



SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020

6:00 pm

VIA ZOOM

ATTENDEES

Trustees

Eve Flynn	Chairperson
Julie Austin	Vice Chairperson
Laura Godfrey	Trustee
Barry Kurland	Trustee
Elaine Young	Trustee

Administration

Keven Elder	Superintendent of Schools
Ron Amos	Secretary Treasurer
Gillian Wilson	Associate Superintendent of Schools
Vivian Collyer	Director of Instruction
Ryan Hung	Assistant Secretary Treasurer
Chris Dempster	General Manager of Operations
Karin Hergt	Executive Assistant (Recording Secretary)

Education Partners

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3570
Mount Arrowsmith Teachers' Association (MATA)
District Parents Advisory council (DPAC)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Flynn called the Special Board Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and acknowledged that the board was meeting on the traditional shared territories of the Qualicum and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations.

She then explained the protocols for the board meeting being held in public and that the meeting would be recorded.

2. SEPTEMBER RESTART UPDATE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Superintendent Elder reviewed the briefing note provided in the agenda package to update where the district is in the restart program as it relates to the Province's Covid-19 Return to School Plan and noted additional links provided on the Province's website.

He stated that the government's four foundational principles remain the same and that it is anticipated that school would begin in Stage 2 beginning in September. He also noted that the main operational challenge at the moment is reorganizing for September and the main concern is the health and safety of students and staff.

The district leadership team then provided updates on how classes and staffing would be organized at the elementary and secondary levels as well as start, end and break times.

Elementary Level Update

At the elementary level, students will be in classrooms as they have each year with a teacher who will work with them every day. Students from one classroom would only associate with one other classroom for a maximum of 60 on school grounds while maintaining physical distancing and/or wearing protective gear. A third teacher will provide support for both classrooms with supervision during lunch. Consideration is also being given to starting the school day 30 minutes later and providing that additional time to teachers for preparation time. It was noted that these are all preliminary discussions and that there is still lots of organizing and work to be done before plans are finalized.

Secondary Level Update

At the secondary level, the emerging plan is to move to a quarter system of two classes per day for grades 10-12 while grades 8 and 9 will remain much as a grade 7 class. Grade 10-12 students will have one class in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Masks would be mandatory in areas where physical distancing is not possible and where students and staff are in close proximity with each other i.e. when moving in common spaces for lunch and between the morning and afternoon classes.

The ministry has allowed for cohorts at the secondary level to remain under 120 students.

Transportation

Chris Dempster, General Manager of Operations, outlined the changes to the transportation of students. There will be segregated seating and bus passes will contain a seat number. Ridership will be two students to a seat which normally holds three. The buses will be loaded from the back to the front where possible and masks will be mandatory. Bus passes for eligible riders will be provided to each school on August 24th with a mask attached. Preference will be given to eligible riders and a wait list of courtesy riders is being compiled and those students will be accommodated on a first-come first served basis if there is room on the bus.

Superintendent Elder noted that the District's requirement is to provide for students outside of walk limits but that will not apply to students attending programs of choice outside of their catchment area. Once eligible ridership is determined, consideration will be given as to whether or not courtesy riders can be accommodated.

Students will be required to wash their hands before leaving for school and a non-touch hand sanitizer station will be on each bus.

At the end of each bus run the driver will disinfect the seats and at the end of day they will be using a Clorox product that will kill germs on the bus to be ready for next morning.

Staff are planning transportation as though all children will be in school; however, that may not be the case in the end. In the interim, the district will have to provide seats for eligible riders at this point and make adjustments if space comes available and there may also be some others who will need to be given precedence over first come and first served.

Custodial

Chris Dempster, General Manager of Operations, then outlined a plan to add day custodians at schools sites who would be responsible for cleaning high touch areas and ensuring schools are kept disinfected throughout the day. The use of Clorox 360 will be used to disinfect schools on a rotating basis with 6 units being used throughout the week, including gym equipment.

Cleaning of the hallways and meeting rooms for any in-person meetings of the board which take place in the Board Office building would need to be arranged ahead of time. Other owners/tenants in the building would be informed and the user group would be responsible to arrange for cleaning after the meeting.

Exposure Control Plan

Superintendent Elder shared that one requirement of the restart plan is a requirement for an updated exposure control plan. This will be in keeping up with new requirements and prepared by the district's Health & Wellness Coordinator, the General Manager of Operations and the Director of Human Resources with a draft anticipated by Monday, August 17th.

