

## West Linn-Wilsonville School District October 14, 2020 @ 11:15 a.m. Special Board Meeting Minutes

A Special Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of West Linn-Wilsonville School District was held Wednesday, October 14, 2020 beginning at 11:15 AM via Zoom online.

(Please access the online video of this meeting for full verbiage in its entirety.)

## 1. 11:15 a.m. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Molatore called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m.

## 2. 11:15 a.m. <u>ROLL CALL</u>

#### **Board Members Present:**

Board Chair Regan Molatore Vice Chair Chelsea King Director Christy Thompson Director Ginger Fitch Director Dylan Hydes

Chair Regan Molatore stated this is a Special Meeting of the West Linn-Wilsonville School District and what makes this a "Special Meeting" is because it is an additional meeting that was not adopted in August for the 2020-2021 school year.

We are here today because she was contacted by Director Dylan Hydes informing her that he and Director Christy Thompson had drafted a Resolution that they wanted to present to the Board before October 15<sup>th</sup>. At the time, Director Hydes and Director Thompson believed state officials would be convening on this date to discuss updating health metrics related to in-person attendance at schools and Director Hydes stated he wanted the proposed Resolution, if approved, presented to the State of Oregon before October 15<sup>th</sup>. She has since learned the October 15<sup>th</sup> date is a community wide misnomer in that this date signaled the START of the process to reevaluate health metrics related to COVID 19.

This is how the Special Meeting came before the Board and Chair Molatore wanted to explain as a point of process. Per the Board Operating Agreement, it takes two Board Members to have an item added to the agenda and it takes three Board Members to call a Special Meeting and Chair Molatore was the third person. The Next Board Meeting is on October 26<sup>th</sup> which is past the October 15<sup>th</sup> date and is why the Special Meeting is taking place.

Director Ginger Fitch stated she does not believe this is appropriate for a Special Meeting regardless of the Operating Agreement. Board Policy BDD states the purpose of a Special Meeting is to give the Board the opportunity to gather and discuss various aspects of an issue. This meeting was set for less than an hour and the agenda was published on Monday and there are still comments coming in and she has not had time to read them all.

Director Fitch stated the proposed Resolution contains factual statements that she could not vet on the Center for Disease Control's website nor compare the data with our own District or inquire of the Superintendent. She is concerned that if the purpose of the Special Meeting is not being met, she objects to this meeting in terms of reaching a vote on the Resolution. The Board Operating Agreement states the Board Members and the Superintendent will not have surprises.

Chair Molatore stated that on the issue of surprise, this was eliminated in that, as Board Chair, she did not agree to set the meeting unless and until Director Hydes and Director Thompson had time to share this with Superintendent Ludwig and get feedback.

Director Fitch stated that if the Resolution was not drafted with the input of District staff, it increases her concern of not having time to look at the data. The Board has already voted and provided the information to the Oregon Department of Education on the Operational Blueprint and now they are asking the Board to take a second look and she does not feel this is proper for a Special Meeting as there is no urgency.

Chair Molatore stated that procedurally, we have done what we need to do to call a Special Meeting and with her understanding of the language, she does not see the subject matter as outside the purview of a Special Meeting.

Director Hydes stated that he believes Board Policy BDD gives wide latitude for Special Board Meetings and he feels this falls within that. He does not want to put form over substance but timeliness is critical and the Board needs to act.

Chair Molatore stated this is not an emergency meeting, but a Special Meeting of the Board and has been properly noticed and our community is aware based on the number of public comments received.

Superintendent Ludwig stated when we have inquired of the Oregon School Boards Association, we were informed that a Special Meeting is one that has not already been approved and on the Board calendar.

Vice Chair King stated she is comfortable moving forward.

Director Fitch stated she needs time to read all the public comments that were submitted.

- Chair Molatore paused the meeting at 11:35 a.m.
- Chair Molatore reconvened the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

## 3. 11:15 a.m. <u>COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE</u>

Chair Molatore stated that we did receive a lot of public comment in advance of the meeting. Some comments seem to have been misinformed and to clarify details, this Board is not making a decision to reopen schools. This decision is not before the Board nor within control of the Board. This Board is also not directly meeting with the Governor which she saw in some of the correspondences. Pending the outcome of this meeting, if the Resolution passes, it may be forwarded to the Governor's office.

