

**Vista School Board Meeting  
August 20, 2020 Minutes**

**Location: 585 East Center, Ivins, UT 84738 (virtually via zoom)**

**Board members present: Matt Middione (Board Chair), Josh Aikens, Dave Hunter, Michelle Walter, Eli Milne, Jacqueline Powell,**

**Others present:** Sam Gibbs (Director), Troy Bradshaw (Tech/Finance Director), Britni Armstrong (Board Secretary), Marie Ehlers (Counselor), Meltem Kelepir-Wood, Emily Caplin, Aubree Warby, Hilary Osness, Beth D'Antonio (joined at 5:35), Allison Shultz (joined 5:51), Bruce Hatch (Tech- joined at 5:53) Lex (joined 6:06)

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**5:04 PM- CALL TO ORDER: Welcome and Introductions**

**5:05 PM- APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Josh moves to approve July 16 2020 minute, Michelle seconds. Joshua says "Aye.", Michelle says "Aye.", Matt says "Aye.", Eli says "Aye.", Jacqueline abstains, Dave says "Aye.". Unanimously approved.

Josh moves to approve July 29, 2020 minutes. Michelle seconds. Josh says "Aye.", Dave says "Aye.", Jacqueline abstains, Eli says "Aye.", Matt says "Aye.", Michelle says "Aye.". Unanimously approved.

**5:09 PM- PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Eli asked that we start adding any public comments emailed to the Board members. Jacqueline says that according to Roberts Rules includes decisions made during a meeting and is wondering if the comments can be added to the agenda instead. It was discussed back and forth what could be done.

Emily Caplin said she submitted a letter and asked to give her permission to have some comments added. She sent an email to Mr. Gibbs about how banning face shields is harming students. She mentioned Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and how that is being ignored. She is seeing negative effects of this and it is very difficult for the students. Shields allowed better breathing and better sound across the room. Masks make it very difficult to breath and affects learning in the classroom. Students cannot connect with teachers with masks on and teachers cannot relay their emotion and facial expressions in a positive way. She mentioned that she did not recognize one of her students without their masks on. She thinks teachers and students should have the choice and right to wear a shield.

Hilary Osness also emailed the board and asked that they draft a letter to ask for exemptions so that k-3 classes have the option to wear a shield, exemptions for all teachers during whole group instructions, and exemptions for choir and other classes where teacher's faces are needed to teach effectively. Young grades with phonics need to focus on the forming of certain words, and it is especially important for under privileged families because their teacher may be the only one they are getting phonics from. She mentioned ADD, ADHD, and claustrophobia being issues that make masks more difficult to function with. She mentioned different cases she is aware of with students having exemptions and think they should also apply to us even though we are a smaller district.

**5:24 PM- BOARD CALENDAR**

**Next Board Meeting- Thursday, September 17 @ 5:00 pm**

**5:24 PM- REPORTS**

**Director's Report – Sam Gibbs**

**5:25- Faculty/Staff Changes**

Two resignations- James Haley- severe special education

- Tammy Engel- part time kindergarten paraprofessional

All employees and their contracts will be reviewed in September.

### **5:28- Enrollment and Lottery Update**

July numbers were 1025, 36 students have added themselves to the waitlist since July. The number of students who are doing distance only is 79, hybrid is 97, face to face is 847. If all student came back to face to face learning we would be at 1023 and were aiming around 1030 so we would be right on target. Eli asked if we are paying for all of the online waitlist students and Sam said we have purchased curriculum for the online students.

#### **- Update on Expansion**

### **5:34- Student Performance Data**

Sam pulled up Comparative Dibels Data and explained that we have goals to hit certain levels that show a quality of curriculum, instruction, and student effort. If 85% of students are at or above the target, it is generally give that your instruction is up to par. In January, all of kinder was where we wanted it to be. First had a mix of some on target and some near and some below. Second and third grade were below or near the target. They would have been tested again in the spring but because of COVID it did not happen. He shows that testing from this year show that the kindergarten students who were all in the green last year, are now all in the red in first grade. Second grade is similar. Same says it was to be anticipated but is still disappointing. Dave asks if is the same assessment given to the first graders this year as the all green kindergarteners last year. Sam says yes, most are the same and new assessments and targets are gradually added. Sam is eager to address these things and get kids closer to the target.

Sam adds that a lot of events will be digital through the fall.

### **5:43 PM Financial Report – Troy Bradshaw**

#### **5:43- Financials and Budget Review**

Troy wants to give a disclaimer that July and August should be “glued” together in order to see the budget properly because of the way contracts and payments and the PNL are ran. It looks like we have a huge revenue but it’s a reimbursement. That money will all go back into the expansions on the new building. Income is down but expenses are also low.

#### **- Report on compliance with bond covenants and state filing deadlines**

### **5:50 PM - DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

#### **5:50- FY SY Budget**

Previously addressed

#### **6:03- COVID-19 update**

There are several documents that the board has access to in the google drive. In summary, the Governor indicated that he was intending to change his current executive order in regards to face coverings including restricting face shields. Friday night it became an executive order. It gave several orders, including face shields not being acceptable face coverings and gave several examples of exclusions. The Washington County School district is focusing on the wording of “essential to communication” and are allowing their parents and teachers to choose when it is essential. Sam notes that majority of speech services are provided in general in the classroom. We could have teachers who have speech students in the classroom use shields when working with those students in the classroom. Sam feels there are ways to comply with the orders. We did not ignore the orders like the district did because we are a different school district than they are. We rely on different organizational structures than they do. Matt asks if we have to accept what the governor says or can we find wiggle room for exceptions. Eli says it is a misdemeanor if you don’t comply. Sam said our ability to remain open is contingent upon compliance. Michelle agrees- she is less worried about the

