

**Rescue Union School District**  
2390 Bass Lake Road, Rescue, California 95672

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDY SESSION MINUTES**

**Tuesday, September 22, 2020 – 5:30 P.M.**  
**Rescue Union District Office Board Room**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-29-20, which temporarily suspends provisions of the Brown Act relating to public meetings.

The Public’s health and well-being are the top priority for the Board of Trustees of the Rescue Union School District and you are urged to take all appropriate health safety precautions. To facilitate this process, 2 options were offered to view and/or participate in the meeting: Via Zoom and in person following social distancing guidelines.

### **DISTRICT MISSION**

Rescue Union School District, in partnership with families and the community, is dedicated to the success of every student by providing a challenging, comprehensive, and quality education in a safe environment in which all individuals are respected, valued, connected, and supported.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ITEM DESCRIPTION</b>				
<b>CALL TO ORDER:</b>	Board President called the meeting to order at 5:57 p.m.				
<b>ROLL CALL:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓Kim White, President</li> <li>Stephanie Kent, Vice President</li> <li>✓Tagg Neal, Clerk</li> <li>Nancy Brownell, Member</li> <li>✓Suzanna George, Member</li> <li>✓Cheryl Olson, Superintendent and Secretary to the Board</li> <li>✓Sean Martin, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services</li> <li>✓Dave Scroggins, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction</li> </ul>				
<b>OPEN SESSION:</b>					
Welcome	Board president provided an introduction to the Board Study Session format.				
1. Adoption of Agenda	Trustee George moved and Trustee Neal seconded to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed 3-0.				
<b>PUBLIC COMMENTS:</b>	Public comments from: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Alexandra Neal Student</td> <td>RE: School dress code and what constitutes “school appropriate”. She stated that students should be learning self-respect, and should not be distracted by other students attire.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kathy Miracle Principal</td> <td>RE: From her perspective as a principal, highly in favor of providing needed teacher support preferably 2 Wednesdays per month. Teachers are in need of time to prepare and follow up with parents/emails.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Alexandra Neal Student	RE: School dress code and what constitutes “school appropriate”. She stated that students should be learning self-respect, and should not be distracted by other students attire.	Kathy Miracle Principal	RE: From her perspective as a principal, highly in favor of providing needed teacher support preferably 2 Wednesdays per month. Teachers are in need of time to prepare and follow up with parents/emails.
Alexandra Neal Student	RE: School dress code and what constitutes “school appropriate”. She stated that students should be learning self-respect, and should not be distracted by other students attire.				
Kathy Miracle Principal	RE: From her perspective as a principal, highly in favor of providing needed teacher support preferably 2 Wednesdays per month. Teachers are in need of time to prepare and follow up with parents/emails.				

<b>GENERAL</b>	
<p>2. Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan for 2020-2021</p> <p>(Supplement)</p> <p>(Consideration for Action)</p> <p>Superintendent</p>	<p>The Board considered approval of the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan for 2020-2021.</p> <p>Superintendent Olson reported the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan was presented for public hearing at the September 8, 2020 Regular Board meeting. She indicated that further input was solicited from sites, parent groups, unions and the community and no additional suggestions were received. The plan, as presented on September 8<sup>th</sup>, with no additional changes, is provided for consideration of approval.</p> <p>Trustee George moved and Trustee Neal seconded to approve the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan for 2020-2021 as presented. The motion passed 3-0.</p>
<p>3. COVID Update</p> <p>(Supplement)</p> <p>(Information Only)</p> <p>Superintendent</p>	<p>The Board received and update on COVID mitigations.</p> <p>Superintendent Olson provided an update on the surveillance testing. Sites will be scheduled to begin testing starting next week (September 28) and staff will be funneled through testing sites at least every other month. We will have designated locations, dates and timeframe for testing. Testing is currently scheduled through December.</p> <p>Mrs. Olson shared she had recently attended a meeting with Superintendents from across the state and some are still in complete distance learning, others have opened with hybrid models. There was some discussion about what we would need to have in place to reopen full time. The hardest piece would be the social distancing aspect. In addition, many of the districts in our county are starting the conversation as well so we will be ready to move forward when it is safe to do so.</p> <p>There Board discussed the testing and reopening as appropriate, being cautious to not move to quickly but also keeping in mind cases in our area (can look different in each county), protocols and guidelines from CDPH as well as the benefit for students and at what point are they safer in school than at home.</p> <p>Superintendent Olson also mentioned the band program and as many districts begin to open they will be allowing the band program, with the ability to play instruments. Rescue has not so far, but would like to begin as long as our teachers can distance students, either outdoors or in multi-purpose rooms with doors open for ventilation.</p> <p>Discussion continued regarding what the timeline might look like if we were to go back to full time. Information was provided about what that would require operationally (reviewing bus schedules, lunch schedules and custodial changes with disinfecting happening throughout the day and additional staff to monitor cafeteria, and arrival/departure of students and educationally (what that would look like for teachers and staff, child care for families and as well as still providing the Frontier Virtual Academy). Additional conversations/questions regarding: proactively reviewing a potential increase in rate of pay for substitute custodians and how that would affect the district budget as well as classified staff, an update on the Frontier Academy (to include electives, materials, and tech support) and how we are keeping those students engaged (in a virtual environment), and an update of our various classified departments that included transportation, M&amp;O, custodial, library, food service and other support staff.</p>

