does that factor in with schools serving meals out of a cooler? Would that even be allowed?

What school staff will be incharge of handing out meals? I personally see and know the teachers are extremely tasked teaching in person and distant learning as well as some have 2 classes they are responsible for. Asking teachers should not even be an option.

As numbers increase daily when do you see having to call back staff to rehire? What if this same staff have found other positions not within the school district and you are left hanging or you put more work onto your already tasked staff? As far as managers etc. Their positions are not as easily filled because it takes time to train someone to manage a kitchen.

Doe's the Principal who is part of the hiring process have any say in who may be bumped in or out of their school kitchen.

I also would like to add that HR brought up trying to move Kitchen Staff into other positions throughout the school district for instance driving a bus, custodian and teacher aids. So looking into some of these options I'm not sure how you can place someone who works in a kitchen driving a bus that requires a CDL license or a custodian who works late into the night or an aid which requires 44 college credits or they have to pass the praxis with a score of 460. I believe if Kitchen staff had a degree under their belt they wouldn't be working for \$11 an hour. So this leaves furloughs and you have stated with option 3 our insurance would run out on December 31, 2020.

Alot of the Kitchen Staff were considered essential and worked hard while school was out and while back in session. To have their job on the line is not fair to these workers. It's also not fair to the schools and staff that are doing really well to have their job taken away do to seniority.

Thank you for your time.

From: Rayelle Porter
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 3:47 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please understand

I have dedicated the last 6 1/2 years of my life to Washoe County school District nutrition services. I really felt that this was my last job. I am dealing with breast cancer, deaths in the family, many other things. How is it that I am to navigate this new situation at 59 years old? We worked so hard today and were not able to accomplish everything. How is it that cutting staff by 44% and only giving people 25 hours per week to do their job? How do you think we are going to accomplish everything we need to do?

Does anyone really care?

Hungry kids make poor students. Nevada does not rate super high on the education level nationally.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Isla Morrison
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 4:04 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Students For Change

My name is Isla Morrison. I am currently a 6th grade student at Tahoe Expedition Academy. I have been learning about BLM/LGBT+ rights since I was in 4th grade. Back in 4th grade we learned about marginalized groups and communities. Then in 5th grade we learned about the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Right now I am learning about colonization and the effects of colonization today. This has impacted me because before 4th grade I didn't know anything about this topic. But learning about this changed my life for the better. Now I can teach people how to stand up for human rights and history about LGBT+ and BLM.

I stand in solidarity with Washoe County Students for Change/Diversify Our Narrative as they request:

- a. The reversal of WCSD policies that consider Black Lives Matter and LGBT+ expression to be political
- b. The inclusion of antiracist texts in all subjects and classrooms, a list of which WCSD Students for Change provided in their July 21st letter and also their petition
- c. The inclusion of topics pertinent to LGBT+ and BIPOC history such as the Stonewall Riots and the Tulsa Massacre in curriculum (these, too, are outlined in both sources mentioned)
- d. The reevaluation of WCSD hiring practices to value diversity

Your students' lives should not be viewed differently in an election season. Please consider the immediate implementation of these actions.

Thank you for your time.

Isla Morrison

From: Jenene Slatt
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 4:38 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Washoe County School District Students for Change

To The Washoe County School Board Members and Community,

Hello, my name is Jenene Slatt. Since I am unable to attend tonight's meeting, I am writing in support of Washoe County School Districts Students for Change's request to the Board to develop anti-racist, inclusive narratives and initiatives. My life and career experience has highlighted this importance and I, myself, am committed to providing this type of programming and education to youth nationwide. I am a mother of 2, Marriage and Family therapist, curriculum builder, parent educator and teacher. As a school-based mental health counselor, I have offered individualized psychotherapy to students and their families, as well as clinical consultation for school faculty for over 15 years. I have also held the position of a Board member to an independent school in the Bay Area. My passion and commitment for the health and wellness of students and their families has led me to my most recent venture of co-founding the non profit, Well Beyond Academics (WBA). WBA strives to combat stress, mental illness, risky behaviors plaguing today's youth while supporting their growth into healthy, resilient adults. Inclusive curriculum is at the core of what we do.

Schools have a moral obligation to support ALL students and families in their district. This is not a political issue. The absence of curriculum that includes the experiences, realities, and perspectives of other than white straight people creates space for misinformation, stereotypes and negative thoughts to grow unchallenged. Knowingly rejecting the development and implementation of inclusive curriculum not only creates the space but effectively encourages these stereotypes and negative beliefs which can lead to bullying and further marginalization of these groups of students and their families. Your job is not to protect the political sensitivities of the community. Your responsibility and obligation is to the students. Working with thousands of students during my career, I have heard over and over how a school system and climate has the power to harm a child or to provide a supportive, safe, inclusive environment where they can belong and thrive. I hope that Washoe County School Board truly listens to the voices and pleas of its youth.

