

MEETING MINUTES
SCHOOL BOARD OF SANTA ROSA COUNTY
April 20, 2021-6:30 PM

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

The School Board of Santa Rosa County met in regular session at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present: Mrs. Wei Ueberschaer, Chairperson; Mrs. Linda Sanborn, Vice-Chairperson; Mrs. Carol Boston, Mr. Charles Elliott, and Mrs. Elizabeth Hewey.

Also present were School Board Attorney, Terry Harmon; and Dr. Karen Barber, Superintendent of Schools and Secretary.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Chairman called the meeting to order and Susan McCole led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and in a moment of silence.

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of School Board Workshop Minutes of April 6, 2021

Motion to Approve was moved by Linda Sanborn, Seconded by Charles Elliott. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

2. Approval of School Board Meeting Minutes of April 6, 2021

Motion to Approve was moved by Elizabeth Hewey, Seconded by Carol Boston. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

D. Oral Written Communications

1. Resolution Proclaiming Month of April 2021 as "Autism Awareness" Month

Motion to Approve was moved by Elizabeth Hewey, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the resolution proclaiming the month of April 2021 as "Autism Awareness" month.

Mrs. Boston reminded everyone that the Autism OdysSea will be held on April 24 at the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station.

2. Santa Rosa Financial Audit

For a complete word for word transcript of this presentation, please see the video.

Allen Jowers of Carr, Riggs, & Ingram presented the financial audit review and report.

Mr. Jowers noted the following:

- The audit was performed for the past year ending June 30, 2020.
- There are multiple pieces involved.
- The audit relates to federal monies in some pieces; three federal programs were reviewed.
- CRI audits two out of every three years and the state audits the third year (which was last year).
- This audit reviews compliance with grants and projects as well as laws and regulations from a state and federal level.

This is a clean audit report; Santa Rosa School District has received a clean audit for the last three years.

E. Recognitions/Resolutions/Proclamations

1. 2021 Science Fair Recognition

Jeff Baugus, Coordinator for Math and Science, came forward to recognize Science & Engineering Fair Award winners. Jodi Russell, Science teacher at Holley Navarre Middle School, joined Mr. Baugus in acknowledging the following students.

Heidi Van Antwerpen (state winner), Sidney Teague (state winner), Omeir Bakhshi (state participant), Rory Curtis (state participant), Ava Hopper (state participant), Emma Bailey, Joseph "Alex" Ballard, Braedon Bautista, Lily Bayard, Chloe Bransten, Evelyn Byers, Domenic Criasia, Gianna Della Ratta, Harrison Graham, Elisa Hume, Jason Jones, Easton Lovelace, Aden Ottley, William Payton, Isabella Peet, Molly Pittman, Jacob Roberts, Marcus Rodriguez, Diego Rojas-Rau, Burke Sayer, Trigg Sayer, Mateo Soto

F. Public Hearing

For a complete word for word transcript of the public hearing, please see the video.

Mrs. Ueberschaer clarified for the audience that the mask mandate is not part of the School Board policy updates on the agenda this evening.

Chairperson Mrs. Wei Ueberschaer asked if anyone would like to address

the Board regarding the School Board policy updates; no one came forward.

1. Public Hearing on SB Policy Updates

Motion to Approve was moved by Charles Elliott, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved School Board Policy updates as recommended.

2. Conduct Public Hearing and Request Approval of the Adoption of Instructional Materials for English/Language Arts

For a complete word for word transcript, please see the video. The following presentations to the Board have been condensed.

Chairperson Mrs. Wei Ueberschaer asked if anyone would like to address the Board regarding the adoption of instructional materials for English/Language Arts.

Debbie Gunnoe came forward to express her concerns with the kindergarten curriculum. Ms. Gunnoe stated that there are pages that she feels disguise critical race theory/racism as diversity and she feels they promote division rather than unity. She also stated that according to U.S. News and World Report reading, math, and college readiness scores decreased in 2019.

Ms. Gunnoe read the following Santa Rosa proficiency scores - reading 65%; math 38%; college readiness 13%. She stated that we should be focusing on basics rather than emotional training and setting up democracies in the classroom.

(Dr. Barber corrected this statement in her comments under Superintendent items: our math proficiency rate is actually 70%. Ms. Gunnoe made several erroneous statements which Dr. Barber corrected.)

Patti Burk feels that superficial, outward appearance does not determine success; it should not affect how we view ourselves and how we view others. Ms. Burk continued that students who are told they're the victim may act like the victim.