In addition, there has been some concern that this is an action based on political pressure rather than science. While each Board Member can and will speak for themselves, none of them are epidemiologists or health care professionals, including our Superintendent. We will not advocate for or suggest alternative health metrics to the State of Oregon or the Oregon Health Authority. We have

trust that the Oregon Health Authority has a skilled team of health professionals who are considering disease data, tracking and monitoring our case rates, comparing our rates with other states and countries, consulting with area doctors and nationwide professionals and the Center for Disease Control to provide us with researched and well vetted information on how to navigate this health crisis.

The Governor's Office, the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority mentioned they will begin actively working on an update to the health metrics beginning this week on October 15<sup>th</sup>. This process is taking place regardless of how the West Linn-Wilsonville School Board of Directors conducts itself today. We can anticipate updated metrics to be released by end of the month and the Resolution before the Board is intended to support that process of revaluating the metrics.

Chair Regan Molatore acknowledged the Board of Directors received public comments from the following individuals:

#### Public Comment in favor of reopening schools was received from the following:

Alana Molden Lisa Simshauser Joanne Masters Jacey Talavs Barbara Hass Julie Stern **Dominic Rivera** Amaya Bilbao Cromwell Rachel Ligocki Rhonda Gomes Lisa Quaglio Jennifer DuBurg Leanne Mason Michelle Winder Jenny Kling Kristin Liston Kim Gwin Megan Westbrook Michael Connell Heidi Hopkins Heather Roms **Preist-Maoz Family** 

### Public Comment not in favor of reopening schools was received from the following:

Jennifer Cerasin David Munoz Danika Zundel Kathryn Dennis Jacquie Banet Rebecca O'Brien Nancy Kay Amy Gilkey Katie Flaker Ms. Mensa

Tian Jin Allison Kolta Troy Mathews Shaun Foster Andria Doblie Alexis Harmon Kathleen Miller Anitra McCormack Elissa Blackhurst Nina Baurer Sarah Enriquez Amy Estimada Karen Detjens Kelly Stanfield Dana VanderZanden Cheryl DeLay Wind Lothamer Dylan Robertson Rochelle Gutierrez-Taeubel Heidi Lentz **Christine Frisiras** Tayler Egan Julie Frazier Meg Groat Jason Stillinger Alison Farrell Mashawna Miller Autumn Paul Magdalena Valusek Erik Schroeder Nicole Pearce Amanda Corey Erin Kays Monica Emerick Kate Coreson Steffany Pacheco Tracey Peterson Leslie Hoeckle Sarah Haefner Rosalynn Pesicka Brittany Armstrong Mindy Black Brittany Drake Jesse Skinner Joey Handley Mackenzie Weekes Heather Carney Ann Breyne Alexandra Stoutt

## 4. 11:25 a.m. BOARD BUSINESS - GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

### 4.A. New Business

4.A.1. Proposed Resolution #2020-5 Governor Brown's Reevaluation of Return-to-School Metrics - BOARD ACTION - Director Dylan Hydes & Director Christy Thompson (Expected Outcome: Board reviews Resolution and takes action)

Chair Molatore invited Director Dylan Hydes to present Resolution No. 2020-5 to the Board of Directors for review.

Director Hydes presented Resolution No. 2020-5 to the Board stating they have received an overwhelming level of community input in a short period of time both for and against the Resolution. He thanks his fellow Board Members for making time on a Wednesday morning to meet.

Director Hydes stated he wanted to personally thank Governor Brown to agreeing to reassess the health metrics. He also thanks our Representatives, particularly, Representative Courtney Neuron for continuing to talk about this issue with constituents making sure the return to school plan reflects the best science and this message is passed on to the Governor. Most of us, if not all of us, agree it makes sense to reevaluate metrics as we learn more about the disease every day.

