



Potomac Elementary School

School Board Minutes

For
March 8th, 2021

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*"Potomac School equips each student for his/her future
within a culture of excellence that values the small community experience."*

Call to Order

In room 112, Chair Vann called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm by leading all in the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice Chair Kelsy Ployhar and trustees Wes Mitchell and Dr. Courtney Hathaway were present. Trustee Gary Long attended via Webex. Principal John Rouse and Clerk, Heather Marcella, were also in attendance.

Public Input (for issues not on the agenda) None.

Consent Agenda

Minutes of February 8th, 16th, and 22nd were on the Consent Agenda
Warrant Lists – Total Claims = \$28,740.19 Total Payroll = \$78,641.04
Business Cards – Included in Total Claims noted.

Petty Cash – Supplemental to monthly warrants used between Board Meetings – Reimbursed thru Claims.
Extracurricular (Student Accounts) – On February 1, 2021- \$58,011.86 thru February 28, 2021 - \$60,801.61.

Vice Chair Kelsy Ployhar moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Dr. Courtney Hathaway seconded the motion.

Passed 5-0

8th Grade Class Trip Report –

Cale Vann, Morgan O'Hara, and Lily VanGrinsven presented to the Board via Webex. The class has met and exceeded their projected budget with an estimated \$5,000 surplus. Chair Cliff Vann asked the class to report back to the board after their trip at the June meeting.

Teacher Reports:

Damian Gaglia

Damian Gaglia discussed the school wide poetry reading that was held earlier in the day. Students presented their poetry in front of the entire school. He had the chance to observe 7th and 8th grade and was proud of their poems. Damian also discussed the transition process for 8th graders entering into high school next year. Mrs. Van Kerkhove and Damian plan to do a joint unit where the students incorporate Social Studies with writing. They are planning a book report project based on civil war historical fiction.

Christianna Taillefer

Christi Taillefer also discussed the poetry reading, she was able to observe the entire presentation. Christi's ELA class is working on informational writing. They just finished their rough draft. This year students are allowed to pick their own topic. The class is learning how to research and properly cite reference text.

Principal’s Report – John Rouse

All of the following activities and accomplishments would not have been possible without the full cooperation and engagement of all of the Potomac School staff members.

Teaching and Learning

- Kristina Davis has been selected by the Montana Environmental Education Association as their Formal Educator of the Year.

News Release

**Potomac School District Teacher Receives
Montana Environmental Education Association’s
Formal Educator of the Year Award**

Kristina Davis, a seventeen-year veteran science and mathematics teacher with the Potomac School District, has received recognition as the Montana Environmental Education Association’s Formal Educator of the Year. Each year, the Montana Environmental Education Association (MEEA) recognizes two environmental educators to celebrate both a formal, classroom educator and a non-formal, out of classroom educator who have demonstrated service and leadership in the field of environmental education. MEEA works to progress environmental literacy across Montana and we believe one of the best ways to do this is to showcase innovative educators and elevate them to share their best practices.

Mrs. Davis peeks her students’ interest through her innovative presentation of lessons in environmental science by building on her own personal experiences as an outdoor enthusiast, hunter, and naturalist. It helps to be married to an outdoorsman and to have two enthusiastic sons who love the outdoors. Lily VanGrinsven, an 8th grade student at Potomac School, says, “I really like Mrs. Davis as a teacher because she tries to make what she is teaching fun and understandable for all her students.” Sarah Schmill, Potomac School District Instructional Coach and fellow teacher says about Mrs. Davis. Mrs. Davis's love of science and learning is evident in her classroom! She is continually asking students higher level questions to encourage them to dig deeper in their learning and understanding of the world around them. She provides students with thoughtful and engaging lessons and projects to develop and further their knowledge, as well as challenges them to be persistent and work through their struggles. Potomac School is lucky to have such a dedicated and engaging science teacher!

- During the month of March, I am involved in the process of completing the performance evaluations for those teachers who are scheduled for their formal evaluations. Evaluating the performance of teachers is a key responsibility of the principal, and it is an on-going process that continues throughout each school year. The collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the Potomac Educator’s Association clarifies the details of the process. Teachers are identified as tenure or non-tenure teachers based on whether or not they have completed three successful years of teaching for our school district. The primary evaluation instrument is one that is based on Dr. Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching. The Framework consists of four domains:
 - Planning and Preparation,
 - Learning Environment,
 - Instructional Effectiveness for Student Learning, and
 - Professional Responsibilities.
- The Framework details the critical attributes under each of the four domains. The Framework further delineates the specific attributes that are associated with four different levels of performance: exemplary, proficient, developing, and unsatisfactory. Below is one example that shows the four levels of performance for the area of student engagement.

3c: Engaging Students in Learning

Level 4 - Virtually all students are intellectually engaged in challenging content through well-designed learning tasks and activities that require complex thinking by students. The teacher provides suitable scaffolding and challenges students to explain their thinking. There is evidence of some student initiation of inquiry and student contributions to the exploration of important content; students may serve as resources for one another. The lesson has a clearly defined structure, and the pacing of the lesson provides students the time needed not only to intellectually engage with and reflect upon their learning but also to consolidate their understanding.

CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES

- . Virtually all students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.
- . Lesson activities require high-level student thinking and explanations of their thinking.
- . Students take initiative to adapt the lesson by (1) modifying a learning task to make it more meaningful or relevant to their needs, (2) suggesting modifications to the grouping patterns used, and/or (3) suggesting modifications or additions to the materials being used.
- . Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.

Level 3 - The learning tasks and activities are designed to challenge student thinking, inviting students to make their thinking visible. This technique results in active intellectual engagement by most students with important and challenging content and with teacher scaffolding to support that engagement. The lesson has a clearly defined structure, and the pacing of the lesson is appropriate, providing most students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.

CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES

- . Most students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.
- . Most learning tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches and/or encourage higher-order thinking.
- . Students are invited to explain their thinking as part of completing tasks.
- . Materials and resources require intellectual engagement, as appropriate.
- . The pacing of the lesson provides students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.

Level 2 -The learning tasks and activities require only minimal thinking by students and little opportunity for them to explain their thinking, allowing most students to be passive or merely compliant. The lesson has a recognizable structure; however, the pacing of the lesson may not provide students the time needed to be intellectually engaged or may be so slow that many students have a considerable amount of "downtime."

CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES

- . Some students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.
- . Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and those requiring recall.
- . Student engagement with the content is largely passive; the learning consists primarily of facts or procedures.
- . Few of the materials and resources require student thinking or ask students to explain their thinking.
- . The pacing of the lesson is uneven-suitable in parts but rushed or dragging in others.

Level 1 - The learning tasks/activities, materials, and resources require only rote responses, with only one approach possible. The lesson has no clearly defined structure, or the pace of the lesson is too slow or rushed.

CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES

- . Few students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.
- . Learning tasks/activities and materials require only recall or have a single correct response or method.
- . Instructional materials used are unsuitable to the lesson and/or the students.
- . The lesson drags or is rushed.

Board of Trustees..... 4

- There are multiple components involved in the teacher performance process. The Framework for Teaching mentioned above is the basis for the formal observations (Note: Each teacher receives two formal observations and at least one informal observation).
- Informal observations are unannounced, and I use a couple of different observation instruments for those. One of the instruments is based on our locally-developed Instructional Framework. This is the Framework that we have been discussing over the past few board meetings. I also use a classroom observation tool that we use when doing curriculum management audits (CMSi Schoolview). It includes a listing of Powerful Instructional Practices as “look-fors” for the observer. A copy of this form has been included in the board packet.
- After completing the two formal observations and at least one informal observation, the teacher and I have a summative conference during which we discuss the overall or summative evaluation.

Budget and Finance

- The bids that we received for the replacement of our current oil-burning gas furnaces were within our preliminary estimates.

Student Activities

- The 8th Grade students were successful raising the necessary funds for their end-of-the-year culminating experience in Moab, Utah.

Safety

- We have completed our Montana Department of Labor & Industry’s Safety Compliance Inspection process. We received their inspection report on February 24, 2021. Their report includes a list of “serious and other than serious” violations and recommended actions. There were two “serious Violations” both of which were abated before this report was prepared.
- “Serious” violation #1- An annual self-inspection of the Potomac Elementary School had not been completed prior to the inspection.
- Recommended action- Self-inspections must be completed at least annually. Self-inspection must be documented. **Violation abated on 2/16/2021**
- “Serious” violation #2 – Potomac Elementary School has a safety committee team but has not met per the requirements of the Montana Safety Culture Act (At least four times per year).
- Recommended action – Safety committee meetings must be held every four (4) months. Meeting minutes and agendas must be kept. **Violation abated 2/11/2021**
- “Other than serious” violation – Maintain the OSHA 300, 300A, and 301 forms for recordable injuries. Documentation was not provided at the time of the inspection. **Documentation sent 3/1/2021**

Facilities

- We received sealed bids for our furnace replacement project from two providers on March 2, 2021 at 2:00 pm. Both bids met the bid specifications, and they were submitted on time. The bids were provided to the facilities committee members from the board for their review. The committee will present the bids to the board along with their recommendation for action.

Respectfully submitted by:

John P. Rouse, Principal

Clerk’s Report

The Clerk reported on the General Fund Budget review for current year and 2021-2022. Also included were details pertaining to a possible third ESSER grant. Expenditures above \$10,000 were reported. Chair Cliff Vann asked the Clerk to move the 2nd Strategic Plan & Goals for following fiscal year to the May meeting on the School Board Calendar.

Board Professional Development Reports

Chair Cliff Vann completed the board packet review. Trustee Dr. Courtney Hathaway signed up for MTSBA training.