Dr. Barber expressed appreciation for the input. We are structuring focus on all students being successful and having high expectations for all children regardless of ethnicity or outward appearance. Dr. Barber continued that the focus of this hearing is the adoption of our English/Language Arts curriculum.

John Clinton stated that he's glad someone is out there reading this material. He asked if we could "take a pause on this" and vote on it at the

next meeting. Dr. Barber responded that we cannot; this is the public hearing.

Cynthia Licharowicz came forward and asked if the school district is going to teach critical race theory in our schools. She stated that she has not seen these materials and she "doesn't want my kid learning that crap in schools."

Dr. Barber asked Floyd Smith to explain the process for adopting materials. Mr. Smith gave an overview of the process the State of Florida goes through before putting materials on the approved list. The state vets all publishers before placing them on the list to be sure they're abiding by state regulations in order to be considered for school curriculum. Santa Rosa School District uses the state adoption list to invite publishers to come to our county and present to teachers who are part of our Instructional Material Committee. The Committee has a rubric to ensure the materials meet the required standards. The Committee takes the list of publishers back to individual schools where they spend months reviewing the material with administrators. They come back together as a committee and list pros and cons from the school based meetings. A ballot is sent out to school-based administrators with the top three listed for them to vote on. Mr. Smith noted that the important part is that every publisher has gone through a process at the state level to ensure they meet state standards to be on the approved list to be available for school districts to adopt.

Mr. Smith shared that critical race theory was not part of the discussion before making a selection. He pointed out that the adoption is advertised in newspapers and they are available for review at the Dillon Center. (These materials are also available on our website under the agenda for the March 9 Board meeting when the request to advertise was approved and again on the April 20 Board meeting under the public hearing section.)

Dr. Barber stated that these adoptions are based on the new BEST standards - Benchmarks for Excellent Student Teaching which focuses on speaking, listening, writing, foundational skills of learning to read, and on comprehension.

Larry Hetu came up to comment on curriculum and his experience in his family; he told his step-son not to be a Latino victim.

Micah Kelly stated that the community wants access to textbooks. She asked if publishers are "sneaking things in there." She feels that they are politically biased; she stated that nobody read the four pages just like they didn't read the stimulus package.

Mrs. Ueberschaer asked if anyone else would like to address the Board on this subject; no one came forward.

Mrs. Sanborn stated that as a certified English teacher she looked at the materials but did not study them - particularly the kindergarten section. She requested to table the item and apologized for not studying it.

Mrs. Ueberschaer asked Mr. Harmon if an item can be tabled if there is already a motion to approve. A recess was called to allow time to research this question.

The meeting was reconvened and Mr. Harmon explained the procedure. Since there was a motion on the table and a motion to table this item was made but was not seconded, it could result in a point of procedure error under Robert's Rules of Order if the Board accepts the motion to table or does not accept the motion to table. In order to avoid a procedural error, if the Board member who made the motion to approve withdraws that motion, it would allow the Board member who made the motion to table to make that motion. If the motion to table the item was then seconded and the Board voted to table the motion, it would indicate the majority of the Board wants to table the item.

Dr. Barber requested that Dr. Charlotte Boling, Coordinator of Literacy, come forward and provide additional information. Dr. Boling read from the overview from HMH into Reading Teacher's Guide for Grade K; "In classrooms where culturally responsive teaching is practiced we often see an increase in students' effort and a rise in participation. Most importantly, we see students grow as learners. Our ultimate goal is to create cultural democracies in our classrooms where students are continuously interacting with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and realities where every student feels respected, important, and proud."

Dr. Boling noted that it is our intent to make sure that we do address differences. We want children to see that we're all unique, all very different, we're all very special; and we celebrate those differences. Part of that is using our communication skills - ways that we speak, read, listen, write, and form ideas. We share those and make sure that we are responsible citizens. Part of that is learning about differences in others and learning to respect those differences. Dr. Boling stated that she sees all of these things as positive components in ELA curriculum.

Mrs. Boston asked Dr. Boling to provide some of her background information. Dr. Boling stated that she is the Coordinator of Literacy and has a doctorate in literacy education as well as twenty-seven years of experience teaching. She pointed out that she is very passionate about children being able to read, create, and become responsible citizens.

Mrs. Sanborn withdrew her request to table the item.

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Elizabeth Hewey. Motion Passed by a Vote of 4 - 1.

Mr. Elliott voted not to approve the adoption.

