

West Bath School Administrative Unit

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2021 at 6:00 PM (Held Remotely)

Members Present: Keith Hinds, Alexandra Jungbluth, Joanne Powers, Ashleigh Randall, Casandra Whoff

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Patrick Bowdish, Emily Thompson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Emily Thompson. Roll call attendance was taken. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Nomination and Election of Board Chair:

Mrs. Thompson asked if there were any nominations for board chair. Mr. Hinds nominated Mrs. Randall. This was seconded by Mrs. Whorff. There were no further nominations nor discussion. Roll call vote (4-0, 1 abstention).

Nomination and Election of Vice Chair:

Mrs. Randall asked if there were any nominations for vice chair. Mrs. Jungbluth nominated Mrs. Whorff. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. There were no further nominations or discussion. Roll call vote (4-0, 1 abstention).

Comments from the Chair:

Mr. Randall said that she did not have comments at this time, but thanked the board for their support.

Approve/Amend Minutes of 10/20/21

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/20/21. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

Adjustments to Agenda:

None

Public Comments:

None

Mrs. Randall reminded the public how to submit public comment while watching remotely.

Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee - Mrs. Randall reported that there are policies to review later in the agenda.
2. Facilities Committee - No Update
3. Finance Committee
 - a. Payroll Warrants - Mrs. Randall said that Mr. Hinds had signed payroll warrants on 10/22 and 11/5.
 - b. AP Warrants - Mrs. Randall said that she and Mr. Hinds had signed AP warrants on 11/3 and 11/17.

Superintendent's Report

1. Financial Report -
 - a. Mrs. Thompson stated that with 65% of the year remaining, 74.6% of the budget still remains. She said that all lines were tracking appropriately, but she had noticed on page 8 that the computer lease line was overextended. She explained that it was not, but a check was voided and reissued earlier this fall, and there needs to be a journal entry to fix that. She said that everything else was tracking as it should be.
2. District Updates -
 - a. Little Kids Rock - Mrs. Thompson said that Mrs. Ouellette, the music teacher, took part in coursework offered by a grant through Little Kids Rock, in cooperation with the Department of Education. She's now certified in modern band 101 and 102, and was provided with 15 ³/₄ sized acoustic guitars and 15 mini keyboards to use with students.
 - b. Maine Community Foundation Grant - Mrs. Fuller, the Librarian and GT teacher recently wrote a grant to the Maine Community Foundation for their literacy program requesting funding to have an author visit later in the school year. She was awarded \$800 through this effort, and is in the process of selecting a Maine author to spend a day at WBS in the spring.
 - c. Student-Led Conferences - Mrs. Thompson said that the first trimester had ended, report cards were being prepared, and student-led conferences were scheduled for Monday afternoon through Google Meets. She said they looking forward to having the opportunity to check in with children and parents.
 - d. COVID Vaccination Clinic - Mrs. Thompson announced that the round 1 COVID vaccination clinic would be held the next day at school with Midcoast hospital, with a follow-up in 3 weeks. She thanked Midcoast for their partnership and for making this happen at WBS.

Old Business

1. In-Person Instruction Updates

Mrs. Thompson said that it has been a challenging couple of weeks at school, and she's

tried to keep the board informed along the way. She explained that 2.5 weeks prior the school had its first positive case associated with it. It was discovered through pool testing, and students and staff who were close contacts, not vaccinated, and not pool testing were quarantined. She said that there also simultaneously were several students in quarantine from community exposures in multiple classrooms and many teachers have been teaching both in person and online throughout the building.

She said that the current status 2.5 weeks later is that there have been 8 cumulative cases with 5 positive cases and 3 recovered as of that afternoon. She said that there were 7 people in addition to the positive cases in quarantine from school exposures, and 7 others in quarantine for community exposures. She expressed that there was once again a challenge with testing, and there is no testing available in the community. Because the school has Binax now tests for pooled testing, the school nurses have been offering testing to some families and employees to help to ensure that they have had access to testing. She said that Midcoast Hospital had also given schools additional tests for that purpose.

