

Minutes
Clark County School District
Special Meeting of the Board of School Trustees

TELECONFERENCE ONLY

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

4:05 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present
Lola Brooks, President
Linda P. Cavazos, Vice President
Danielle Ford, Clerk
Irene Cepeda, Member
Chris Garvey, Member
Deanna L. Wright, Member
Linda E. Young, Member

Jesus F. Jara, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

Also present were: Mary-Anne Miller, Board Counsel, District Attorney's Office; Eleissa Lavelle, General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel; Dr. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, Deputy Superintendent, Office of the Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Mike Barton, Chief College, Career, Equity and School Choice Officer, College, Career, Equity and School Choice Unit; Dr. Greg Halopoff, Chief Technology Officer, Technology and Information System Services Division, Operational Services Unit; Jason Goudie, Chief Financial Officer, Business and Finance Unit; Kelly O'Rourke, Assistant Superintendent, Assessment, Accountability, Research and School Improvement Division; Ignacio Ruiz, Assistant Superintendent, English Language Learner Division, Academic Unit; Linda Kalekas, Director, Health Services, Academic Unit; Deanna Jaskolski, Associate Superintendent, Student Services Division, Academic Unit; and Cindy Krohn, Director, Board Office.

Adoption of the Agenda

Adopt agenda, except note reference material provided for Items 3.01, 3.02, and 3.03.

Motion: Young Second: Cepeda Vote: Unanimous

Public Comment on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items

Mrs. Krohn provided a summary of the written comments submitted as follows:

Item 3.01

Writers offered suggestions that included: have all employees work from home through August 24; have schools start 100 percent online; open rural schools under plans they submitted; return to five-day, in-person learning; use money spent on personal protective equipment (PPE) for improving internet access and technology for students and families.

Public Comment on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items (continued)

There were several concerns regarding: students who do not wear masks; education of special education students; how a school knows when a student is sick; concerns there will not be enough substitutes to cover classes when needed; whether a teacher who is quarantined can teach online; specialists having to go into several classrooms each day; specials having a loss in instructional time; staff who have a compromised immune system or other health conditions; child care; safety and cleaning procedures; asking staff and parents to sign a hold harmless document; how CCSD will inform staff and families if someone tests positive for COVID-19; what type of PPE will be provided to staff; what is happening with the Program Approach to Career Employment (PACE); the survey being available only to those with internet access; students learning at home will need to continue receiving meals; ensuring that all have devices and internet access; what will happen to substitutes if the schools go to online learning; online scheduling for elementary students.

Item 3.02

Several teachers expressed that they would rather use Zoom as a distance learning tool, stating Zoom is more efficient than Google Meet.

Item 3.03

One writer was in support of four classes per semester; others disagreed with having year-long classes in one semester. Another writer asked if class schedules will be available before August 10 since accelerated courses do not allow for any schedule errors. It was suggested that schools be allowed to determine if six to eight year-long classes are the best option for everyone.

Non-agenda items

It was stated that new teachers have not received sufficient communication about when to report and what is expected of them when their contract begins in a few days.

Approve Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Approval to determine the instructional model that Clark County School District students will be in for the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

Ms. Kalekas, Dr. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell,

The Board had discussion and asked questions related to possible differences in infection rates and issues in rural communities; a timeline for the development of a vaccine for COVID-19; antibody testing; the number of CCSD employees who have tested positive for COVID-19; notifying employees when someone they have been in contact with tests positive for the virus; delays in test results and contact tracing; guidance for principals on the protocol for reporting positive COVID-19 tests; asking employees their concerns or plans for returning; aligning the District's reopening plan to the governor's phased reopening plan; a breakdown by grade level specific to Cohort C; technology platforms that will be used for distance learning; access to technology and Wi-Fi and questions and concerns related to civil rights, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and English Language Learner (ELL); cost and source of funding for connectivity.

Approve Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year (continued)

Discussion continued regarding areas with a lack of devices; a breakdown by schools of the number of their students who have devices and Wi-Fi access; supporting students who have 504 Plans, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and other special needs and their parents; addressing communities that do not have access to Wi-Fi or devices and could not participate in the survey; support for the homeless student population; family engagement; how parents unenrolling their students could impact funding and the budget and efforts to keep families in CCSD; addressing why parents are choosing to leave the District; rural connectivity and capacity; health and safety of students and staff and plans for a full-time distance learning model; the possibility of co-teaching and support professionals' roles; the use of Wi-Fi busses; the possibility of virtual clubs for students to participate in; collective bargaining contract and teachers returning to the classroom; Safekey and health and safety; teachers being offered employment opportunities outside of the District and expectations and obligations for teachers during their contract time; the possibility of repurposing the roles of school-based support staff employees to support distance learning; a separate consideration for rural schools that meet the plan for Phase 2.

