



GRANT SCHOOL DISTRICT #3

401 N. Canyon City Blvd. • Canyon City, OR 97820
Phone: (541) 575-1280 • Fax: (541) 575-3614

BOARD MEETING TUESDAY, August 3, 2021 • 6:00 P.M. GRANT UNION OLD GYM

MINUTES

1.0 PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1.1 Call to order

1.2 Pledge of allegiance

Pursuant to notification of Grant School District 3 board of directors and news release to The Blue Mountain Eagle, KJDY and posted on the district web site. Haley Walker called the school board meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Other board members in attendance were Aaron Lieuallen, Jake Taylor, Dr. Colleen Robertson and Chris Labhart. Kelly Stokes was absent. Superintendent Bret Uptmor and Business Manager Heidi Hallgarth were also present.

1.3 Agenda Review

1.4 Public Forum

Dr. James Klusmier read a statement that he prepared concerning mask wearing which included statistics and science on why children should not be masked.

Walker explained that the goal of the meeting was to get input from the group and send that on to the State. Walker told the audience that there would not be any decisions made tonight.

Jessica Moore asked when the parents would have a definite answer from the district on masks. Walker said that ODE is sending out the mask rule on August 12th and the district's plan is not due to the State until closer to the start of school so the district will turn in the current plan and see what the State says while the district continues to advocate for local control.

Athena Moline read a statement that stated that the parents that are pushing for masks in the 2021-22 school year do not have any scientific proof for their wishes. Moline went on to state scientific proof as to why students should not be wearing masks.

1.5 Swear in New Board Members --Moved to 1.4.

Chris Labhart

Kelly Stokes was absent

Jake Taylor

Aaron Lieuallen

Haley Walker

Robertson swore in Labhart, Taylor, Lieuallen and Walker.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Chairman Haley Walker • Chris Labhart • Aaron Lieuallen • Dr. Colleen Robertson • Kelly Stokes • Jake Taylor

2.0 New Business

2.1 Appoint Board Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the 2021-22 School Year

Robertson nominated Walker as the board chair. Taylor seconded.

Robertson nominated Lieuallen as the Vice-Chair. Taylor seconded.

The motions passed with 5 for; 0 opposed.

2.2 Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework for 2021-22 School Year

Uptmor thanked the parents for the input that they have provided to the district and for also submitting their concerns to the State. Uptmor told the audience that the Superintendents on the Eastern side of the state would be meeting with Representative Owens and Senator Findley on Friday.

Uptmor explained to the parents what Colt Gill reported to the Superintendents on Monday, August 2nd. A copy of that summary is on file at the district office. Taylor asked who would be the enforcer of the complaints. Uptmor said that OSHA would be investigating the reports.

Uptmor was asked what the school's position would be if the district did get local control back. Uptmor said that the district would make masks a recommendation but not a requirement.

Uptmor was asked what the local health department's position on this mandate was. Uptmor said that when he talked to Kimberly Lindsey she said that she was for local control.

Jessa Bigsby asked what the board and district are going to do if there are students that will not wear a mask and how will the district and board protect the teachers under these circumstances. Walker said that she didn't think the district could give the students an option on wearing a mask or not but she also didn't think that the district could force them to wear one. Uptmor told Bigsby that every employee in the district was in the same boat as the teachers. Uptmor said that if the district is enforcing the mask mandate with the students that become recordable and proof that the district is trying to follow the mandate. Walker said that her understanding of the rule is that if the teachers are reminding the students to wear the masks then these are things that can be used as part of the investigation by OSHA. Bigsby said that she has reached out to other districts in the State and there are other Superintendents that are not going to enforce the mandate. Bigsby told the board that Grand School District 3 needed to follow suit with the other districts. Taylor said that is why Uptmor is trying to advocate for local control so that the parents can decide.

The board was asked how many chances the students were going to get regarding wearing their mask before they are forced to do online schooling. Walker said that the board does not get involved in the daily interaction with the students so that would be determined at the school level.

Corey Anderson said that she did not like the word "recommendation" in the plan. Anderson said that she worries that the teachers or administration that are pro mask will try to force the students to wear masks in their classroom and that should be the parent's choice. Walker said that the district will not enforce that, masks will be the parents' choice and teachers and administration will not be allowed to force these students to wear masks if the district gets local control.

Melissa Galbreath asked if there is a waiver that parents can sign to opt out of wearing a mask. Uptmor said that question was asked in the Superintendent meeting and the answer from ODE was no there is not.

Justin Galbreath told the board that he appreciates the push for local control, but he doesn't think that is going to happen. He doesn't believe that Brown will give that power back to the districts.

