

**WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS
MEETING MINUTES**

March 1, 2021

1. OPENING ITEMS

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Safe and Healthy Schools Committee was called to order at 2:00 P.M., via Zoom.

1.02 Roll Call

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

1.03 PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Ward provided public comment via email.

1.04 ACTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

On motion by Lorraine Benuto, second by Jim Nadeau, the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission approved the agenda as presented. (Yea: Scott Benton, Misty Vaughan Allen, Amber Joiner, Natalie Sanchez, Jim Nadeau, Darin Balaam, Coretta Patterson, Jeffrey Frame and Lorraine Benuto) Final Resolution: Motion Carries 9-0

2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION, PRESENTATION AND/OR ACTION

2.01 APPROVAL OF THE MINTUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 1, 2021, MEETING OF THE SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS COMMISSION (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

On motion by Amber Joiner, second by Misty Vaughan Allen, the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission approved the minutes as written. (Yea: Scott Benton, Misty Vaughan Allen, Amber Joiner, Natalie Sanchez, Jim Nadeau, Darin Balaam, Coretta Patterson, Jeffrey Frame and Lorraine Benuto) Final Resolution: Motion Carries 9-0

2.02 UPDATE ON DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF INTERVENTION EFFORTS INCLUDING AN UPDATE ON FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS AND CHILDREN IN TRANSITION PROGRAMMING (FOR PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ONLY)

Rechelle Murrillo, Intervention Department Director, presented an overview of the intervention department, what they did the last several months in response to the needs that families and students have had during the pandemic. She explained the overall goal of the intervention department is prevention and intervention services for students and families. They work with all schools in Washoe County through child in transition (CIT) which serves students who face homelessness and support students in foster care, three family resource centers (FRC) who help students and families with basic needs, truancy intervention and chronic absenteeism, and reengagement to work with students who are no longer enrolled in a WCSD school to find out reasons they left and provide support to come back.

Ms. Murrillo discussed direct services they provide such as mentoring, school staff collaboration for chronic absenteeism, intervention, and processes. Help with case management and support through transportation for students who are identified as homeless or in foster care because they have a right to stay in their school of origin. They do home visits, academic placement assistance to help place students when they come back to the District. Collaboration with social services and juvenile services to support students. Work to help support CIT students so they can have broad enriching experience in school.

There are FRC's to serve students and facilitate access to basic needs. FRC is mandated to help all residents of Washoe County, including senior citizens but primarily work with students in WCSD. They help to facilitate access to basic needs after an initial assessment. Needs could include emergency rental assistance, case management, power assistance and assistance with co-locating supports of other community agencies.

Intervention Department has 6 reengagement specialists who work with students who are no longer enrolled with the District and 6 attendance officers who focus on students who are chronically absent and work with school directly to be part of attendance team.

School closure saw an influx at family resource centers of families who needed help accessing basic needs. As of July 1, 2020, 70 families have been assisted with emergency rental needs, 910 families have received power assistance, and served a total of 1,180 families including 1,497 students with access to basic needs.

There are approximately 2,700 families facing homelessness. Have called every single family and have only been able to contact and locate about 250 students. Collaborated

with human services agency, family shelter and Eddy House to identify and ensure needs are met. Partnered with Big Reno Coat Drive to give 2,100 coats to students. Helped 2,322 students during spring lockdown by doing residence checks, bringing food, and left academic packets, hot spots, and anything student may need to adequately access education from home. They have continued home visits, by staying on porch and do not go inside a home to have a face-to-face visit with family and stay connected to assess needs.

Chair Benton opened questions. Dr. LaMarca thanked Ms. Murillo and let Commissioners know they wanted to bring different support departments to show what the District has done to support students with emphasis around mental health. Poor attendance is almost always a signal for something much greater going on at home. Work on getting them back in the door and engaging students to give them a good education.

Superintendent, Dr. McNeill thanked Ms. Murrillo and team, let commission know that FRC's are funded solely out of State and Federal funds. There is a nexus between absenteeism and students who are trying to support their families through job loss and covid illness. When we were told schools needed to close on March 16, 2020 – Ms. Murrillo and team were the first ones to step up to help get food security and needs out to families.

Chair Benton thanked Ms. Murrillo for the work and appreciates what he sees day in and day out with the FRC with the work that he gets to participate in. During the pandemic did not realize the amount of food insecurity there would be and thanked Ms. Murrillo and department along with the FRC's for facing it head on and have done a tremendous job handling. Commissioner Sanchez asked what the best way to refer people for services. Ms. Murrillo let her know she would email contact information, they are meeting with people, but that most work is done virtually and through phone calls to assess needs and help with long term goals to help families with stabilization.

