

Board of Education

Special Meeting Agenda - Study Session - Minutes

DATE: Thursday, October 1, 2020
TIME: 5:00 PM
LOCATION: Gravenstein Elementary, Multipurpose Room

Steve Schwartz, President
Gregory Appling, Clerk
Alexander Kahn, Trustee
Jennifer Koelemeijer, Trustee
Patrick Lei, Trustee

[Zoom Link](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER AT 5:00 PM

Meeting called to order at 5:01pm all board members in attendance

II. ADOPTION AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA **Approval of the agenda for October 1, 2020 (2 min.)**

Action taken/comments:

No changes to the Agenda

III. PUBLIC COMMENT (15 min.)

At this time the public may address the Board on any item not listed on the agenda. Presentations are limited to three minutes per person per topic. The Board may not respond to presentations. The public may address the Board on any item listed on the agenda at the time the matter is taken up by the Board.

No Comment

IV. BOARD STUDY SESSION: IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION WAIVER (60 min.)

Situation: The California Department of Public Health, in conjunction with the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, is inviting applications from school districts interested in applying for a waiver of current restrictions on in-person instruction, limited to grades TK-6. The waiver process and application requires a series of steps, including the sharing of a reopening plan with stakeholders.

Plan: For staff to present a draft of a waiver application that includes reopening plan information to the Board and members of the public.

Note: No votes were taken during the study session. Comments below are a summary of the discussion. If additional information is requested it can be provided.

Discussion:

Currently schools throughout the state of California are allowed to have small groups of high needs students on campus. We have a very small group at Gravenstein. This is separate from the process we will be discussing tonight.

Dave Rose (DR) explained/summarized what has been posted on the website regarding the In-Person Instruction Waiver.

SDS - going to summarize in 30 seconds or less. What we are talking about tonight is getting an application for approval of a plan to file for a waiver. While that process gets started we are going to survey parents and negotiate with staff before going forward and that would be the plan. If we can't negotiate a plan, we don't have to go forward with the plan.

DR - the only details left to be worked out with staff are the exact schedule for the school day.

GA – Can we get the waiver and then make adjustments?

DR - all of the guidelines are non negotiable. If we don't confirm that we have those in place, then the waiver will not be considered. We want to put this waiver in with consent from our families and staff. We need to know how many students would be interested.

SDS - aside from the safety protocols that come from the feds we would still have to clarify the plan of what teachers would have to stay home.

GA - before the waiver can be filed we have to have sign offs from the staff.

DR - It is the state not the feds.

SDS - but we have to follow CDC guidelines which is fed

DR - yes but the feds will not see the waiver. To answer GA we have to have consultation with staff and parents, not sign off. We don't need a sign off or agreement, we just need to consult.

DR – Testing will be done by batch (per classroom). If there is a positive test, there would be a follow up test that is more expensive. The practical number is 2 positive initial saliva tests. The swab test is over 98% accurate.

PL - asks about TK - 2nd grade wearing masks. Thought he heard that they would not be wearing masks.

DR - no they would be wearing the mask. There may be some parents who don't want those kids to wear masks and so we would say we respect that and they should continue with distance learning.

PL - also interested in hearing from parents and staff.

SDS - clarifying question. Talk about date span and average new daily cases. regardless of the movement if we have a waiver in place that would determine day to day decisions, is that correct?

DR - yes to a point. If there was something we heard that could affect our campus then of course we would consider going back to full distance learning.

SDS - one more clarification - we know in the event of return to in person instruction there will be rumors of a positive test, what if we do have a positive test, are their procedures.

DR - yes

Open up the floor to parents and staff

Kathleen Byrne - EL support person at Gravenstein. I received a question in spanish and is translating the question from Olivia Morales

“As I understand it, a person who has had Covid 19, will still have the virus in their system for 3 months, will the school nurse have access to records indicating who has tested positive.”

DR - if there is a case beforehand. No we would not have records to those medical records, but if it is one that has happened on campus then we would be able to trace it.

Follow up question. “what will we do for students who are at higher risk due to diabetes or such”

DR - We would recommend they continue on distance learning. However, if they still wanted in person instruction we would put something in place to help.