The reason he spearheaded the effort to draft the Resolution is that it is clear to him Governor Brown has very clearly considered the risk of opening schools. However, it is less clear that she has considered the risk of not opening schools and the impact on families. Some families are low income and cannot afford a tutor and both parents work. Anecdotally, we have heard from hundreds of families in the district with children that are struggling with isolation, depression and are losing interest in their education. From a personal experience, he has three children and one of his kids, a very well behaved student, threw their school laptop against the wall. They had to get a new computer from school and he is waiting to see if they can pay to have repaired or replaced. His efforts are to make sure Governor Brown is considering both sides of the issue, the pros and cons of getting children back to school and he wants to acknowledge the problems with distance learning is not the fault of the District. In six months, we have asked our teachers and staff to completely reinvent how education works and the fact it is working as well as it is, is nothing short of amazing and he gives credit to Superintendent Dr. Ludwig, her team and our teachers.

He wants to be clear, the Resolution is not to pressure the Governor to reopen schools and is not an attempt to keep them closed. It is an acknowledgement that we are learning more each day and we are seeing how Districts that do open are working or not working. He read over 25,000 words of public comment with a lot of misunderstandings on what the Resolution is. One comment submitted said: "I am shocked and disappointed to learn that you would be considering pressuring our Governor to reopen schools." To be clear, this Resolution does not do that, it states to please not give into political pressure and to listen to the science.

Finally, he wants to talk about the Resolution being rushed. Absolutely, it is rushed, because tomorrow the Governor starts the process of reexamining the health metrics and we want it to be

impactful and the way to do that is for this Resolution to be on her desk in front of her team when she starts this process tomorrow.

Director Christy Thompson stated she has many of the same sentiments as Director Hydes and wants to thank our District for the tremendous job our District has done with Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) and what is happening with our kids and our teachers. She hears that our teachers are working twice as much and the Board hears this and thanks them. The reason she felt that she and Director Hydes could come forward with this Resolution is due to our District's demonstration of concern and safety of our students, families and staff by creating an online option. Each student had the option of enrolling in the yearlong online program and for those families that do not feel safe, they can make the choice to remain online with CDL if they do not feel comfortable returning to the classroom. Additionally, the Board was informed by Ms. Shyla Waldern, Human Resources Director, that all staff who had medical conditions or families with medical conditions were approved to transfer into the yearlong online program.

Director Thompson stated she wanted to reiterate a few things based on some of the comments they received, she wants to make sure the community understands what the Resolution is for and what it is not for. This is a balanced Resolution that thanks Governor Brown for reevaluating the health metrics, it does not ask her to lower them. It encourages her to regularly reevaluate the metrics, look at the successes and failures of other districts that have returned to the classroom, encourages her to continue to base the metrics on the best science and to weigh the pros and cons of opening either too soon or too late. While crafting the Resolution, they tried to make sure they erred on both sides of safety and encouraging Governor Brown to have a growth mindset.

- Director Hydes motioned to approve Resolution No. 2020-5 as presented.
- Director Thompson seconded the motion.

The Board engaged in discussion including:

Ginger Fitch stated she does not support the Resolution and has problems with enough of the language it would basically gut it in terms of modifying it. She thinks this is a political statement where we say we don't want the Governor to be political. She thinks this is noted by the rush to get this done and the failure to take time to get input from District staff, District unions and from the community to have a fully vetted conversation about this. She thinks the cites to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is from a few months ago. The CDC data is from June or July and as referenced in the Whereas(s) and is referring to studies that happened early in the year. We now have a lot more information both locally and nationally about what has happened when schools have reopened. Some of the things said in the public comment mirror her own concerns; "Academics can be recovered but loss of life cannot" and "Studies have shown that the effects of COVID disproportionately affect people of color and low socioeconomic individuals." Our staff has gone to great lengths to mitigate this issue of the impact of Distance Learning on students of color, students with disabilities and lower income students. The impact of these families would be worse if we return to in-person learning prematurely thus opening up the possibility of infection to these groups. There was one public comment that referenced an article on the impact of COVID-19 on racial and ethnic minorities and the Whereas(s) do not acknowledge both sides and does not provide a balanced view. It only asks the Governor to consider one perspective. She acknowledges to our families, our staff and fellow School Board Members that this is not an ideal situation to be learning in, however, we are in a national and international pandemic that is not within our control, but what we are doing is.