Mrs. Thompson said that it's been challenging to determine when to continue to push forward with in-person instruction, and when to move the school to remote instruction universally. She said she had consulted with Dr. Hanna throughout the weekend, and she encouraged Mrs. Thompson to keep school open and increase mitigation efforts on site. Her concern was that if the school went into remote status before Thanksgiving, families would need to rely on each other for care, there would be more mixing of children in places where there are fewer mitigation efforts, and the school may be in a more challenging situation following Thanksgiving. She said that as long as there is staff to keep the school running safely, she encouraged in-person instruction.

Mrs. Thompson said that the school is in outbreak status, which means there have been 3 or more cases in a 2-week period of time, but they have not yet officially been contacted by the CDC nor declared to be an official outbreak. She explained that schools remain in outbreak status until there has not been a positive case for at least two weeks.

Mrs. Thompson said that while they await the CDC call, the decision was made after a second case was announced to go back cohorting recesses as a way to try to reduce the number of close contacts there might be with further cases. She said they are now masking outside, have moved specials back to the regular classroom, and cohorted restrooms to try to reduce movement and potential cross over of students. All classrooms have students spaced 6 feet apart. She said she is hopeful that some of these more stringent guidelines can be relaxed as local conditions improve, but at the moment it seems necessary.

Mrs. Thompson said that more families and staff have opted into pooled testing, and that she appreciates that weekly status check. She said that one of the things that she dreads is putting out the announcement to the community that there has been a case as it is really hard having to refer to positive case as "a case". The cases associated with our school are people who they care about deeply and she wishes there was another way to communicate the news. She said she is also trying to keep in mind that even as new cases are announced, other move into the category of recovered.

She said she recognizes that all schools in the area are struggling. She stated she wished to thank the West Bath families who from March 2020 have made incredible efforts to help to keep our school healthy and safe to be in for in-person learning. She said she would also like to thank the staff who every moment of every day go above and beyond to make sure that students have what they need, whether they are in-person learning or home remotely. She said she was incredibly grateful to the school nurses, who are doing all they can to keep the school up and running. But she said that it is the students who really need the thanks. They adapt to the rule changes, are resilient with changes to mitigation measures, and continue to put their best foot forward and focus on their learning despite challenges around them. She said she continued to be so proud to be a part of this school and community.

She opened the floor to the board for questions.

Mrs. Randall said she wondered if there would be a way to utilize the Friday family update to give updated COVID information through a dashboard, giving the information about what the active case count is, what the recovered case count is and maybe even if it is something that is allowed to be shared, what the percentage of participants in pooled testing might be so that the information is available for those who are interested, but it's not a constant email every day to say that there's another case. She said that at some point those emails stop being impactful. Mrs. Thompson asked Mrs. Randall if she thought that should happen instead of an email with every case, or in addition to. Mrs. Randall said she would be fine with either approach because close contacts are being notified regardless.

Ms. Powers asked about buses, and what changes have happened with buses since the fall. Mrs. Thompson said that nothing has changed with buses in the last two and half weeks, but that bus rules did change since last year. She said that the rule on buses is that everyone has an assigned seat and if there is a case on the bus one is considered to be a close contact if they have been on the bus for more than 15 minutes cumulatively in the day and within 6 feet of the case, and that windows have to be opened for circulation at the front and the back of the bus. She said this year buses are very full. Last year we had asked families to transport students if they were able to, so there were open seats between children, but that is not the current status.

Ms. Powers asked if Mrs. Thompson knew the percentage of students who were participating in the vaccination clinic? Mrs. Thompson said that she had to check on the rules for what could be shared as she had heard other superintendents say that is not shareable information. She said that many students have already accessed the vaccination clinics in Brunswick, but that she would report back when she gets information about what is allowable to be shared.

Mrs. Jungbluth said that she really liked the idea about the dashboard, and maybe it could just be added to the website for people who are seeking that information. She also said that she speaks regularly with the bus driver and she has shared that she would appreciate more information about what is happening from the school so they are better in the loop. Mrs. Thompson said that she appreciated that feedback, but that she speaks

with the bus supervisor regularly and checks in with the bus drivers twice per day, but that she'd connect with them in the morning to find out how to better meet their needs.