Megan Gorman - 5th Grade Teacher - My main concern as a parent and teacher, not so concerned about the kids coming to school with a fever because they won't, but students will come to school with seasonal allergy sniffles. We don't just have students coming from Sebastopol, we have them coming from all over. So we can't just look at Sebastopol. If we need a waiver to come back to school, then it is just not safe.

Kory Van Dyke - Talks about how hard it has been to do distance learning and how much they have been working. But her focus is the students. She feels that the teachers cannot do two forms of teaching. Feels that allowing some students to come back to school would be too much. She just wouldn't be able to do distance learning and do in person learning.

DR - explains that depending on the numbers we would have a teacher doing in person learning and a different teacher doing distance learning

Jerie McNeil (JM) - concerned about the kids now getting used to how things are working and having their teacher. If the waiver happens and now suddenly they might have a different teacher and how it might feel for the student who can't go to school while their peers are on campus.

JK - thought she saw that teachers would evaluate the need for small group instruction.

DR - that is the current status we have right now. If it is direct instruction for an hour or two a day.

Tanya - parent with a kiddo in Kinder with Mrs. Crandall. Thought she heard about an opportunity to hire more teachers to help with the small groups. She is pro getting back on campus, but she hears what the teachers are saying and understands. Has there been any thought of doing classes outside. If we have the opportunity to hire more staff to help the teachers she is all for it.

Erin Hanauer - Wants to thank everyone for their hard work. This is just bad for everybody and she knows it can be very controversial. She knows everyone is worried about the spread. We have child care for staff members so couldn't we expand that to have a few more students on campus. She really feels that even a couple of hours a week would be so much better for the kids.

Brandon Webby - in chat - What happens if we don't apply? What are the possible outcomes?

SDS - we could wait and see what happens. If we open the door to applying now, if we successfully negotiate a plan then we can go for it. But if we try to negotiate a plan before applying we might have to wait much longer.

DR - If we don't apply, then we are playing the waiting game. If we aren't under a waiver status, we would have to wait a minimum of 28 days during the change from purple to red.

DR - adding to staff is unfortunately not really something we can do because we don't have the classrooms. We would consider that if we could. We are looking at temp staff for maintenance and instruction assistance. As to outside learning we have the ability to do that.

Stephanie Tomsy - TK Teacher - if we don't have any more classrooms, if all of my TK students want to come back, how can I offer quality instruction and maintain social distancing. As the only TK teacher she wouldn't really be able to do in-person and distance learning.

Molly Jackel - Parent - Knows that teachers did not sign on to be front line workers. If it is safe and we have staff that are willing she wants her kid to be on campus.

Sally Redfern - KN Teacher - We all want to be back on campus and we all want to see our students, but she feels the numbers are there for a reason. She feels that if we have the waiver we would not be safe. She doesn't want to lose her class, she already loves them and wants to teach her kids. Very emotional.

Megan Gorman - 5th Grade Teacher - Knows she has already spoken. She wants to reiterate what Sally said. She is watching the numbers everyday. She knows it is frustrating to watch

those numbers and that we would have to wait 28 days, but there is a reason for the numbers. If we get the waiver, it won't be safe

Dan Dexter - Hillcrest Teacher - Wants to thank those that met with him to discuss this. He is working with students everyday and he can see their smiling faces through the zoom. They are engaged and now that they finally have it going and there is a rhythm in place, he doesn't feel it would be good to come back to campus. Even today the smoke was so bad we couldn't open the windows. How do we deal with that if we have kids on campus.

Tony - 5th grade parent - would love to have her child go back to school, but she doesn't feel it is safe. And really hearing what the teachers are saying. She feels if the teachers aren't comfortable with in person learning, we have to support the teachers.

Ray Dellosa - Day care director and Instructional Assistant (IA) at Grav. Wants to piggyback on how logistically difficult it would be to monitor the kids during recess and such if kids come back on campus. Feels it would be very chaotic. Did he hear that there is no coverage for liability. In the classroom we can keep them six feet apart, but it would be a lot harder when at recess.