Director Fitch stated she spoke with someone at the Oregon Department of Human Services and this information is also on their website, about concerns of abuse recording. The numbers in

September of child abuse reports and the percentage of those investigated, is a little less than last year at this time, but it is comparable, so we are not missing out on those situations, they are being caught. She has also spoken with families of varied status and there is not a pressing urge to return to school before the metrics have been met.

Director Hydes stated that he wanted to address some of the things Director Fitch mentioned. With regard to there not being a lot of time for public comments, he has been hearing about this literally every day for two months and has heard from hundreds of parents, students and teachers. He feels he does have a large base of constituent feedback to base this on. He feels Board Members are elected to lead and so far the Board has been too passive on this issue in his opinion. Director Fitch is correct in that the Whereas(s) are not balanced and the reason is because we know the Governor is very concerned about the risks of reopening, but is she as concerned about the costs of not opening schools? If at the end of the process they think the metrics are spot on, he will defer to it and does think it is the job of the Board to make sure to advocate both sides be considered since we have such strong opinions on both sides in this community.

As a point of process, Chair Molatore stated per Board Policy BDF Code of Conduct; It advises the Board to only take action after receiving input and guidance from the Superintendent, so after Vice Chair King speaks, she will invite the Superintendent to speak.

Vice Chair King stated this is a tough one for her. She read all the public comments and she saw inaccuracies on both sides which led her to wonder if people had read the Resolution. She also sees this as an example of the personal being political so it is both impacting their direct life just as much as it is a political statement and is straddling both. She sees the Resolution standing by itself as really not necessarily doing much to what the Governor is already doing. This Resolution is saying weigh the pros and cons of opening too soon or too late. There is a statement saying to base her decision on available science rather than political pressure. She appreciates this angel of saying that the Board wants the Governor to consider the risks of staying closed in absence of considering science. She has heard from a lot of parents for months about the toll it is taking on everyone. She, herself is living it with 3 kids doing CDL. She hears her fellow Board Members and agrees with much of what they say.

She is very sensitive to the idea of race, socioeconomics, cognitive and academic abilities, so the statement in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Whereas; "...but particularly for students of color, students with disabilities and lower income students" she is wondering where the source came from?

Director Fitch stated it comes from the CDC website on schools and communities and it does say something like "encouraging reopening." What she is referring to is the footnotes on the website stating the data is from June or July and is not current. The data is about speculation around harm, particularly in urban cities and just general knowledge that during the summer certain student cohorts are impacted by a delay in learning as opposed to what happens when the entire student body is impacted. It also includes studies of schools that were not doing any kind of Comprehensive Distance Learning, which in her opinion, are deficits in the study upon which the CDC relies.

Director Thompson stated she did read through the documents and under the tab "Importance of Reopening School" it is mentioned two or three times under differing topics.

Vice Chair King stated her concern is that she does not see a source cited and it is stated as fact and she would like to know the dates of the data.

Director Hydes stated he is Googling it now and a lot of information is coming up on the unequal effect on differing communities including lower economic and socioeconomic communities. He

believes they can all conclude the less money you make the less resources you have to get you through this. His children have a tutor two times a week, he knows a lot of families cannot hire tutors or have two parents to help them out. It is a demographical fact in this country that families of color tend to be lower socioeconomically and he does not think we need a Harvard Study to tell us this. If that language is what it takes to get a third vote, we can strike the language.

Director Fitch stated her concern is that she does not think that she wants an upper middle class family telling her about the concerns and difficulties that families within our District are having who might be on the lower end of the socioeconomic status nor those who are people of color. Rather, she would much rather be hearing it from those people. What she finds in the comments she is receiving is that she is speaking for a different group of people who she is sure are struggling and that is not what she is hearing from those other families and this is one of the reasons she really opposes that kind of statement, that we somehow know the experiences of people of color or people who have children with disabilities or with socioeconomic problems during the Pandemic. Our District has done quite a lot to make sure that families who are disadvantaged have the supports they need and believes it is presumptuous without having heard from them.

