



WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS MEETING MINUTES

January 4, 2021

1. OPENING ITEMS

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Safe and Healthy Schools Committee was called to order at 2:01 P.M., via zoom.

1.02 Roll Call

Chair Scott Benton, Vice-Chair Misty Vaughan Allen, and Commissioners Amber Joiner, Leanne McCulley, Natalie Sanchez, Jim Nadeau, Charlene Bybee, and Lorraine Benuto, and Jeffrey Frame were present at roll call. Commissioners Coretta Patterson, Marci Burke, Darin Balaam, Alice LeDesma, and Diane Nicolet were absent. Dr. Paul LaMarca, Committee Staff Liaison, and Superintendent Dr. Kristen McNeill was also present.

1.03 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment submitted.

1.04 ACTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

There was no discussion on the adoption of the agenda.

On motion by Amber Joiner, second by Jim Nadeau, the Safe and Healthy Schools Committee approved the agenda as written (Yea: Scott Benton, Misty Vaughan Allen, Amber Joiner, Leanne McCulley, Natalie Sanchez, Charlene Bybee, Jim Nadeau, Jeffrey Frame, and Lorraine Benuto) Final Resolution: Motion Carries 9-0

2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION, PRESENTATION AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION

2.01 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 7, 2020 MEETING OF THE SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS COMMISSION (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

On motion by Charlene Bybee, second by Natalie Sanchez, the Safe and Healthy Schools Committee approved the minutes be moved to the next meeting of the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission. (Yea: Scott Benton, Misty Vaughan Allen, Amber Joiner, Leanne McCulley, Natalie Sanchez, Charlene Bybee, Jim Nadeau, Jeffrey Frame, and Lorraine Benuto) Final Resolution: Motion Carries 9-0

2.02 UPDATE ON COUNSELING EFFORTS WITHIN DISTRICT INCLUDING NUANCES ASSOCIATED WITH DISTANCE LEARNING, SAFE TALK, HANDLE WITH CARE, AND SIGNS OF SUICIDE (SOS) (FOR PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION)

Katherine Loudon and Keelie Killian presented. Ms. Loudon began with a brief overview of their departments and gave some quick facts about how they serve the Districts 61, 533 kids, they have 66 elementary counselors, 50 middle school counselors, 58 high school counselors, and four in the central office. Due to Dr. McNeill and Dr. LaMarca's initiatives on grants, they have been able to hire 14 licensed school social workers, 32 safe school professionals, 8 participants that they have helped with communities in schools and two mental health professionals. Through grants received they can provide more mental health and supports to schools. They have home hospital teachers for the approximately 1400 home hospital students, and high school career facilitators. Ms. Loudon wanted to make sure Commissioners were aware of these statistics so they know that with the challenges of district learning, they still have staff in place to help although the delivery of that help may be different. Stated it has been a challenge sensing needs but have been collaborating from the beginning with many departments to make sure they are servicing students to their fullest capacity.

Ms. Loudon continued with explaining how they are handling some of the distance learning concerns such as isolation, access issues, and 58.33% chronic absenteeism rate. They met over the summer with human services, child advocacy center and child assault prevention to address remote abuse and neglect reporting to help staff make connections with students who are struggling. Working with students on grief and loss that students are feeling about loss of important milestones and rituals like sports, dances, clubs, and activities and continuing with death grief and loss, crisis response, and emergency management.

They have collaborated with Family School Partnerships and communications to send information to students regarding services available to them such as Nevada 211 Youth App, Safe Voice. Working with the National Center for School Mental Health Shape System, and departments looking at school mental health quality assessments and progress reports. Ms. Loudon explained how the department handles Safe Voice tips and works with Nevada Department of Safety and filtered to those who need to respond. She also explained Handle With Care as part of drug endangered children initiative (Senate Bill 80) to help law enforcement alert schools when a student needs a handle with care situation and how the department deals with that within the schools. During this school year they have had 228 elementary, 83 middle school, and 154 high school handle with care alerts.

Keelie Killian, Middle School Counseling Specialist, presented said they are excited about a new grant they helped write and received for the State of Nevada for school mental

health. Ms. Killian talked about their work with suicide prevention in relation to Senate Bill 204. Within the District they utilize SOS which stands for Signs of Suicide and is given to approximately 5,400 7th grade students and they partner with Children's Cabinet to provide the services for the program. The program consists of an education piece that is delivered to all of the students, PowerPoint with video clip and discussion, Children's Cabinet helps deliver the screening to the approximately 3,800 active students who have permission to be part of SOS. For students in 8th grade they are doing a booster lesson on resiliency, coping skills, connectedness, and motivation lessons. For high school students' lessons are delivered through health class and ROTC. They also provided training to almost 3,000 staff on SOS.

Ms. Killian stated suicide is the 1st leading cause of death in Nevada for children 12-19. The national rate of suicide grew nearly 60% in the last decade. She shared results from the Nevada Youth Risk Behavioral Survey from last year with nearly 20% of middle school and high school students stating they seriously considered attempting suicide. During their trainings they have looked at considerations for students who are at a higher risk due to Covid.