Old Business

Community Center Lease Update

Trustees Wes Mitchell and Dr. Courtney Hathaway presented a new version of the lease for review and approval. Vice Chair Kelsy Ployhar moved to approve the Potomac Greenough Community Center Lease agreement for 2021-2022. Dr. Courtney Hathaway seconded the motion. The board reviewed the latest revision. **Passed 5-0**

MTSBA Policy Updates – 2nd Reading

Dr. Courtney Hathaway moved to approve the MTSBA policy updates as listed for a 2nd reading. Wes Mitchell seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

New Business

Student Activities Discussion and Possible Action for 2021 Track Season

The board decided no action was needed, instead they would give administrative guidance. Principal John Rouse advised that he contacted members of the Western Montana Superintendents Association to see which schools were participating in track. There were 8 other schools planning to hold a track season. Some schools will not hold a season due to concerns over track meets. The board agreed that the health risk is limited because track is an outdoor sport. The board supports the administration in proceeding with the spring 2021 track season.

Approval of Propane Project Bid from Design Air

Vice Chair Kelsy Ployhar moved to approve the propane project bid from Design Air reflecting the original bid modified to allow for dual fuel units plus the supplemental add-ons for the HRV units and the removal of the existing furnace for a total furnace project bid of \$73,407.00. Dr. Courtney Hathaway seconded the motion. The board reviewed the bid document. **Passed 5-0**

General Fund Budget Review for 20/21 and 21/22

The Board reviewed the General Fund Budgets.

Review the 1900 Series of Policies

Chair Cliff Vann advised there would be no motion made. He would provide for review and discussion along with public comment. Chair Vann contacted MTSBA, Kaleva Law, and polled the Potomac School teaching staff in preparation for the meeting. The Missoula County Health Department continues to uphold a mask mandate. MTSBA advised that if the District goes against the mandate it could stand to lose “good Samaritan” protections under the applicable Montana Code Annotated laws. Kaleva Law advised that the district would likely have to take the Missoula County Health Department to court because the county-wide mask mandate is legally enforceable. The Potomac School teaching staff supports following the mask mandate in order to keep the school open through the end of the year.

The Board decided to give administrative guidance to loosen the protocols for students while outside. Grade levels K-3 no longer need to remain in separate cohort groups while outside. The same for grades 4-8. Students will not be required to wear masks while outside. Adults and staff are still required to wear masks outside if social distancing is not possible.

Chair Van opened the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Nick Salter, a parent – Mr. Salter expressed disappointment in the Board’s position. He waited for the special meeting that was promised once the Governor made a change to the mask mandate, but no meeting came. He wanted to see the school remove the mask mandate.

Trustee Dr. Courtney Hathaway asked Mr. Salter if he was in favor of the District suing the health department in order to do away with the school’s mask mandate.

Mr. Salter said yes.

Ms. Amanda Martinez, a parent - Ms. Martinez stated she agreed with Mr. Salter and shared his viewpoint.

Mr. Tom Peterson, a community member – Mr. Peterson was in favor of lifting the mask mandate, though he acknowledged the challenge the school would face if it went against the Missoula Health Department. Mr. Peterson said the masks should be made optional, whether to wear them or not, according to family preference.

Ms. Alicia Vanderheiden, a parent - Ms. Vanderheiden thanked the school for their current course of action. Ms. Vanderheiden supported the mask mandate. She expressed that it should stay in place until significant changes were made by the legislature and county health department.

Mr. Steven VanGrinsven, a parent - Mr. VanGrinsven was in favor of lifting the mask mandate, however he expressed not being in favor of litigation with the health department. He would see the District’s limited resources put to better use.

Trustee Gary Long expressed his support to make mask wearing based on choice. He said it was the first he had heard that the District would have to sue the county health department.

Ms. Amanda Martinez – Ms. Martinez said that students are being reprimanded outside for not wearing masks.

Mr. Chip Duello, a parent - Mr. Duello was in favor of lifting the mask mandate. He said that with regard to suing the health department the circumstances were unprecedented and he believed Kaleva Law gave a legal opinion. Although he would like to see the school sue the health department he knows that it would be hard to do. Mr. Duello cited the CDC, the WHO and Dr. Fauci saying that there was limited evidence that masking would provide protection.

Trustee Gary Long stated he was with Mr. Salter, and was upset that it would take suing the county to allow students to go without a mask.

Mr. Nick Salter - Mr. Salter said the Board’s decision to not make a motion happened at the last meeting as well. He asked if the board planned to take action at the next meeting.

Chairman Cliff Vann stated it was his decision to add the mask mandate to the agenda in order to have a discussion. Unless a change happened at the legislative or county level, he would not put it on the agenda again.

Mr. Nick Salter – Mr. Salter expressed anger over Chair Vann’s statement. He called on Trustees to initiate a vote.

Trustee Gary Long stated he would like to look into whether the District truly has to sue the county to lift the District’s mask mandate.

Vice Chair Kelsy Ployhar said that Chair Vann was not refusing to put it on the agenda, but that there was no point in revisiting at this time. Once there has been a change the board will revisit the District mask mandate.

Principal Rouse stated the administration would loosen the cohort group restrictions and would not require masks for students when outdoors.

Adjourn

Chair Vann adjourned the meeting at 9:25 pm.

Cliff Vann, Chair

date

Heather Marcella, Clerk

date