Trustee Young requested a copy of Ms. Kalekas' report.

Trustee Garvey and Trustee Brooks requested data on rural communities.

Trustee Cavazos requested a copy of the one-page memorandum instructing principals on steps to take regarding a positive COVID-19 test.

Trustee Cavazos noted that in looking at the number of responses and students accounted for, it would be presumed that the parents that responded are those who have access to technology or possibly used their phones to complete the survey, and she asked for a further breakdown of the data.

Trustee Young suggested implementing full-time distance learning and allowing each school to assess the needs of their community.

Motion to move forward with full-time distance education with updates for the Board every 30 days; but that the District would proceed unless there is a dramatic shift, such as a vaccine becoming available; that the District would move forward with distance education for the first 90 days; and that staff be allowed to work in a hybrid model, working partially from home or in the building based on their preference as well as the needs of the school.

Motion: Wright Second: Cavazos

Trustee Cavazos inquired about the 90 days in Trustee Wright's motion.

Trustee Wright clarified that they would not necessarily stop after 90 days, but the 90 days is to say that distance education would not continue indefinitely and that another agenda item would be brought forth after 90 days.

Approve Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year (continued)

Trustee Cavazos suggested having a definitive, science-based timeframe, not just using the arbitrary timeframe of 90 days.

Trustee Cavazos offered the amendment that the updates to the Board include specific goals or milestones, answering questions such as, "have there been 14 days with no new cases?" or whether the District is aiming for under 5 percent.

Trustee Brooks offered that the amendment be that the Board would receive information about what the transition plan would be.

Trustee Cavazos said that would not address the health and safety aspect.

Trustee Wright agreed with "less than 5 percent testing positive and at least a 14-day downward trend" and then they would reevaluate.

Trustee Brooks asked if Trustee Wright would be including that in her motion or would they be letting health officials make those determinations.

Trustee Wright said she wants to include those thresholds with the health officials giving guidance.

Trustee Wright restated her motion as follows: Motion to move forward with full-time distance education, foreseeably for the first semester with updates for the Board at least every 30 days including health and wellness information from health professionals; that they would make a determination along with health professionals as to where the pivot point data is based on the number of positive cases and hospitalizations and a 14-day downward trend at a future date; that staff be allowed to work in a hybrid model, working partially from home or in the building when and where possible.

Trustee Young asked that the motion include that staff be allowed to work in a hybrid model if they desire.

Trustee Young said some may have a condition that would prevent them from coming into the classroom and would need to work completely in a distance education model.

Trustee Wright agreed to that friendly amendment.

Trustee Wright said teachers should have the flexibility of working completely from home or going into the classroom based on their needs. She said principals and school supervisors can address concerns on an individual basis.

Trustee Cavazos confirmed that she seconded the motion.

Approve Reopening Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year (continued)

Trustee Ford asked questions regarding ensuring teachers' safety, who would decide if a teacher would be allowed to work from home, providing teachers with devices and Wi-Fi, and childcare for staff.

Trustee Garvey asked if Trustee Wright would be willing to include in her motion that rural schools would be allowed to follow the hybrid instructional model if they meet the safety criteria.

Trustee Wright said if the rural schools meet the criteria for the decrease in infection rate and they get approval from the Southern Nevada Health District, then she would agree to that friendly amendment.

Trustee Cavazos said she would agree to that amendment, as long as they meet the criteria and staff is agreeing to come back on a voluntary basis and parents want their children to return.

Ms. Miller advised that the Board focus on the big decision points before them and not attempt to address the details such as whether a particular teacher can be forced to go back into the classroom.

Vote on Trustee Wright's motion was unanimous.

Superintendent Jara asked for clarification regarding working from home for employees.

Trustee Brooks clarified that the motion included hybrid teleworking.

Board Member Leaves

Trustee Wright left the Board meeting.

Approve Required Staff Professional Development

Approval to determine how professional learning opportunities for staff will be conducted during the 2020-2021 school year.

There was discussion around possible issues arising from principals making the decision of which of their staff participates in professional learning opportunities in-person, teleworking, or hybrid teleworking; the inconsistency of moving into distance learning and then asking staff to come into the buildings; the health and safety of teachers and the number of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation applications that have already been submitted; the fact that the teleworking option takes any choice away and prohibits anyone who may want to from coming into the building; providing clear direction for principals; considering that some teachers do not have the same level of resources at home as they do at school, that all schools are not the same, and that some may have large rooms where everyone can be together while social distancing and possible inequities.