misdemeanor and more about the possible shut down. Eli asks whether we have had instances of students or others with COVID known or suspected cases. Vista has no active cases. We did have 2 employees who quarantined and had positive cases. One student stayed home with symptoms for a few days but tested negative and will return next week. Sam doesn't expect cases to jump for about 2 weeks because of incubation period. Sam feels the current mask mandate could allow speech students to wear shields instead of masks, and any teacher teaching that student. It can get very complex on how we comply to the order. Sam agrees that masks are not in the best interest developmentally of children's but that the public health issue has trumped the development portion. Sam has talked to several representatives for the state recently. Sam says much of what they say has revolved around limiting the extent of the governor's orders and what they contain. Sydney Dixon was apologetic for the timing (3 days into school) and was very clear that the expectation was that we follow the mandate. Eli thinks that if we use the exemption of a class instead of an individual that it undoes the effort of trying to follow the order. Eli thinks it is inconsistent with the intent. He intends to say Nay on these exclusions because he feels it is against the law. Michelle agrees and that the approach may be that a majority of parent and people coming out and saying this does not work. Sam says other options (other than legal) is the governor's office and the office of the superintendent to get where we want to go. Michelle and Lex feel like there has got to be a better way to protect our students and deliver education. Lex does not agree that it's against the law- if there are parents saying exemptions should be for their child then it should happen because we are teaching their children. Eli says he agrees with the concerns but his concern is with the legal compliance with it. Josh asks if when or if we see that there has not been an increase in cases, if would be a good timing to use that as a way to get back to our original plan. Sam agrees and that it may be a good time to revise out plan. Josh notes that southern Utah is very different than Northern Utah and we may want to request a review from the state. Eli asked if we reached out to school board and got an advised opinion about our interpretation he would be fine with, He does want to be the "poster child for insurrection" and does not want out name in the media in a negative light. Sam said the state has declined to give legal advice and that they said to refer to his own legal team. Michelle thinks to wait for the incubation period and see if nothing happens then to appeal to the governor's office. Matt agrees and thinks if we have the ability to voice our opinion then we should, Eli is afraid our voice will not be heard and to wait another week or so. Sam says if we do have an outbreak 2 weeks from now, they will close a class, an environment, or the school based on the circumstance because of the updated case "allowance" recently given. Eli feels it may be best to reconvene in 2 weeks and re-approach the options and that once the rest of the state goes back to school, we may have more political power on our side. Josh agrees but is bringing up the idea of what is the middle ground? Sam agrees that we have experimented with different ideas but they don't solve the speaking problem. He mentioned a chiffon mask with a face shield over it. Sam felt it worked great for visibility except for the talking part. Michelle is k with waiting 2 weeks as recommended by Eli and maybe including a section in the news letter to encourage those with concerns to reach out to the governor's office to communicate with their concerns. Matt thinks it is important to use to verbiage that we are not simply waiting to wait, we are waiting to gather data over the next 2 weeks. Sam says he will most likely send out a separate email with the info about the data gathering instead of placing it in the new letter. Eli suggests putting together coalition to join with other schools down here. Josh brought up the fact that we still need to answer to the Southwest Public Health Dept. Sam notes that it's the representatives that have the power to make these decisions. Sam answers a question in the chat- Yes, we are

allowing individual exemptions. Sam is going to table to universal speech exemption. Josh notes that we will re-convene September 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:00 to continue this discussion.

#### **5:51- Vista Early literacy plan**

State gives funding every year and it's based on the goals Sam went over previously. Board needs to approve the plan. Josh asked if goals were changed. Sam said curriculum and practices were changed but not goals. Michelle asked how we are measuring whether we hit those goals. Sam explains that we use progress monitoring and add instructional things to those students who need it and they are monitored more often. Other students are monitored less frequently if they are at the target goal. Josh asks who manages it- Sam says the reading specialist and Title I specialist manage it, plus the title I paraprofessionals along with many meetings. Josh moves to approve, Michelle seconds. Josh says "Aye.", Jacqueline says "Aye.", Matt says "Aye.", Eli says "Aye.", Michelle says "Aye." Unanimously approved

#### **6:00- Approve/Extend COVID based policies**

State board has asked us to reiterate some policies made in April for the rest of the school year. They are the same policies approved in April that need to be in function until October 2021. Sam is asking them re-implement the current policies for an additional 12 months. Eli Moves, Josh seconds, Josh, Jacqueline, Matt, Eli, Michelle

- **Apply for exemption to mask mandate**
- **Approve other COVID based measures**

#### **7:00 PM- COMMENTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM**

Marie wanted to note that she is so happy to see us back in session, that the kids are doing great with wearing their masks and that it's important to keep them on in order to stay open. Sam agrees that the most important thing is to stay open and function. Michelle asks if he has sent out information saying "we do not want you to send you students f they have the following symptoms..." Sam says he has relayed it and Josh thinks it's ok to keep saying it.

#### **MISC COMMENTS**

#### **TABLED AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **7:03 PM – ADJOURN**

Josh moves to close the public board meeting. Lex seconds. Josh says "Aye.", Jacqueline says "Aye.", Lex says "Aye.", Matt says "Aye.", Eli says "Aye.", Michelle says "Aye." Unanimously approved.

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

**To discuss the character or competence of an individual. Requires Roll call vote.**