Chair Molatore stated she has a general wondering and maybe this would be a good topic for the January Board Work Session around what assumptions do we make about groups of people and however well-intentioned we are, how to get the knowledge rather than assume.

Vice Chair King stated she does not know which way she will vote. She appreciates some things about the Resolution; that it points out the Ready School Safe Learners Plan and is calling on the Governor to consider science. She does have a concern with the sheer number of comments that were against reopening and primarily from District staff. As a major stakeholder, this gives her pause that they are not collaborating on writing this and the Board is there to represent the public.

Vice Chair King inquired of Chair Molatore what her thoughts were as the Board Chair prior to hearing from Superintendent Ludwig?

Chair Molatore stated that Vice Chair King articulated her own thoughts perfectly. She entered the meeting today with no pre-formed opinion as she wanted to hear fellow Board Member's thoughts. When she received notice from Director Hydes and Director Thompson, she did not know the content of the Resolution and if you add a third party to the conversation, it becomes a public meeting. She was concerned about the Resolution and thought it may be political or not a sound science based move or something that would have disrupted our Memorandums of Understanding that we have already reached with our Union Associations. When she received the Resolution, she felt better, but believes it asks for what she perceives as actions that are already occurring by our Governor. As this decision has unfolded, she has decided not to support this motion because she feels the ramifications in disruption could do greater harm than making this ask for things that she believes are already happening. This is where she stands at the moment but would also like to hear from Superintendent Ludwig.

Superintendent Ludwig stated she is hoping to speak to the Resolution at the very end of the meeting so the Board of Directors can work through what they need to.

Director Hydes stated he wanted to address one thing Vice Chair King said and one thing Chair Molatore said. Vice Chair King is absolutely right that there were a lot of public comments against this Resolution and mostly from staff. He does not recall hearing a single teacher say not to do what the Resolution does. What the teachers were uniformly against is a Resolution that pressured the Governor to reopen schools. This Resolution says do not give into political pressure, rely on science. Secondly, Chair Molatore said the motion is asking for things that are already taking place, however, we do not know about this and the reason he drafted the Resolution is that he is not sure it is happening and is asking for more transparency in the process.

Director Fitch stated that if, in fact this is what Director Hydes wanted to say, this Resolution goes way beyond this. Just as we do not know what Director Hydes is assuming things the Governor is or is not listening to, she is not willing to make this assumption. She feels this is properly understood by the people opposing it to make a political statement encouraging the Governor to change the metrics.

Chair Molatore commended The Board of Directors for being thoughtful, thought provoking and collegial in this process.

Director Thompson thanked Director Fitch for her comments and stated she hears what she is saying and that the intention is not politically driven and she feels it does not ask the Governor to change the metrics, just to reevaluate and continue to base them on science.

Superintendent Ludwig stated she echoes the sentiments of collegiality of this group. She has incredible faith in each of them and their respect for one another and expected nothing different in terms of the thoughtful hard conversation that stayed with great integrity and respect for one another. For those listening in or watching from home, this is a remarkable Board of five individuals committed to working together as a group and are a gift to this community and gift to this Superintendent during this remarkably difficult time and she is honored to lead with them.

Her thoughts are that however the Resolution was drafted, what emerged was the complexity of it. The Resolution was crafted by skilled wordsmiths on our Board it still led to misunderstandings in our community of what the intention was. This is complex and emotional for families and shows that a well-crafted document can still be widely misunderstood by families.

This pandemic only surfaced disparities that already existed. The Board of Directors committed years ago to disrupting systems of racism and she would also add; systems of oppression. We have been working on this for several years now and often a crisis or things like a pandemic just amplify the disparities. When we get to the other side of this, we need to remember to challenge the disparities even when things return to normal, they are not normal for everyone and they need to commit to this Board Goal.

In terms of the Resolution and any action, there is nothing in the Resolution that changes the District's Operational Blue Print, our work with our Unions and Memorandums of Understanding that are in place and she wants the community to hear that. This is not a Resolution staff brought forward to the Board, so in full transparency, staff has not been working on this nor is it one we were seeking.