2.03 UPDATE ON THE STATEWIDE "HOPE MEANS NEVADA INITIATIVE (FOR PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ONLY)

Vice-Chair Misty Vaughan Allen let the Commissioners know about "Hope Means Nevada" which began in Clark County and now in Northern Nevada. Let commissioners know the participation state-wide, vision, and initiatives they are putting together for awareness of suicide prevention and hope are powerful. Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen handed over to Katherine Loudon, Counseling Coordinator, stated the counseling and social work department along with MTSS and SEL have been collaborating as a team on this initiative. Ms. Loudon let commissioners know that Caryn Swobe is heading up Northern Nevada's initiatives with other partners.

Caryn Swobe thanked commissioners and stated she was excited to present. She stated Hope Means Nevada started in April in Las Vegas by Julie Murray and Maryann Mele. Mission is to raise awareness of mental health and teen suicide and looking to expand it to youth. R & R partners has a full campaign with tv pro-bono outlets that have begun running in Las Vegas. Campaign is based on tag of "Ask 5" meaning to have students reach out to 5 of their friends and ask how they are doing. On Northern Nevada Committee they have Katherine Loudon and Trish Shaffer from WCSD, Susan Fisher from Macdonald Carano who is a co-chair, Annie Zucker from Renown, Arden Dingle from University Medical School, Joe Dufur from Safe Talk for Teens, Sheila Leslie former state Senator, Von Minente, Chief Strategist for Nevada, and Kim Young who is the Executive Director of Children's Cabinet. Their job is not to create programs, they want to raise awareness and shine a light on issue and have organized informational sessions. They have had several webinars out of Las Vegas, one of which school administrators and school counselors were invited to that had a good turnout. Would like to educate parents more and do a parent town hall. Ms. Swobe has worked with the Dorothy Lemelson Foundation to possibly reinstate the grant for ideation work that Children's Cabinet has been doing. Want to start talking with students and start a teen group in Washoe once schools start in the fall.

Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen stated that Southern Nevada has about 100 students involved. Ms. Swobe stated that the group in Southern Nevada started independently of school district and would like something in the north that involves the District. Chair Benton and Superintendent Dr. McNeill both thanked Ms. Swobe for presenting. Superintendent Dr. McNeill asked if they are talking about Signs of Suicide (SOS) program through Children's Cabinet and District is looking to partner with them again and offered support on their efforts.

Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen wanted to confirm name of Living Ideation, with Dr. Steve Nicholas and Jaquelyn Kindredler who have been piloting with schools in the north and would be a great opportunity. Ms. Swobe stated they just had one at Damonte and had about 30 parents there and they made exception to meet in person.

Ms. Swobe mentioned the townhall with Children's Cabinet, to see if parents are interested in Hope Means Nevada initiative. Ms. Loudon said it is exciting with collaborative training with Living Ideation, had school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists participate, and SOS were available to have it in English and Spanish. Hope Means Nevada has joined the north and south, and as a District have worked with suicide prevention coordinator, Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen for a long time on suicide prevention and postvention efforts. Continued that it was great to see business leaders and students driving to reduce the stigma and help connect the things they are doing in the north and the south and have a loud statewide message about addressing the issues. Ms. Swobe stated they will be active in legislation to help remove the stigma associated with suicide.

2.04 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 FEBRUARY 1, 2021, SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING (FOR PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION)

Dr. LaMarca shared this presentation with the Board of Trustees at their February 22, 2021 meeting. TMPRA still shows in the high range, however things are moving in the right direction. Test positivity in the county is down to 6.0. Governor Directive 038 paves the way for more in person learning. The District has been among few large school districts that has had a significant in person learning throughout the pandemic. The Directive changes rules around max occupancy from 50% to 75%, transportation, face covering and high school contact athletics. Working to get kids back in school – there are significant implications on making schools safe for learning, contact tracing, enhanced cleaning, and budget implications. Approximately 70-75% of staff has received vaccinations. Board of Trustees gave direction to get presentation together on how to get more students into school for their meeting on March 9, 2021.

Chair Benton opened for discussion. Commissioner Joiner asked if potentially returning after school break is for all levels 100% and will distance learning remain an option for parents. Dr. LaMarca responded distance learning will still be an option, second level middle and high school will look different due to max occupancy constraints. Trying to minimize disruption for families and make return as safe as possible. Commissioner Joiner thanked the District for all the efforts, being flexible and keeping the commission informed.

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

Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen stated she and Meagan Downs, Interim Chief of Communications and Community Engagement, emailed regarding next steps for content and working to develop paragraph on each topic. Ms. Downs will be reaching out to Adam Searcy, Chief Facilities Management Officer, and Katherine Loudon, Counseling Coordinator for mental health and physical building safety. Vice-Chair Vaughan Allen is working on finalizing content before next meeting then can forward to Ms. Downs for marketing.

Chair Benton stated there was no action that was needed until the next meeting.

3. CLOSING ITEMS

3.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment provided.

3.02 NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Chair Benton stated the next meeting of the Safe and Healthy Schools is scheduled for April 5, 2021, at 2:00 P.M. via Zoom.

3.03 Meeting Adjourned

There being no more business, Chair Benton adjourned the meeting at 2:49 PM.