My beliefs are not formed only through experience in working with thousands of students. It is also supported by nationwide research. The CDC 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 18.8% of students seriously considered committing suicide. The greatest percentage of those who have seriously considered suicide and those who attempted suicide identified as LGBT+. In 2017, The National Institute of Mental Health stated that 13.3% of students ages 12-17 have been diagnosed with major depression while prevalence is highest among those who report identifying as two or more races. This number is growing. When anyone is marginalized whether it is because of identity, color of their skin or orientation there are serious mental health ramifications. When a child does not see themselves in the curriculum provided they are not only not engaged in the material because it excludes their experience and/or history, it can also lead to feelings of shame and isolation. Shame and isolation greatly increase risk for depression, anxiety and suicidality. In fact, every student suffers when they are not informed about the dynamic human experience. American SPCC states that 70.6% of youth have witnessed bullying. 30% of youth admit to bullying others. Those who are perceived as different from their peers are most likely to be bullied. By rejecting the Washoe County School Districts Students for Change request you are enabling bullying. By developing and implementing inclusive curriculum you would be promoting acceptance by teaching and normalizing differences.

Schools should be safe havens for all students no matter their beliefs, color, or identity. It should be a safe space where they can learn about all perspectives and experiences, engage in informed and healthy discourse, and grow into diverse individuals. Well Beyond Academic's inclusive programming has had great success and positive feedback from all types of families, regardless of political beliefs, religious affiliations, ethnicity, sexuality etc. because it values and promotes the wellbeing and safety of all students. In the end, no

one can argue with that bottom line. I hope that Washoe County School Districts Students for Change find success and that you help them to achieve their goals.

Thank you for your time.

Jenene

From: Adrian Lowry
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 5:17 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] WCSD Board of Trustees Meeting Oct. 13 General Comment

I'm very concerned that teachers are being told they cannot show support for their minority students by displaying BLM or pride flags. It is not political to show support for diversity and I believe it is much more political to tell teachers to enforce the racial, gender, sexual, and cultural norms of our country.

I'm also very concerned about in-school teaching. Statistics are showing that the children dying from COVID are mostly Black or Latino. I think this is also the risk in our county. We need to protect all of our children, not just the white children, and it is shameful that our district is putting minority children at heightened risk of death or serious harm.

Thanks,
Adrian Lowry

From: Julie Hitchcock
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 6:45 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item 4.01- Nutrition Services

Importance: High

With the importance of the meals through Nutrition Services- could the school district create a mandatory school food only for the children? Meaning no outside food can come to school? All allergies and special requests would be considered into the three options available for the children. Just an idea!

Thank you,

Julie

I agree to wait on making the decision.

If you take 60 lunches to the school and only 50 come. And the next day you take 50 and 40 come and so one... you are going to set up to not be successful due to not having enough food be available to the students. I think you should keep nutrition services the way it is until the end of the year due to the promise of free meals available to the students and look at making the decision in January 2021 when the students come back from winter break.

Thank you,

Julie

From: Sindar-House, Joyce
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 8:02 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Meals

Please consider adding for locations for meal pick up. Many students at SSHS (where I've worked for 5 years) have long commutes and cannot make it in to the new sites to get meals.

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From: Selena La Rue
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 8:35 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 5.02

My name is Selena La Rue Hatch and I am a teacher and member of WEA. I am writing because our teachers are drowning and their cries for help are being ignored by this board and this administration. Instead of stopping to reevaluate new information, our "leadership" is plowing forward with their reckless, dangerous, and unsustainable models while relying on teacher "creativity" (aka hundreds of hours of unpaid labor) to make them work.

This board claims to care about data, at least when it's convenient, so let's look at the data:

Only ¼ of staff believes the district is following appropriate safety guidelines Why is it that our leadership seems to think we're handling COVID so well, while the staff clearly knows we're not? Maybe that's because we can see with our own eyes what is happening in schools. Teachers and staff have brought their concerns to you for months in public testimony and personal emails. And yet, our legitimate safety concerns have been systematically called into question and rejected by Dr. McNeill and this board for the last 9 weeks. Clearly, our schools aren't safe and your staff is telling you so.

How about some more data: 84% of teachers say they are burned out, and 90% say they do not have time to complete the tasks that are asked of them! To put this in perspective, when this district suffered a morale crisis under the previous superintendent, 50% of teachers said they felt burnt out. Not only has this administration continued the toxic policies of Traci Davis, they've expanded them! You can see the desperation and anger of your staff every board meeting! This board and this administration pays lip service to improving morale, but this data makes crystal clear you couldn't care less about the burdens shouldered by your staff. If you did, you would have listened to us from the start. You wouldn't have made teachers double and even triple their workload with zero additional time or resources. You wouldn't have thrown your staff back into an increasingly dangerous workplace with safety precautions which are only achievable on paper. You wouldn't have called our legitimate concerns "inappropriate and unfortunate."

As a teacher on the ground I must tell you this situation is untenable. You have taken some of the most caring, dedicated, passionate, and yes, creative people in this community and you have broken them. You have told them their lives mean nothing and removed all joy from their work. This cannot last and the reckoning from these actions will be immense. I beg you, change course. Listen to your teachers. Stop the madness that is hybrid teaching and make the choice to go full digital. Protect your staff, support your staff, listen to your staff.

From: Jenny Snaza
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 10:04 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Teacher Wellness

Dear WCSD Board of Trustees,

Thank you for reviewing the important data regarding teacher and employee wellness. Listening to the presentation, it is evident that little or no support is being provided to teachers on a meaningful scale. We can all say "we're doing our best" but the reality is that this is not a plan. It is a path that will continue to lead to great educators leaving the profession.

The district only works if your teachers are healthy - mentally and physically. Our students need high quality teachers who have enough energy to devote to individualized education.

Thank you for listening to teachers. Now it is time to make a plan.

Best,

Jenny Snaza

WCSD Parent