What will change this, is direction from the Governor, the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority to all 197 public school districts and private schools in the state of Oregon. This is the authority we look to and are guided by. She will recuse any recommendation as there is nothing to recommend about the Resolution as there is no action to it. She stays committed to the very well-crafted Operational Blue Print staff generated. Our Board of Directors critiqued and approved the Operational Blue Print which was then presented to the County Public Health Department who reviewed every item for safety protocols and approved it. These are the documents Superintendent Ludwig stands by and has recommended to the Board of Directors, thereby, she has no opinion on the proposed Resolution.

Director Fitch stated if the vote on the Resolution is not unanimous on consensus of language and intent, she feels it would be ill informed to send it to the Governor.

Vice Chair King stated she remains committed to District Goal No. 1 and is still learning and growing on how to lean into communicating in a way that does not replicate systems of oppression. She has concerns about the 3<sup>rd</sup> Whereas but also some of the quotes about children who live in unsafe homes or unsafe neighborhoods and some of the implicit bias that may be inherent in our culture. The following three Whereas(s) also concerns her, without those statements, she feels she could support it. She does have reservations about sending it with a split vote, particularly with the amount of disruption that occurred within our community in the lack of clarity people had, maybe they did not read it or they interpreted it a certain way.

#### Chair Molatore called for a vote:

- Director Fitch, No.
- Chair Molatore, No.
- Vice Chair King, No.
- Director Thompson, Yes.
- Director Hydes, Yes.
- 3-2 Motion fails.

Chair Molatore thanked the Board of Directors and stated this discussion resembles the ongoing debates in our community that are also happening within the Board, there is no simple solution. She thanked fellow Board Members for remaining engaged and supporting our students, families and teachers as we wait for new health metric information to become available.

As a point of process, Chair Molatore reminded the Board that Policy BBF states that when there is a split vote, once the vote is taken and the majority vote wins, the action is to be supported by all Board Members regardless of their votes, collectively they then support outcome.

Director Hydes thanked fellow Board Members and stated that even though the Board did not take action, he is reminding and encouraging the community to take action on their own.

Chair Molatore stated that similarly, Director Hydes and Director Thompson are welcome to send a letter jointly or independently to Governor Brown.

Superintendent Ludwig stated she also wanted to remind our community there are Districts that are able to reopen and bring students back on campus with safety parameters, but we are not there yet. We do have a few Limited In-Person (LII) instruction happening so we can support some students struggling with mental health, connectivity to internet, Independent Education Program (IEP) or evaluation. We are also opening to co-curricular activities with our high school students under the safety guidelines set by Governor Brown and the Oregon State Athletic Association.

Director Thompson stated she wanted to thank District staff for their efforts to pull together this meeting. She also thanked her fellow Board Members for their work on the meeting stating she respects each Member and feels even though the Board has diverse opinions, at the end of the day she respects and appreciates all the work that went into this meeting. She thanks our community members for being involved and all the public comments.

### 4.A.2. 11:50 a.m. IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE BOARD

- 4.A.2.a. 10-26-20 @ 5:00 p.m. Board Work Session
- 4.A.2.b. 11-9-20 @ 6:00 p.m. Regular Board Meeting
- 4.A.2.c. 11-16-20 @ 5:00 p.m. Board Work Session

#### 4.A.2.d. 12-7-20 @ 6:00 p.m. Regular Board Meeting 4.A.3. 11:55 a.m. <u>ADJOURN</u>

# Chair Molatore adjourned the Special Meeting at 12:52 p.m. 4.A.4. <u>DISTRICT GOALS</u>

#### 2020-2021 District Goals

- 1. Grow student achievement through the use of high leverage instructional and engagement strategies to raise rigor, disrupt systems of racism, and generate equitable outcomes for all students while eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps.
- 2. Effectively use systems of professional growth, assessment for learning, social-emotional learning and inclusive practices to build self-efficacy for every student
- 3. Operate in an accessible and transparent manner to encourage and generate community involvement as our parents, students and community partners are an integral and valued voice towards change in our district.
- 4. Be responsive to community growth and student learning needs of the future by conducting long-range capital improvements and financial planning through processes and practices for long-term financial stability and sustainability.

Regan Molatore, Board Chair

Kelly Douglas, Board Secretary

Date

Date