Working with First Nations

Superintendent Elder noted that, while it is a requirement, the district also has had longstanding relationships with the Qualicum and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations and the board and administration continue to work with them in developing back to school plans. A series of meetings have been scheduled with representatives of both First Nations on how best to support children from the two First Nations who attend SD69 schools and conversations are ongoing through consultation with the Indigenous Education Services Committee as well as the two First Nations.

Working with Unions

Superintendent Elder stated that the district has a strong and healthy working relationships with the Mount Arrowsmith Teachers' Association and the CUPE Local 3570 and leadership staff are in constant communication during school year with union representatives. Meeting have already occurred with both unions and will continue on at least a weekly basis to guide the district's decision-making in collaboration with the unions.

International Program

Associate Superintendent Wilson advised that no new visas have been issued since March 18th; however, some students already have a visa and some stayed in the district while others chose to return home. A summer program was run for local as well as those international students who stayed and an activity program was also run for those international students who did stayed.

Districts are waiting to hear where the federal and provincial governments will stand regarding the issuing of any visas, if they do at all. The principals of the program have created a quarantine protocol in collaboration with two physicians. Staff are also determining who has a valid visa which would allow them to return; however, there will be significantly less students than originally hoped for, which will affect funding which adds value to what can be done for staffing in schools as well as the cultural diversity having international students brings to the district..

The host families were very involved in the self isolation documentation that was created and a newsletter goes home from the program on a regular basis to keep the host families informed as information is received by the district.

Restart Plan Required by the Ministry

Superintendent Elder advised that the template for the district restart plan was provided on August 11th. He has divided the responsibility of completing various sections to those staff members with primary responsibility for specific areas. Those will be compiled into the one document for the Superintendent's signature. The final draft will be provided to the Board prior to submission to the Ministry by August 26th.

French Immersion Program

Superintendent Elder stated that the plan for French Immersion classes will be for them to be operating as in a normal year. The entire class will be together as organized in June and that is the learning group. There may be some overlapping with another class while keeping contact below 60 people.

Trustees then posed questions/comments as follows:

- Will students who exit French Immersion to go to DL or Home schooling, or those who have to be out of school for health reasons, be able to attend the school they are currently enrolled in at a later date?

That is uncertain at this point; however, it would be the district's inclination to approve those requests although there would be some consultation needed with the Director of Instruction to see what may be required after a student has been away from the French Immersion program for a period of time and be supported in order to re-engage in the program. The district will do its best to allow students to experience the best possible opportunities; however, there is not guarantee at this point. Simply an inclination on the part of the district to accommodate those requests.

- Consideration to include some type of hybrid model as much as possible.
- Mandating masks where distancing can't be maintained
- Consideration of a 'Soft' Opening

There is something being contemplated for the second half of the day so leadership staff will have to work with teachers and administrators to see what a C block class would look like with not all the students on site in the classroom, so there is a hybrid nature to that.

- Has the District ruled out staggered start times?
Staggered starts to the day are being considered which are also related to transportation.

The start of the year is now for the staff only on September 8 and 9 and some orientation for students later in the week. There is discussion to consider attendance by half of the students on Thursday and half of the students on Friday and all students in on Monday; however, it may be determined that it would be better to go slower than that during the first week of September

- Any talk of September 30 count being pushed back?
Nothing has been mentioned at this point in time.

Trustees then discussed whether it could be in a position to approve a restart plan with so many unanswered questions and the need to have more discussion on factors that are locally based. They then discussed a motion to request that the Ministry revisit the restart plan to include parents receiving home supports from their neighbourhood schools so that senior staff and school administration can begin to work and plan around that.

20-80R

Moved: Trustee Flynn *Seconded:* Trustee Austin

THAT the Board of Education of School District 69 (Qualicum), within the school restart plan to the Ministry of Education, include parents receiving home supports from their neighbourhood school based on concerns they have for family, health and well-being, even in the absence of symptoms.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Trustees and senior staff then noted the number of questions being asked on the zoom chat. It was determined that a Question & Answer document would be created from those questions and posted on the district website.

Trustees also recommended that another public meeting be held prior to submitting the district's final restart plan to the Ministry. It was determined that a 'town hall' style zoom meeting be arranged for Thursday, August 20th at 6:00 p.m. Members of the public can submit any questions not already answered in the Question & Answer document via the 'contact us' link on the district's website.

Associate Superintendent Wilson noted that the board and senior staff would also need to consider adjusting the start times to 30 minutes later, shortening the lunch hour at the secondary level and allow additional prep time for teaching staff. Trustees requested additional information prior to making a determination on adjusted start times.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

As previously noted, trustees and senior administrators will review the questions posed in the chat window of the Zoom call and create a Q&A document for posting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Godfrey moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Original Signed Copy on File

CHAIRPERSON

SECRETARY TREASURER