4. Teacher Supports

(Supplement)

(Discussion and Possible Consideration for Action)  
Superintendent

The Board reviewed and discussed how to best provide needed time and support for our teachers so they can continue meeting the diverse needs of our students during this pandemic.

Superintendent Olson started by saying we are extremely grateful to and for our teachers and staff. They have put forth a great deal of effort, time and energy to make our hybrid model and Frontier Virtual Academy work. It has been no easy feat for anyone. It has taken our everyone working to together as a team to make it happen.

She stated that experiencing the new year unfold, we have seen that our teachers have been working hard, but struggling to keep up with everything needing to be done. Because we care deeply about our teachers and staff and their ability to have the time to prepare high quality materials for student learning and engagement, we developed a survey in collaboration with RUFT Leadership regarding needs for additional support of our teachers and also to determine the value they have placed on the additional planning, collaboration time provided for the first four Wednesdays of the year, along with four more days scheduled throughout the year.

There were 125 teachers who participated in the survey, and it was very apparent that our teachers absolutely feel the pressure of all the changes and the new requirements.

81.7% feel their workload has been significantly more this year over past years with the necessity of learning new platforms/programs, answering the many, many daily questions from parents and students while teaching in person at the same time, providing feedback, helping parents/students with technology issues, new requirements from the state for attendance and participation and more. Additionally, TK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade hybrid students no longer have the 15-minute afternoon recess, so teachers have lost that time as well.

72.2% of the teachers believe the Wednesday planning days would be considered extremely valuable providing time to collaborate with teammates, manage all the extra duties that come with teaching in person as well as the distance learning time, time spent disinfecting, answering questions from parents for the online work, provide time to prep the asynchronous learning and provide time for meaningful feedback.

70.6% indicated that one or two days would indeed be helpful if not every Wednesday could be provided. Additionally, 57% of TK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers indicated that it would be helpful to have support each week with preparation of materials.

Some of the top items noted in the survey creating additional work for our teachers were answering questions/emails, planning for asynchronous work learning new platforms and technology issues. To support Frontier teachers, the district has hired a Student Services Secretary to help with questions/emails and scheduling and 8 distance learning days are being provided, spread throughout the year, to help with planning time, to assist teachers in learning the new platforms. Teachers also have the flexibility to use programs/platforms of their choice. Now that the year is underway the IT department will be better able to support teachers in answering tech questions for student, parents, and staff.

At this point Superintendent Olson introduced Laurisa Stuart, RUFT President to share the perspective of RUFT members.

Mrs. Stuart stated now that the concerns from staff have been shared from the most recent survey, she thought it would be helpful to walk through what a teacher's day is like, providing a better picture of how their workday has changed. She provided a comprehensive overview of how things are different with: increased cleaning protocols, speed teaching that requires

meticulous planning (needing to make the best use of every minute), the broad spectrum of academic levels in the classroom, addressing learning loss, use of small group instruction that is vital but due to COVID, groups must be even smaller with no sharing of materials, responding to emails, grading, feedback on asynchronous work that has been submitted, and doing this for both AM and PM sessions ending way past the contracted day. Mrs. Stuart stated she was sharing the major differences that she has personally experienced this year. Middle school hybrid and Frontier have many additional or different concerns including provide work for students who are out with an increase in independent study contracts, and teachers working to digitalize materials that is extremely time consuming.