Jessica Moore said that the State just keeps making things worse. Moore asked what the board/district would do when vaccines are mandated or critical race theory is being enforced. Moore asked if the district would go along with the State because the district doesn't have local control.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Chairman Haley Walker ▪ Chris Labhart ▪ Aaron Lieuallen ▪ Dr. Colleen Robertson ▪ Kelly Stokes ▪ Jake Taylor

The board was told that the district needs to find a way to dig in and protect our kids while also protecting the teachers, administration, etc.

Moline said that the board needed to read the constitution and hire a constitutional lawyer. Moline said that everybody needed to wake up, find out what was really going on and fight against Kate Brown.

Dr. Klusmier asked if there was a way for Eastern Oregon districts to band together to fight this mandate. Walker said she thought that was a good point and should definitely be talked about once all other avenues are exhausted.

The board was asked what would happen to the funding if all of the students left the district.

Tye Parsons said that OSHA has to make an appointment when they come to town to do an investigation. Parsons said that the doors are locked and people have to check in at the office so saying that OSHA will show up and fine the district sounds ludicrous. Parsons said they have to let you know why they are investigating an incident. Parsons asked if students could get in trouble if they are not wearing their mask. Uptmor said that in Seneca there is a spot in the classroom where the students can go, pull their mask down and take a break from the mask. Parsons asked if enforcement was going to be the same as last year or could the teachers and administration be a little more lenient. Parsons asked what compliance looked like for the district. Uptmor said that he had asked that question in the Superintendent meeting and did not get an answer from ODE. Parsons told the board that his kids hate school and that the teachers are going to stop teaching and become the mask police because they are worried about getting in trouble and being liable.

Lieuallen asked if the specific questions on supporting the teachers and liability have been asked of legal counsel. Walker said that the district wants to be educating our students not being a mask enforcer.

Uptmor was asked if there was any talk at the Superintendent meeting of all of the Superintendents in the state saying we're not going to do this and if there is how is Brown going to enforce it. Uptmor said that the Eastern Oregon superintendents are all going to work together and become one voice to talk to the governor.

Janine Weaver asked how the district plans on reaching the students who are forced to attend online schooling because they won't wear a mask. Weaver said that if both parents work in the household then there is no one there to ensure that they are doing their school work and those students will lose a year of schooling. Robertson said that we are all here to do the best for the kids and that they are all working for that.

Lieuallen asked Gerry if the principals in the county have talked and shared with each other what has and has not worked in their schools. Lieuallen asked if there was a way to be creative while constantly thinking about what is best for students. Gerry said that he has not had those discussions with any local principals but he is part of a Statewide group that has had those discussions. Gerry said that he didn't know if there was an answer for this issue and that he is personally frustrated. Lieuallen asked what the direction on mask enforcement was from the administration to the teachers. Gerry said that they will create a plan this year, similar to what they did last year, that will be reviewed and then followed at Grant Union. Gerry said that if there are students in class that don't want to wear a mask they will be asked to wear them and if they still refuse then there will be a discussion with the student, the parents and himself to try to correct the issue.

A parent told the board that they did not want the kids to wear masks when school starts and asked what would happen if the parents refused to send their kids to school with a mask.

Labhart asked the audience if they trust the information given to them by the health department. The parents said that they did not because they will probably do what they are told to do. Labhart said that he has asked a few of the kids if they want to be in school and the kids are telling him that they do. Labhart told the parents that the teachers are responsible for more than what the parents realize they are.

Taylor went and sat in the audience and told the board (as a parent) that his daughter had COVID and so now has the antibodies. Taylor asked what would happen if she were to get another kind of virus from wearing the mask, what is the district's liability in those situations.

Paige Weaver, a student at Grant Union, told the board that she struggled this year hearing and understanding the teachers and just learning in general. Weaver said that she went from a 4.0 student to barely passing her classes. Weaver said that

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Chairman Haley Walker • Chris Labhart • Aaron Lieuallen • Dr. Colleen Robertson • Kelly Stokes • Jake Taylor

she appreciated the adults fighting for the students but it was time for the students to start advocating for themselves as well.

The board was asked how are the kids are going to know how to pronounce their words when they are forced to wear masks. The parent asked the administration if the teachers were going to be able to wear face shields so that the students can hear and see their faces. Uptmor said that there had not been any direction on that this year. Uptmor said that they were able to wear face shields while giving direct instruction but not general instruction last year.

Josh Walker told the board that he thought it was highly unlikely that the State would end up fining the school district or stripping the teachers of their licenses when we are already struggling to not have our school close down completely. Walker said that he planned on sending his two high school students to public school, because online school will not work for his family, without a mask. Walker said that he is going to instruct them to go to class and he hopes that it won't come down to physical removal of his children.