G. Public Forum- (Request to address the School Board regarding an item not on the agenda)

For a complete word for word transcript, please see the video. The following presentations to the Board have been condensed.

Board Chairperson Wei Ueberschaer called speakers forward in the order she received the registration form to address the Board. Mrs. Ueberschaer explained the process pointing out that speakers are limited to three minutes and lack of decorum will not be tolerated.

The first speaker was Jennifer Hensley, who stated that she is addressing the Board as a parent and educator. Ms. Hensley requested the Board maintain the current mask policy through the end of this school year; she trusts the Board to adopt a policy that has everyone's best interest in mind.

Michelle Hardman expressed her displeasure with the mask mandate and stated that students do not have to wear the mask any more (based on her interpretation). Ms. Hardman shared that her younger student has asthma and sleeps a lot from wearing the mask while her senior student has developed "maskne" and depression.

Cynthia Licarowicz wants the mask mandate lifted immediately. She talked about the letter from DOE (Commissioner Corcoran) and stated that she called DOE and someone from Dr. Rivkees' office returned her call and said that this policy was not their intention.

John Clinton stated that he is unhappy with the quarantine requirement and opposes masks. Mr. Clinton feels that the present school officers will be voted out if this doesn't change; he shared that he has pre-filed for 2022.

Jo Ann Cave referenced the April 14 letter from the Commissioner of Education; Ms. Cave does not support mandatory masks.

Len Cross stated that this has been a fear-driven agenda; children's faces should have never been masked; it is the parents' decision.

Rick Staszak talked about alternative quarantine options for close contact exposure. Mr. Staszak also brought up graduation and the inconsistency

between band activities, sports, and cheerleading.

Amy Davis shared that she respects everyone; those who support wearing masks and those who do not. Ms. Davis feels that masks should be optional - not mandated. One of her children wears a hearing aid and masks make it more difficult to read lips and facial expression. We need to get back to normalcy.

Oscar Locklin does not support the mask mandate; he pointed out that speakers tonight have each removed their mask at the podium but students do not have that option. Schools without mask mandates have opened in this county. Mr. Locklin stated that two motions should be made tonight; one for the remainder of this school year and one for next school year.

Craig Morin stated that he has fought the mask mandate in front of the City of Milton, Escambia County Commissioners, etc. He stated that his child has been in remote learning because he refuses to put a mask on her. Escambia and Okaloosa have had mask choice guidelines; he feels that the Board should listen to parents.

Laurent Hetu stated that masks should have been removed yesterday; he said that Governor Desantis realized that the lockdown in the state was a mistake. Mr. Hetu continued that the Governor must have been thinking about his reelection because now he's very popular. He feels that the Board can redeem themselves by changing the mandate.

Daniele White stated that she moved to Santa Rosa County for the school district; her student has two years left and she "can't wait to get out of here." Ms. White wants masks to be optional; "kids deserve options."

Reese Sayer, a student at Navarre High School, opposes the mask mandate and shared that it's made his acne worse. Reese stated that the mask cannot be removed when social distancing; they can be removed when playing sports but must be put back on immediately when sport is over. He stated that if this continues none of the Board will have their job after the next election.

Brandon Favano addressed the Board "y'all are communists right now" because he says the Board has dictated that students wear masks though parents have stated many times that they do not want to wear masks. Mr. Favano became unruly and was escorted out of the meeting.

Mrs. Ueberschaer asked if anyone else would like to address the Board. No one came forward and the Public Forum was closed.

Administrative Agenda

H. Approval of Agenda- Items may be pulled from the Administrative Agenda and placed under the respective Action Agenda category by request of the Board member/Superintendent

Motion to Approve was moved by Charles Elliott, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved all Administrative Agenda items H. 1, 2, 3, and 4 as submitted.

1. Human Resource items

- a. Administrative Agenda**
- b. Leave and Temporary Duty**

2. Curriculum/Instruction Items

- a. Suspensions**
- b. Student Reassignment Requests**
- c. School Volunteers Level 1**

3. Financial Items

- a. Budget Amendment #20/06, Bills/Payroll and Monthly Financial Statement for February 2021**

4. Administrative Operational Items

- a. Exceed the Limit 042021**
- b. Religious Venue Requests**

Action Agenda

I. Administrative/Operational Recommendations- Joey Harrell, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services

1. Surplus 042021

Motion to Approve was moved by Elizabeth Hewey, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

2. DAG Agenda Items

The Board reviewed the status of current DAG construction projects.

3. McKim & Creed Agenda Items

The Board reviewed the status of current McKim & Creed construction projects.