Mrs. Stuart stated that the teachers are asking for help, the hybrid program is uncharted territory and they need the Wednesdays. They asked the district and Board to hear their request and provide the distance learning days for teachers to complete the necessary and required work to education the students in our district. Teachers are burned out and their mental, physical and emotional health are in jeopardy, teachers need the gift of time.

Superintendent Olson shared the administrative team struggles with what decision would be best. Direct instruction is where the magic happens, however teachers have reached out with a serious heartfelt request. She stated we need to find a balance to support our teachers so they can meet the need of our students.

The Board was appreciative of the information presented. Discussion and questions followed regarding, technology skills/support for teachers who are helping to navigate parents and students, the Fuel Ed program for the hybrid model that did not provide the seamless integration for teachers as anticipated, challenge for the district to balance the needed support for staff, with additional distance learning for students (more learning loss, detriment to children who may be unsupervised at home), additional input from parents and students should be solicited, child care issues considered, and would the Wednesdays need to continue throughout the year (or through the learning curve of new platforms/programs).

Two trustees were unable to be present for this meeting. However, they both indicated that they would like to be able to be part of this important discussion and have this item brought back to the October meeting for further review and consideration for approval at that time. The Board members in attendance were in agreement that they should have the opportunity be included in the discussion.

The question was also raised about what the general consensus seemed to be from our administrators regarding additional support. Superintendent Olson shared they all want to provide the needed support to our teachers, but how many/often, perhaps at least one Wednesday a month. The concern is the finite amount of instructional time we have in the hybrid model, when many of our students may struggle more with additional distance learning time. The Board asked that any other models or options beside the Wednesdays be presented as well as the any fiscal impacts. Comments regarding this question were heard from the following principals:

Dustin Haley, Principal at Rescue – Commented on the value of Wednesdays as planning/collaboration time for staff, however there could still be challenges for students with more distance learning as face to face time is already limited. If there are adjustments, it would be the 3<sup>rd</sup> published calendar for parents. This is a very complex issue.

Michele Winberg, Principal Green Valley – Responded by saying that as a Title I school there are many families that currently struggle with the

	<p>distance learning portion aspect and therefore, there is not as much learning taking place at home.</p> <p>Lastly, Superintendent Olson stated the struggle is to find a balance between supporting our teachers but also our students. Teachers could use all Wednesdays but considering perhaps every other Wednesday.</p> <p>Trustee Neal moved to table and continue the discussion on Teacher Supports, with additional input from parents and students. Trustee George amended the motion to include October 13, 2020 the next regular Board meeting for continued discussion and seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.</p>
<p>5. Superintendent's Performance Goals and Board Priorities for the 2020-2021 School Year</p> <p>(Supplement)</p> <p>(Discussion)</p> <p>Superintendent</p>	<p>The Board discussed the Superintendent's performance goals and the Board priorities for the 2020-2021 school year.</p> <p>The Board is tasked with providing the focus and vision for the school year and what the expectations are for the superintendent. It was determined it was preferable to have all members present for this item.</p> <p>Superintendent Olson was asked to give her top 3 goals in order to have an idea of what her focus may be in partnership with the Board.</p> <p>Mrs. Olson shared that student support during Frontier, Hybrid and full return to school would be one area of focus. She said that given the potential for new Board members a focus could be in relation to Board cohesion. In addition, the area of equity and culturally responsive teaching and learning could be a focus.</p> <p>Other ideas shared by Board members were to continue engaging our community especially now during COVID, to help them better understand the complexity of schools to garner support. Another desired area of focus was how to keep our middle school students connected and engaged particularly with the COVID restrictions and distance learning.</p> <p>This discussion will be continued at the October 13, 2020 meeting to allow input from all Board members.</p>
<p><b>ADJOURNMENT:</b></p>	<p>Trustee George moved and Trustee Neal seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m.</p>

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Tagg Neal, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kim White, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Board Approved October 13, 2020*