Jessica Moore told the board that the parents are already at the point of saying "no" our children will not be wearing masks. Moore said that she didn't feel like the board was there yet because the parents have not really gotten any answers from the board.

Melissa Galbreath said that she feels like the board is protecting themselves and the parents are here protecting the kids.

Taylor asked the audience if they felt like there was a disconnect. The audience told the board that yes, they did.

MT Anderson told the board that they took an oath to protect the constitution and mandates are not constitutional. Anderson told the board that they really needed to look and find out if the mandate is constitutional. Anderson said that this was just a scare tactic by the State and the board is scared.

A member of the audience told the board that they say that students are first, but the teachers need to be considered as well. Walker said that the fines are not as important to her as what the teachers think about the mandate. Walker said that the district had not talked to the teachers yet to see how they feel. Tye Parsons said that if the district would send an email to the teachers telling them that the district supports them and they are covered by the district that would mean a lot.

Amanda Lindsey told the board that her son enrolled in online school last year due to the mask mandate and that they were hoping he could return to school this year but with this mandate they are reconsidering their options. Lindsey asked Uptmor if there was any legal recourse for the parents regarding the mandate that is coming down from the State. Lindsey said that she is a federal employee and The President is already working on punishing federal employees for not getting vaccinated. Lindsey told the audience that if they think that won't happen to their students, it is coming. Walker said that she didn't know if there was any legal stance for parents. Uptmor said that he could ask if parents can sue the district because we are requiring students to wear masks.

Dr. Klusmier said that if Eastern Oregon does decide to take that stance that they will not require masks that statement needs to be ready to be sent as soon as the State says no to local control.

Megan Workman said that she thinks the entire county districts and school boards need to get together and work together to say no to masks. Workman said she thought that there should be some parental involvement as well. Uptmor told the audience that he thinks that the other school districts will have the same concerns expressed to them as you are expressing here tonight. Uptmor said that he thinks it will be better if all of Eastern Oregon can be unified as one voice over just having the County make a statement.

A parent asked Uptmor if there was a unified message that the district wants the parents to pass on to the State. Uptmor asked the audience to send their messages to him as well as the legislatures but that he will not dictate what they should and should not say to the State. Walker said that as a parent I want to know what constitutes them making the decision for a mask mandates and what is the threshold to reverse that decision.

Lieuallen asked the audience if the return to school plan said that masks are recommended but not required would that okay with them. The audience said that the recommendation of masks is okay if the teachers and administrators are not mandating that students are wearing them in class.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Chairman Haley Walker • Chris Labhart • Aaron Lieuallen • Dr. Colleen Robertson • Kelly Stokes • Jake Taylor

Justin Galbreath asked the board if they were willing to make a statement that says Grant School District 3 will not wear masks.

Corrie Anderson asked the board what their personal opinion on the mask mandate was. Robertson said that the board speaks as one voice and the board did send a letter as one voice. Robertson told the audience that the board's personal opinions aren't relevant tonight, it is their opinions that are relevant tonight.

Taylor said that his child would not go to school with a mask on. Taylor asked what will happen to students when they don't wear masks.

Robertson told the audience that she didn't feel like any of the board had any fear. Robertson said that they all have been pushing back. Jessica Moore asked how the board had been fighting back because the parents have not heard what they are doing. Robertson said they wrote a letter. The audience asked what letter the board was talking about because they had not seen a letter. Uptmor pulled up the letter and put it on the overhead screen.

Taylor made a motion that there would not be any masks required by Grant School District #3 in the 2021-22 school year. Labhart seconded the motion for discussion purposes.

Labhart told the audience that the board represents the entire school district and our students need to be in school but the board needs to look out for the entire school district. Labhart said that he would like to get the information from ODE on the 12th and then meet on the 13th to make a final decision.

Robertson said that she was concerned about the financial consequences for the teachers. Robertson also said that the board needs to look at the parents that want their kids to wear masks. Robertson said that she thought that masks should be optional and not no masks.

Lieuallen said that he likes the idea of setting a date to make a decision instead of kicking the can down the road.

Taylor said that he appreciated Labhart seconding the motion. Taylor said that the board needed to look at the legal ramification for the district if the decision is made to make masks optional. Taylor said that he thought that they also needed to look at the difference between right and wrong.

Walker thanked both Taylor and Labhart for the motion and second. Walker said that she thinks it is important for parents to have the option of what is best for their kids. Walker said that the board was looking out for the kids but she wanted to talk to the staff and make sure that this choice would not put them in a difficult decision. Walker said she will definitely make herself available on the 12th or 13th to discuss this further. Walker said she wants to see a consistent policy throughout the district.

Labhart asked if he could vote if he was not physically at the meeting. Walker said that he could call in or Zoom in to cast his vote.