4. Sam Marshall Architects Agenda Items

The Board reviewed the status of current Sam Marshall Architects projects.

5. Prequalified Contractors

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Charles Elliott. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the updated list of approved contractors that will be eligible to perform work in the District, as required by Section 4.1 of the State Requirements for Educational Facilities.

J. Human Resource Recommendation- Liz West, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

1. Action Agenda

Motion to Approve was moved by Charles Elliott, Seconded by Carol Boston. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the following job description.

- *TSA, Mentor Coach (revised), requested by Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources*

Motion to Approve was moved by Charles Elliott, Seconded by Carol Boston. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the Memo of Understanding between the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, U.S. Department of Defense, and the School Board of Santa Rosa County.

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the following administrative appointment.

- *Sandra Drost, Assistant Principal, West Navarre Intermediate, effective May 17, 2021*

Motion to Approve was moved by Charles Elliott, Seconded by Carol Boston. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the following job descriptions as presented. Superintendent Barber pointed out that these two new positions will be

paid from ESSR Covid 19 funding.

- *Literacy Intervention (new) requested by Coordinator of Literacy*
- *Public Information and Family and Community Outreach Officer (new) requested by Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources*

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the revised Administrative Salary Placement Schedule for 2020-21.

K. Curricular and Instructions Recommendation – Michael Thorpe, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

1. Alternative Placements

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the alternative placement of Student A21-0071-042 for 45 days with educational services provided at Camelot Academy.

Motion to Approve was moved by Charles Elliott, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the alternative placement of Student A21-0261-041 for no less than one calendar year with educational services provided at Camelot Academy.

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Charles Elliott. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the alternative placement of Student A21-0103-040 for no less than one calendar year with educational services provided at the Learning Academy of Santa Rosa.

2. Gaines Auto Center, Inc. Affiliation Agreement

Motion to Approve was moved by Elizabeth Hewey, Seconded by Carol Boston. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

3. Title I, Part A Grant for Disadvantaged Children and Youth 2021-2022

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Charles Elliott. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

4. 2021-2022 School Calendar Correction

Motion to Approve was moved by Elizabeth Hewey, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

5. Elementary School Supply List

Motion to Approve was moved by Charles Elliott, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

6. High School Course Fee List 2021-22

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Charles Elliott. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

7. Head Start COLA Grant Synopsis 2021-2022

Motion to Approve was moved by Elizabeth Hewey, Seconded by Carol Boston. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

8. Head Start Monthly Report for March 2021 - Review Only

Review Only

L. Financial Recommendations – Susan McCole, Assistant Superintendent for Finance

None

M. Information Technology Services Recommendations – David Hicks, Assistant Superintendent for Information Technology Services

None

N. Items from Board Members

1. Completion of Annual Report

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved the recommendation to recess the regular School Board meeting in order to convene the Santa Rosa School Board Leasing Corporation meeting. The purpose of the Leasing Corporation meeting is appoint new directors and elect officers for 2021.

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Linda Sanborn. Motion Passed by a Vote of 3 - 0.

The Board approved the recommendation to replace Buddy Hinote and Jennifer Granse with Charles Elliott and Elizabeth Hewey as Directors in the School Board Leasing Corporation.

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Charles Elliott. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved Mrs. Ueberschaer's recommendation that she serve as President of the School Board Leasing Corporation; Linda Sanborn serve as Vice-President; Dr. Barber serve as secretary/registered agent; and all current School Board members serve as Directors.

*Motion to Approve was moved by Linda Sanborn, Seconded by Elizabeth Hewey. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.
The meeting of the Santa Rosa School Board Leasing Corporation was adjourned.*

The regular School Board meeting was reconvened.

O. Items from Board Attorney

School Board Attorney Terry Harmon pointed out that he has been our Board attorney for six months now; he expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with us and stated that he has enjoyed getting to know staff.

P. Items from Superintendent

1. Discussion and Recommendation Regarding Mask Requirement

For a complete word for word transcript, please see the video. The following has been condensed.

Superintendent Barber asked School Board Attorney Terry Harmon to walk us through the process and provide some background information.

Mr. Harmon shared that he joined the Board in November 2020 as Board Attorney. The Board approved the Code of Student Conduct for this school year (2020-2021) at the July 30 Board meeting; said that masks shall not be mandatory. At the same meeting, Superintendent Wyrosdick brought before the Board an emergency rule proposal that was intended to make masks mandatory for ninety days. (If you determine an emergency exists rules can be made but can't last longer than ninety days.) During that period of time you have to go thru the rulemaking process to make that rule. Subsequent to that a public hearing was noticed for September 10, 2020, for the revised Code of Student Conduct, which included the exact language as the emergency rule that was proposed in July. (The rule was adopted within ninety days.)