Cat Peirano - IA 2nd Grade - it has been really interesting listening to everyone. She has had a super positive experience with these kids during this time. She even feels she has helped some of the parents. Feels she would not be able to safely work with these same kids if they were on campus.

PL - going to put on my parent hat. Doing distance learning is incredibly difficult and the prospect of getting him back to school when it is safe is what they are hoping for. However, we would have to make plans and changes to be able to go to in-person learning. Feels it really needs to be when it is safe and appropriate. Feels that if we have to switch back to distance learning, after doing in-person learning, could do more damage to the kiddos.

SDS - We have had some say the kids are doing well with distance learning, but it would be interesting to see how many are doing well and how many are actually struggling.

Jackie Jex-Lewis - Hillcrest Teacher - coming into distance learning after being gone last year. She is following the same pacing as if she were doing in-person learning. She had heard some had problems with it before and so was concerned. But her attendance has been good. Her students are learning and engaged and safe. She misses her students, but really feels they should stay safe at home.

SDS - wants to get clarity - the waiver would only affect TK - 6 th grade is that correct.

DR - yes that is correct

JK - wants to agree with something SDS said. I think it would be very helpful to get a survey out to the parents and see what their thoughts are. She works at a school in Tehama county and they have been working on the reopening process, and most of them have started with a hybrid model. They have had a positive case and so now have to go back to distance learning. She thinks this is the new norm. Understands that the teachers have been working hard and it is not easy, but feels we are going to have to get used to this new norm.

Linda Helton - Hillcrest Teacher - I've been tracking my hours the last 4 days. 45 hours in 4 days - I have 90 kids - trying to do hybrid with 90 kids. If the superintendent of all the schools says we shouldn't go to in-person learning, if we have to have board meetings via zoom, how can we have the kids back on campus? How could we clean the classrooms in three minutes between classes? It isn't perfect, but distance learning is working. How will I see how the kids are doing if I can't see their faces? I can see them now and I know if they are smiling or perplexed. I think we shouldn't come back until it is safe.

Vanessa Nordstrom - 3rd grade - loves that we belong to a community that is able to converse and hear each other's words. Does worry about a handful of her students and would love to be able to meet with them sometimes. Would love to be able to give parents a reprieve

GA to me we need to look at distance learning as not living but surviving. Nothing about distance learning is ideal for students or teachers.

AK - distance learning for my daughter and for me is awful. I am lucky enough to be working from home, where I am ignoring my child, but it is not great. But I am not ready to send my child back to school until I hear from the government and the scientists that it is safe. After hearing everyone tonight I do not support the waiver.

Beth Trivunovic - Her point is safety is when school isn't calling her student or her a client. When she started here she felt it was family and now she is a client. Safety is not going to happen until she feels she is a person and not a client.

AK - The most recent article he read states that we should stay in distance learning. Until a person with more knowledge than I have says we can open and it is safe, I support distance learning. Both my wife and I are teachers at schools that have decided not to open for the rest of the academic year so I would feel disingenuous to tell our teachers "Oh you're, fine we can go back".

Kelly Sporrer - Hillcrest teacher - Being a middle school teacher who has lost a student to depression wants to be sure our students are being supported emotionally. One student unengaged unsupported is one to many. She appreciates everyone's voice. Thank you to all the cohorts, the parents, and the teachers, I really appreciate it.

SDS - thank you for bringing up the emotional side of it. Wants to repeat the parent that said this could kill us faster. This is definitely a high stakes situation.

Jeri McNeill - builds on what KS was saying. This seems like a huge undertaking to implement this plan just for three months. Have we considered building emotional/social support for everyone. there are other ways we could use this money instead of towards a hybrid of learning.

SDS - I don't think anyone on the board saw the number before this afternoon about the cost for the draft plan. We can handle the \$130,000 if we can do everything satisfactorily. That should not be the piece that stops us. Heard from a number of teachers and Superintendent Rose that the teachers have been checking in with their students, but would love to hear other ideas for that subject.

SDS - To DR what more do you want to hear from staff and parents.

DR - I have a list of questions and I am going to categorize them. The emotional/social side of this is a tough subject. Will be taking everything they have heard tonight so that the board can make an informed decision next Thursday.