Trustee Ford suggested teleworking with the option of going in if the principal, educator, and support professional agree.

Approve Required Staff Professional Development (continued)

Motion to approve the hybrid teleworking model for professional development from August 5 through August 21 with strong communication to be sensitive to individual employees' needs and that all social distancing and hygiene practices be strictly followed.

Motion: Garvey Second: Brooks

Trustee Cavazos asked who would be deciding whether employees are allowed to telework and overseeing that safety guidelines are followed.

Trustee Garvey said the guidance would come from the District down to principals, but principals would be overseeing and ensuring that safety guidelines are followed.

There was further discussion regarding safety, equity, clear direction, and consistency.

Trustee Garvey amended her motion to include that it would be 100 percent teacher choice to come into the building for professional development.

Trustee Brooks agreed with that amendment.

Vote on Trustee Garvey's motion: Yeses – 5 (Brooks, Cepeda, Cavazos, Ford, Garvey); No – 1 (Young)

The motion passed.

Trustee Wright was not present for the vote.

Approve Instructional Scheduling for Secondary Students

Approval to determine instructional scheduling options for secondary students during the 2020-2021 school year.

Trustee Cavazos said she was not in favor of the semester-based courses. She said students have expressed that they would have more stress with the semester-based courses. She said most have expressed support for the traditional year-long courses.

Trustee Young said she would leave this choice to the schools.

Trustee Cepeda spoke in support of the traditional year-long courses with school discretion.

Trustee Ford spoke in favor of the traditional year-long courses with school discretion. She suggested also putting something in place that would allow seniors to graduate early.

Trustee Garvey said her constituency and schools are split in support of semester-based courses and traditional year-long courses. She expressed concern, regarding the traditional year-long courses with school discretion, for students who have challenges and issues that make learning and academic success more difficult and those who have little to no supports at home. She asked staff to explain why schools cannot choose whichever model works for them.

Approve Instructional Scheduling for Secondary Students (continued)

Dr. Larsen-Mitchell stated that different schools in the District cannot have different credit earning systems because of the potential for student to transfer to different schools.

Trustee Brooks stated that she believes the semester-based courses would be easier for students but understands the challenges that causes for continuity of scheduling and the difficulties of having four courses for AP and IB students.

Trustee Cavazos said the principals should be allowed to make some decisions for their school community so she would be in support of the traditional year-long courses with discretion.

Trustee Young said she was also in support of the traditional year-long courses with school discretion.

There was some discussion around the differences in the credit earning systems; AP, IB, and dual credit courses; principal working groups and input; concern for the social-emotional and mental health of everyone; the caseload for educators for each of the options.

Motion to adopt the traditional year-long courses with school discretion option.

Motion: Ford Second: Cavazos

There was further discussion regarding concerns expressed by principals and the importance of getting principals' input; workload and support for writing up courses into Canvas; the possibility for middle schools to use the semester-based courses model and for high schools to use the traditional year-long courses with school discretion.

Trustee Garvey asked the maker of the motion if she would accept a friendly amendment to the motion that middle schools would use the semester-based courses option and high schools would use the traditional year-long courses with school discretion option.

Trustee Ford expressed concern that middle school students would not have all the tools they need starting the school year and said she would need assurances that the first semester of school would be as adequate as the second semester.

Trustee Cavazos said she does not see that motion as stated by Trustee Garvey an option for the Board.

Call for the Question

Trustee Cavazos called for the question.

Approve Instructional Scheduling for Secondary Students (continued)

Trustee Ford did not accept Trustee Garvey's friendly amendment.

Approve Instructional Scheduling for Secondary Students (continued)

Vote on Trustee Ford's motion: Yeses – 3 (Cavazos, Ford, Young); Noes – 3 (Brooks, Cepeda, Garvey)

The motion failed.

Trustee Wright was not present for the vote.

Motion to accept choice 3, traditional year-long courses with school discretion, for high schools and choice 1, semester-based courses, for middle schools.

Motion: Garvey Second: Young

Trustee Cavazos asked legal counsel to advise on the Board voting on something that has not been presented as a choice.

Ms. Miller said there is nothing in this agenda item that would preclude this motion from going forward, as it includes secondary schools.

Vote on Trustee Garvey's motion: Yeses – 4 (Brooks, Cepeda, Garvey, Young); Noes – 2 (Cavazos, Ford)

The motion passed.

Trustee Wright was not present for the vote.

Adjourn: 9:24 p.m.

Motion: Garvey Second: Young Vote: Unanimous

Trustee Wright was not present for the vote.