Mr. Harmon continued that if the Board is considering making changes to the current Code of Conduct or Covid-related mitigation issues, whether or not the proposed change is a rule that has to go thru rulemaking process will be dependent on whether the rule change is already contemplated by the meeting on September 10, 2020.

Mr. Elliott noted that the rule that was adopted in September 2020 was adopted by the Board that was in place at that time. He asked if a change is made will it require 28 days to become effective. Mr. Harmon

responded that it may require the 28 days if it's a change in policy/rule.

Mr. Harmon explained that part of the Code of Student Conduct states, When the School Board determines community health risks require masks or face coverings to be worn in school (closed spaces, crowds and where social distancing is difficult), these masks or face coverings will be mandatory. He continued that the Code of Student Conduct language may be broad enough to make masks not mandatory; but it is ripe for challenge. Depending on the direction the Board goes in will raise the question of whether or not that is creating a rule.

Mr. Elliott asked if changing the mask requirement at this point could subject the Board to lawsuits from those who are in favor of wearing masks. Mr. Harmon responded that lawsuits are always a possibility but Senate Bill 72 (signed in March by Governor Desantis) removes liability for certain Covid-related claims. He continued that if the Board does not follow authoritative guidance (from the CDC) we could lose the protection of Senate Bill 72.

Mrs. Sanborn requested clarification - does changing the rule require going through the procedural process which will require 28 days? Mr. Harmon responded that because of past practice (the intent of the Board at the September 10 meeting was that mask wearing become mandatory - adopting the language included in the Emergency Order from July) that following the rulemaking process is the least likely to be challenged.

Mrs. Boston asked what the legal penalty could be if challenged; it could include attorneys' fees and the rule could be repealed.

Mrs. Sanborn repeated the question what is the quickest legal way to change the mask requirement? Mr. Harmon stated the Board could request the Superintendent to provide legal notice and advertisement for 28 days to change the policy. He pointed out that the Board could make the change immediately if declaring this a public health emergency but cautioned this is not meant to be used to speed up the normal rulemaking process.

Dr. Barber stated those attending the public forum have strong opinions and are entitled to come and share concerns with the Board. As parents they are advocating for their students and it's appropriate to do that. She also stated it appears they have lost confidence in this school district. This is heartbreaking - this Board, Superintendent, teachers, and administrators do these jobs because they love kids and want what's in their best interest.

Dr. Barber also corrected a comment made earlier by Debbie Gunnoe that our math proficiency rate was 39%; it is actually 70%. Ms. Gunnoe

made several erroneous statements which Dr. Barber corrected.

Superintendent Barber provided results from the employee mask survey showing that 53% of employees who responded (60% of total) want the mask policy to stay in place until the end of the school year; 47% want the policy changed. Only 16% of parents responded to the survey (which was sent out on School Messenger); 47% of those parents want the policy to stay in place until the end of the school year and 53% want it changed - 40% of these want the mask mandate removed right away; 13% want it changed to "mask encouraged" as soon as possible.

We have parents who chose brick and mortar for their student and employees who chose brick and mortar based on the guidelines we currently have in place.

Dr. Barber reviewed the policy - if social distancing can take place the mask can be removed. If the policy has not been implemented consistently we will talk with our administrators. Also some parents have mentioned a medical exemption; you need to work with your doctor on this.

Mrs. Boston reminded the audience of the waiver for medical condition.

(At this time several audience members began calling out; Board Chairperson warned them and then requested Deputy to remove those who were still speaking out of order.)

Motion to Approve was moved by Elizabeth Hewey, Seconded by Carol Boston. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

The Board approved Superintendent Barber's recommendation to give her permission to advertise a proposed rule that would maintain the Board's position on masks through June 14 but change masks to highly recommended on June 15.

Q. Adjournment

Motion to Approve was moved by Carol Boston, Seconded by Elizabeth Hewey. Motion Passed by a Vote of 5 - 0.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

DONE AND ORDERED IN LEGAL SESSION by the School Board of Santa Rosa County the 20th day of April, 2021.

**SCHOOL BOARD OF
SANTA ROSA COUNTY**

Chairman

ATTEST:

Superintendent and Secretary