

Highland School District #203
Board Work Study Session
Highland District Office-via Zoom
August 11, 2020, 7:00 a.m.

The August 11, 2020 Board Work Study Session convened at 7:00 am via Zoom. Present were Board Chair Nikki Keller, Members David Barnes, Lupita Flores, Carlos López, and Cindy Reed; Superintendent Mark Anderson, Director of Business and Operations Francis Badu, and Recording Secretary Julie Notman.

1. Reopening Plan 2020-2021: Mark gave an overview of the reopening plan: The building secretaries are calling families to share basic reopening info and ask a few questions [to help with planning]. We have the go-ahead from DOH to bring in five students at a time to meet teachers and learn about expectations. We are figuring out how to do that for a half-hour block, looking at all available space: gyms, art room etc., how to do busing. We also have the [YHD] Okay to bring in small groups of parents to train them on the different programs their children will use. It was suggested to have a list of expectations to hand out for both the students and the parents as they need to be involved as well. This will start next week and go through September or October, as long as is needed, especially since harvest is starting and parents may be working 12-hour shifts.

Districts don't have the grace/relaxation of rules like last spring. This year attendance must be taken, grades given, tests taken etc. All these will be 'normal', counted and reported. We have heard from parents that they want a set schedule, including possible evening and/or Saturday sessions, with teachers teaching from classrooms and professionally dressed to emphasize the importance of education. They are concerned about how accessible teachers will be. We recognize that remote/distance learning is not the ideal and puts all students at risk.

We are looking at how to handle the social emotional needs of students and the short- and long-term effects of remote learning. Equity and accessibility are concerning issues: how do we serve families that do not have connectivity due to location, trees, etc., students that are not connecting/participating for other reasons. We need to determine who they are and if we can [safely] bring them on-site. Students can't effectively be online 6 hours/day so we are working on narrowing down the focus to priority standards, eliminate superfluous/busy work, utilizing live and recorded lessons, assignments posted for unlimited access. HEA feels they are better prepared for online teaching, and it will be more robust than last spring. Paras may be utilized to provide tutoring and support during non-traditional school hours.

We've learned we may not serve meals on site and will look at grocery style meal hand-out again. Have to figure out how to record student ID at pick-up time as this too must be reported for funding purposes.

2. HEA and PSE MOU Discussion: Mark reported that HEA sent him an MOU late Sunday night that has [WEA] boiler-plate language that was generated a couple months ago. It has a lot of starting points (already discussed in the weekly meetings he has had since June with the HEA Advisory group) and will be edited to represent what HSD will do this year. The district has contracted with ERNN (Employee Relations & Negotiations Network) to assist with MOUs/negotiations. Areas of concern: staff that are high-risk, staff that are not high-risk but concerned about being on-site and wanting to take leave to avoid working on-site, mandatory on-site teaching or allowing discretionary remote teaching, filling absences if a teacher is unable to teacher on-site or remotely, childcare issues, etc.

Mark asked the board to share their expectations. The main points were 1) the teachers will need to be flexible to meet the needs of their students and their families. They'd prefer teachers teach from their classroom and dress professionally but understand that teaching remotely from the classroom will not be 100% feasible if there are evening or Saturday sessions although they still expect the teachers to show a professional background and to dress professionally to emphasize the importance of education. Students will rise to the modeling/standard of the teacher. 2) Every family is in the same situation in regards to working out childcare issues, the teachers will need to solve for their situation like everyone else, the district can't provide childcare for them unless they could for everyone, which is impossible. With the limit of 5 or 10 students on-site, a teacher bringing their own children on-site would reduce the number of students that could be served. 3) How will we handle families that return after traveling out-of-state or out-of-country?

Mark continued: Transportation is a big issue as funding is partially generated by ridership reports. If there are no riders due to remote teaching, then there won't be the same amount of funding. That could lead to having to furlough drivers, them finding other jobs and not returning, exacerbating the existing driver shortage. The legislature unfortunately is looking at state education transportation as a place to recoup state revenue money lost by COVID.

We may be able to keep all of the paras by utilizing them to support teachers and to provide tutoring for students. PSE has asked about starting bargaining now (meeting scheduled for 8/27) instead of rolling over the current contract as previously agreed upon. The new contract would begin next year. They have been a great group to work with.

The Board Retreat is usually conducted in August but the Board agreed to put it on hold for now.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:11 a.m.

Chair

Secretary