SDS - what else would you want to hear for next week before voting.

JK - would really like to hear the voice of the parents. I know we have heard from some of them tonight, but would really like to see a survey go out to the parents.

AK - would love to hear from more parents. Agrees there are probably many things we haven't heard about. But again he will be looking for what the county and CDC have to say.

JK - I think we are in a transition phase right now. From her perspective this is preparatory for when the numbers are more in our favor. She agrees that she does want to see us closer to the red.

SDS - ask PL and GA if they want to weigh in on a survey before next Thursday.

GA - not sure how we could do that unless it was only a one or two questions survey. Do we know about other surveys from other schools?

DR we know there are 12 other waiver applications, but we don't know from where.

JK - wants to hear from DR about whether this is preparatory to better numbers.

DR - absolutely.

PL - do we need a survey - since the waiver doesn't actually lock us in to going back - I don't see a rush to getting a survey out.

SDS - in the summer we talked about how things were going to go this year. Some issues were resolved and some were not. The Governor kind of stopped that process.

GA - two people have their hand up and reads questions from the chat: "Also someone asked a question about who decides about resuming school." "Also asks who will assume the responsibility when (not if) someone dies?" (it could be a teacher, a student, or the parent of one of the students). GA responds that the board decides to open.

Allie Brown - thank you so much for all the opinions that have been expressed grateful to work with so many superheroes. Parents, teachers and board members. She is concerned about equity if someone is able to come back and some who won't be able to come back.

SDS - wants to comment on the equity piece. He hears what she is saying. He talked to a single Mom today who is not paying for her child to be in a pod. The equity piece goes in both directions.

Kelly Sporrer - the comment about emotional support is about whether we reopen or don't we need to be sure we are cognizant of those students who need emotional support.

Erin Hanauer - feels the survey would be really wonderful. Wonders who is designing the survey. appreciates all the work that was put into it, but felt there were some presumptions made in the questions. A survey is only as good as the questions. Wonders if there is someone who could help with that. As to the mental piece we have a counselor, right now there is no live class, maybe the counselor could have a small live class with the students once a week or something.

Amy Hudgens - wants to say she is in full support of the teachers. It was hard starting a new school this year during all this. Her daughter and she are so impressed with how things have gone so far. Not 100% sure how she feels about the waiver. Feels it might be better to wait until after the holidays.

Kelly Lannon(KL) - 1st grade Teacher - just wants to put out two things. I see my parents almost daily. Tomorrow I am going to be meeting with almost all my parents in parent teacher conferences. Couldn't I reach out to my parents at that time about survey questions, or is that not okay.

SDS - as a board member I am not going to say no, but it would be different than a survey.

KL - I understand that an official survey is still preferable, but for now I could gather some information.

SDS - thanks for all the comments and participation.

Motion to adjourn the study session

Motion: SDS Second: AK Vote: SDS: aye GA: aye PL: aye JK: aye
AK: aye

Meeting adjourned at 7:39pm

V. GENERAL ACTION ITEMS

A. GUSD Actions to Support Distance Learning and Other Related Essential Services (5 min.)

Situation: With the constant changes in guidelines and mandates related to the suspension of in-person instruction due to the Coronavirus for GUSD students, this item is a placeholder in the event that any action items arise between the time this agenda is posted and the time of the meeting, as well as serving as a potential action item that arises based on Board discussion during the meeting.

Plan: For the Board to consider any new action item based on new or additional mandates as well as any action item put forth by the Board during the meeting.

Recommended motion: None at this time.

Action taken/comments

VI. FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

- A. October 8, 2020 at 5pm**
- B. November 12, 2020 at 5pm**
- C. December 10, 2020 at 5pm**

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:39pm

ADA Compliance: In compliance with Government Code 54954.2(a), the Gravenstein Union School District, will, on request, make this agenda available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with a disability, as required by Section 202 of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12132) and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof. Individuals who need this agenda in an alternative format or who need a disability-related modification or accommodation in order to participate in the meeting should contact Dave Rose, District Superintendent, Gravenstein Union School District, 3840 Twig Ave., Sebastopol, CA 95472. Telephone (707) 823-7008.