Walker said that she feels that the district has a good plan in place that will protect the kids so she thinks that masks should be optional.

Paige Weaver asked if the district was going to ask the students opinions as well as the teachers. Walker said that she wanted to talk to the teachers because they are the one that are personally liable under this mandate. Labhart told the board that his goal for the board was to have a non-voting student representative on the board.

The motion failed with 2 for and Lieuallen, Walker and Labhart voting no. Walker and Lieuallen both said that they voted no so that they could get further information on August 12th and from legal counsel before making a decision.

The board agreed to schedule another meeting after August 12th.

Uptmor went over the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan section by section with the parents.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Chairman Haley Walker ▪ Chris Labhart ▪ Aaron Lieuallen ▪ Dr. Colleen Robertson ▪ Kelly Stokes ▪ Jake Taylor

Mental Health Issues

A member of the audience asked if Grant Union was going to be on a block schedule again this year. Gerry said that they were not.

A parent asked if the students would be allowed to take classes out of their grade level this year. Gerry said that they would.

Communicable Disease Management Plan

Uptmor was asked if the district was going to be pushing vaccinations on students. Uptmor said that the district would not be.

Uptmor was asked if the district would be looking down on the students that aren't vaccinated. Uptmor said that they will not be looked down upon.

Uptmor asked if students would be segregated by vaccinated and non-vaccinated. Uptmor said that they would not be.

Uptmor was asked if students would be tested without parental consent. Uptmor said that they would not be.

Uptmor was asked if teachers would be directed not to push the vaccine on the students. Uptmor said that they would be.

Mitigation Strategies

Gerry was asked if students were getting green backs from the school if they were vaccinated. –Gerry said that greenbacks were being given out at the vaccination clinics but the school was not handing them out.

Labhart asked if all of the rooms had air ventilation. Uptmor said that they did not. Labhart asked Uptmor why that wasn't done using the million dollars that the district received from COVID. Uptmor said that the air has to be circulated five times an hour and the HVAC systems do not do that so the district is looking at getting air purifiers.

Uptmor was asked if the school would have to shut down if we ran into a situation where there were not enough subs to cover the quarantined teachers. Uptmor said that is what happened last year.

An audience member suggested contacting the health department to see if the quarantine recommendations are different for students that have had COVID.

Uptmor was asked why are the unmasked/unvaccinated are treated differently, especially if it was just announced today that masks don't work. Uptmor said that question was posed at the Superintendents' meeting but he couldn't remember what the State's position was on the subject.

The board was asked why people that are exposed after they've been vaccinated are not forced to quarantine. Uptmor said that would be a health authority question because they are the ones that determines who need to quarantine.

Uptmor was asked if parents could opt out of their child using hand sanitizer. Labhart asked if the district had hand washing stations. Uptmor said that the teachers used hand sanitizer in the elementary because of the time that it saves. Uptmor told the parent to communicate their wishes with their child's teacher, they did not need to sign a waiver.

Uptmor was asked when the audience could expect an answer on the question of sending their children to school without a mask and what those disciplinary actions would look like. Uptmor said that the district would have that answer at the next board meeting around the 12th of August.

Uptmor told the audience that COVID Testing and screening would only be done with a signed release form from the parents.

Accommodations for Children with Disabilities

Labhart said that this was the one group he was really worried about. Labhart said that if we lose them they will really fall behind.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Chairman Haley Walker • Chris Labhart • Aaron Lieuallen • Dr. Colleen Robertson • Kelly Stokes • Jake Taylor

3.0 FUTURE AGENDA AND CALENDAR ITEMS

- August 16 Teacher In-service
- August 23 First Day of School
- August 25 Board Meeting
- September 15..... Board Meeting
- October 20..... Board Meeting
- Nov. 11-13..... Annual OSBA Convention
- January 19 Board Meeting
- February 16 Board Meeting
- March 16 Board Meeting
- April 20 Board Meeting (Seneca)
- May 4 Budget Meeting
- May 18 Board/(Optional) Budget Meeting
- June 1 Budget Hearing/Board Meeting
- June 2 Last Day of School
- June 3 Teacher In-service

7.0 GOOD OF THE ORDER

Lieuallen told the audience that there was a vacant position on the board. A member of the audience asked how that position would be filled. Uptmor said that the board would direct him to post the position at the August 25th board meeting, it would be advertised in the paper, the board would conduct interviews and make their choice and then appoint the successful applicant at the September board meeting.

8.0 ADJOURN

Walker adjourned the meeting at 9:03 pm

_____ August 25, 2021
 Haley Walker
 Chairman’s Signature

_____ August 25, 2021
 Bret Uptmor
 Clerk’s Signature