Ms. Loudon opened for discussion, Commissioner Bybee thanked them for the presentation and asked about the screening for 7th graders to see if early on they have a need for counseling or is the screening for kids who are struggling and reach out after the presentation. Ms. Killian explained how SOS education piece is presented to all 7th grade students, the screening requires parent permission and is a 7-question depression screening tool. Commissioner asked if they have found good results with being able to screen more students. Ms. Killian responded that yes, they have found students that the school or parents did not know about and are able to get connected with services and supports earlier. One barrier has been distance learning students due to concerns with Covid and services are always available and Children's Cabinet will reach out later to let family know they are available to help. Commissioner asked if they have changed their best practices for work, they are doing due to the challenges of Covid. Ms. Loudon said it has been a challenge and they have done a lot of collaboration with community partners. She mentioned they are working hard to make sure they are still doing a warm hand-off and providing connection. They are reevaluating consistently their resources. They have been able to introduce SOS so broadly to help reduce the stigma of mental health.

Commissioner Joiner said as parent of a 7th grader offered some feedback as she supports SOS. She let them know she emailed the Children's Cabinet in October and to date no one has responded. She asked if the education piece is available to distance learners as her child still has not received the curriculum. Ms. Killian let her know they are working with magnet programs to deliver lessons in the spring along with screening. Ms. Loudon reiterated that across the District through counseling and social work, safe school professionals the work of SEL, MTSS are making an impact on students.

Dr. LaMarca stated they do an incredible breadth of work to support our schools and students even on weekends when there is a crisis or tragedy. He thanked them for what they do and stated he was not sure how the District would survive without what they do.

Commissioner Sanchez stated the work they have done is extraordinary and asked if the materials are available in different languages. Ms. Loudon replied yes, they are available in English and Spanish, and need to do some work to be able to offer in other languages. They are looking in late January or early February for a middle school to pilot a virtual parent's night where they can deliver the content in Spanish. Ms. Killian stated if they are not able to reach parents through parent training, there is a component that is sent out that allows parents to view the parent video and offers resources.

Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen thanked them and stated it is always a pleasure to work with them and their team. Stated the new project aware 2.0 will be a great opportunity to improve diversity relevancy around training and community members and parents.

Chair Benton stated he appreciated their presentation and asked if they have seen an increase in safe voice and other tips that are coming in this year compared to last school year. Ms. Loudon stated initially what they saw with safe voice and handle with care initiative was a slow down of reporting this school year. The District has done some re-education on these sites and have started to see reports come in. They have seen an increase in child abuse and neglect reports and attributes that to the elementary schools being in person.

2.03 UPDATE ON SCHOOL REOPENING EFFORTS RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, INCLUDING STEPS TAKEN TO OPEN SCHOOLS AND OTHER INFORMATION RELEASED BY THE WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT SINCE THE DECEMBER 7, 2020 SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING (FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION)

Dr. LaMarca presented on the Covid-19 Response update letting the Commissioners know that middle school and high schools are on distance learning with a return date of January 19, 2021. Using this time to work with the Washoe County Health District on training contact tracers so the District is comfortable with bringing the secondary students back in the classroom. He reviewed the TMPRA risk meter that showed we are still in the very high region and have been trending down in terms of total score. Stated they have had vaccinations for tier one and are preparing for tier two which all of education falls under.

2.04 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO DETERMINE TENTATIVE CONTENT, LOGISTICS, AND MARKETING OF THE 2021 SAFETY FORUM (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

Chair Benton reminded everyone that in the last meeting they had some topics they decided upon and Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen was going to contact some subject matter experts to see if they were available, and Megan Downs from Communications is going to help get the information in the correct format.

Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen stated she did get the queries out today and will be focusing on that in the upcoming week. Chair Benton asked Megan if there was anything that she had updated from communications. Megan stated they had no updates and are waiting to hear what the content is and what the Commission wants so they can make it happen.

Chair Benton asked Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen to state what the topics were so that if someone on the Commission would to help find someone that would be appropriate for the topics. Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen listed the topics of social media and technology related to suicide prevention, sex trafficking and drug misuse, stress coping and mental health and well-being, safety, and emergency preparedness. Commissioner Benuto stated she would help with the stress component with her staff or help identify another expert in the community. Commissioner Sanchez offered to help in any way she can. Commissioner Bybee asked if they decided if forum was going to be virtual and what dates they were looking at. Megan responded she did not have her notes and Superintendent Dr. McNeill said the date was May 12, 2021 and virtual. Chair Benton stated they decided it was best to go virtual and May is mental health awareness month. Commissioner Bybee stated with the forum being virtual we may have better attendance and asked once they have the forum would it be available online later. Megan responded that it will be recorded on the website and will be promoting on social media channels. Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen also let Commissioner Bybee know that there will be different recordings on the day of forum to get multiple crowds. Megan offered to talk with Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen to review content and logistics.

3. CLOSING ITEMS

3.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment provided. Commissioner Nadeau had a question regarding interest in having a presentation on school traffic safety and how school zones are decided, are modernized, and who oversees them. Chair Benton stated he would work with Dr. LaMarca to get the presentation on a future agenda.

3.02 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Chair Benton stated the next meeting of the Safe and Healthy Schools is scheduled for Monday February 1, 2021, at 2:00 P.M. via zoom.

3.03 Meeting Adjourned

There being no more business, Chair Benton adjourned the meeting at 3:12 P.M.