Mrs. Jungbluth said that she felt this was a lot for Mrs. Thompson to handle. It's a lot of stress and worry and she really appreciates it, and thinks that the community really appreciates it as well. She said it was a lot to take on on top of daily expectations. She said that she appreciated what Mrs. Thompson was doing to keep to the children safe.

Mrs. Thompson reminded the board that they had voted to have communications sent out with every case, and if they wished to change that to be replaced by the dashboard, they should vote on that. Mr. Hinds said that his personal preference was that the dashboard is added to the weekly update, but that she still continue to communicate with families when there is a case. He said it is not fun to read them, but over-communicating is always better and it better allows families to make decisions for their children. Ms. Powers said that she agreed with Mr. Hinds, and that she liked that plan. Mrs. Randall said that she wanted to echo Mrs. Jungbluth and that they certainly appreciate all that is being done and that hearing over and over again about how the community is partnering with the school, from the children to Midcoast Hospital certainly shows #WeAreCrew and that she appreciates everything she and the school staff are doing to keep kids in school and as safe as possible. Mr. Hinds said he wanted to jump in with agreement, but also acknowledge that when he stopped in to sign the warrant that morning it was nice to see the staff talking and laughing with each other, as it's been stressful for everyone. It was nice to hear laughter.

2. Second Reading of Board Policies

a. EBCA - Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

Mr. Hinds said that there were no changes from the first reading. Mrs. Whorff made a motion to approve the policy. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

b. JLCC-R - Blood Borne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan

Mr. Hinds said again that there were no changes from the first reading. Mrs. Whorff made a motion to approve the policy. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

2. Review of Board Policies

a. JKAA - Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion

Mr. Hinds explained that there were changes to the policy because there were changes in state statute. He explained that the new language was highlighted and the old language had been stricken.

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to approve the policy as revised. Mr. Hinds seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

b. JKAA-R - Procedures on Physical Restraint and Seclusion

Mr. Hinds expressed that these are the accompanying procedures to the policy change, as a result of changes in state statute.

Mrs. Whorff made a motion to approve the policy as revised. Mr. Hinds seconded

the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

New Business

1. Board Standing Committee Assignments
Committee Assignments for 21-22 are as follows:

Board Standing Committees

- *Facilities - Mrs. Whorff & Ms. Powers*
- *Finance - Mr. Hinds & Mrs. Randall*
- *Policy - Mr. Hinds & Mrs. Jungbluth*
- *Negotiations - Mr. Hinds & Ms. Powers*

- **Board Ad-Hoc Committees:**

- *Wellness Council - Ms. Powers & Mrs. Jungbluth*
- *Comprehensive Planning Committee - Mr. Hinds & Mrs. Randall*
- *Technology Committee - Ms. Powers*

Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the committees. Mrs. Randall seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

2. First Reading of Board Policies

- a. KLG - Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities
Mr. Hinds gave an overview of the contents of the policy.
- b. KLG-R - Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities (Procedures)
Mr. Hinds gave an overview of the contents of the policy.

3. Personal Items

- a. Hiring of Hannah Whitney - 80% Special Ed Ed Tech II
Mrs. Thompson shared the hiring of Hannah Whitney. She shared that her experience included substitute teaching at WBS since 2017, subbing in all grade levels and programs. She has 2 summers of prior experience as an assistant activities director leading outdoor activities, a head counselor for a middle school program, and volunteer work coaching youth and leading arts and craft camps. She is the treasurer for the WB parent organization. Her recommendations shared that she is easy to work with, builds good relationships with children of all ages, has good creativity and initiative, is confidential with students and staff, a good communicator, and has a good repertoire of strategies when working with students

Public Comments

None

Mrs. Randall reminded the public how they can submit public comment.

Set Next Meeting Dates and Locations

1. December 15th at 6 PM - Meeting of the West Bath School Board of Directors

Adjourn

Mr. Hinds made a motion to adjourn at 6:58 PM. Ms. Powers seconded the motion. Roll call vote (5-0).

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Thompson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emily Thompson