

MOUNT VERNON SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 320
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 3, 2021: 6:00 p.m.

Call to Order and Flag Salute: Director Otos called to order a regular meeting of the Mount Vernon School District Board of Directors at 6:05 p.m. on September 16, 2020. The meeting was held via Zoom call. Director Otos led the board and gallery in the flag salute.

Roll Call of Members Members present included Directors Otos, Coffey, Samora, and Cailloux. Director Ragusa was excused. A quorum was present. Superintendent Vivanco was present as were student representatives Conde-Martinez and Grechishkin. Also, in attendance were many staff and public.

Set Consent and Regular Agendas

Upon motion by Director Coffey, seconded and unanimously approved, the board set the regular and consent agendas.

Review and Approval of Consent Agenda

Upon motion by Director Cailloux, seconded and unanimously approved, items in the consent agenda were approved as follows:

Warrants

- Warrant No. 569696 through 569696, totaling \$52,312.83
- Warrant No. 569697 through 569878, totaling \$1,664,495.99
- Warrant No. 569879 through 569896, totaling \$34,537.61
- Warrant No. 569897 through 569919, totaling \$1,216,402.26
- Warrant No. 569920 through 570066, totaling \$2,297,000.48 and voids/cancellations, totaling \$571.85

Minutes

- Regular meetings on January 2, 2021 and January 20, 2021

Agreements

- Addendum to Personal Service Contract: Kathy Shoop

Personnel Report

- Certificated: Employment; Leave; Retirement/Resignation/Termination
- Classified: Employment; Leave; Retirement/Resignation/Termination
- Extra/Co-Curricular Stipends and Supplemental Contracts
- Unfilled Certificated and Classified Positions

Public Comments

There were 19 public comments submitted.

- Staff member wants to make sure the school board, staff, and community increase efforts to celebrate Black History month.
- There were 13 comments from parents encouraging the board and administration to return all students to in-person learning, including secondary levels.
- There were 5 comments from staff encourage the board to keep secondary students in a remote status until vaccines for staff and students, and ensured safety for staff and students can be met.

Board Member Comments

Director Coffey thanked the parents and staff for sharing their comments. COVID has been difficult and terrifying for the lives of our students, teachers, and staff. We are trying to walk a balance between awful outcomes and we have done that as data driven as possible. More data is available now than in the last few months. The data now says COVID doesn't pose a significant risk to teachers who teach in settings with masks, cohort separation, hygiene, and social distancing. At the same time, and good news are the amazing vaccines that are becoming available. Chris Reykdahl, state superintendent of schools says, we can't wait for those vaccines to return to in-person teaching. Skagit County numbers are improving and we are heading the right direction.

Director Otos said he visited a 3rd grade classroom at Harriet Rowley. The teacher has done a tremendous job and he appreciates all the elementary teachers who are returning.

Superintendent's Report

School Counselor Recognition: February 1-5, 2021

Clint Carlton, Executive Director of Student Support Services said this year's theme is All in for All Students. This is very appropriate for the commitments we have made as a district and the hard work the counselors do daily. They find creative ways to reach families and students to engage during remote plus learning. The counselors have helped design and support daily and weekly social-emotional learning. They regularly help families locate resources, explore interests and strengths, and set goals. Their roles have expanded to include group counseling, referrals, college prep, study skills, and crisis intervention. Thank you to our counselors.

Mount Vernon High School Social Justice Club presentation

The Mount Vernon High School Social Justice Club presented a report regarding bathroom equality. Six students presented, led by Eden Yoseph. Their goal is to implement gender inclusive bathrooms. It is important to create a more inclusive and safer environment and they want to start the conversation about transgender and nonbinary.

Director Coffey and the school board thanked the students for the thoughtful presentation. The board appreciated the specific suggestions and could tell the report was well thought out and researched. They also appreciated the time to send a student survey.

Bill Nutting, Assistant Superintendent, appreciated the solutions brought forward. Regarding the Old Main building, each of the 3 floors includes both gendered and gender-neutral bathrooms. Gender neutral is in the same location as the others and not designated as staff but is for student use. We are looking at that approach for all of our facilities. He appreciated the information on the signage availability and recommendations. He also said he appreciates that the presenters recognize some of the limitations of existing facilities. Some of those limitations would require use of staff bathrooms so this needs further discussion. More discussion is needed at the construction level, including the space additions at LaVenture that provide opportunity.

Dr. Coffey requested a follow up from administration before school is out.

Reopening Update: B. Nutting/I. Vivanco

Dr. Vivanco said there have been approximately 450 K-12 students doing in-person learning each week, many since September and all since October. Recently the Transition K students were added to the mix. While that number is small, it is an important program the district has wanted to start. It uses three classrooms at Little Mountain, Centennial, and Madison.

Mr. Nutting said that as the board knows, on February 8, students in grades K-1 students will begin in-person hybrid learning. From the survey, 80% of families elected to participate, while 20% are staying remote. Each new transition will add approximately 800 students into the buildings. The February 8 date was tentative depending on the health of the community. Transportation has secured drivers for the new routes and are ready to go. A training for over 225 staff members on health and safety protocols in our schools was held. A survey was sent to 2nd-3rd grade parents to collecting information on their desire to return their students to in-person learning.

Dr. Vivanco shared that we have been focusing on the elementary level. Now that it is underway, there will be some overlapping to start the secondary grades. The board has heard the public comments and knows there are some who want to open instruction, and others who want us to remain in remote learning. Much of the work regarding safety protocols is already in place and will apply to all grades. We have been serving the same number of students as in other districts. There has been a rumor that we are not bringing back secondary due to construction and that is not true. It is a factor to consider, but that is not why the district has not yet opened secondary schools to in-person learning.

We continue to wait for vaccination opportunities. In a meeting with local superintendents, it was noted that some have partnerships with the tribes, which provides them with some vaccinations. If that opportunity becomes available to our district, we will utilize it. We will also continue to follow the direction from the DOH. We have six elementary schools that feed into the secondary levels. Each time we accept groups of approximately 800 students we need to assess the next steps forward. There are over 1800 students at MVHS with many items to consider.

Director Otos said it sounds like things are progressing. He understands the difficulty and appreciates all the work by staff. When the district size is smaller, it is easier to navigate and make a turn than with 6700 students. We will continue to communicate with larger districts to see what they do.

Dr. Cailloux asked what the additional considerations and factors are for secondary return. Dr. Vivanco said it includes staffing, scheduling, food service, and transportation. With K-1 level, we had more staff that wanted to be back than were needed. Vaccine availability will make a difference as we move forward.

Old Business: there was no old business.

New Business

MVHS Course Schedule Modifications: 1st Read

Director Otos said the board heard a great presentation at the work study meeting. The information will be reviewed revisited at the next meeting. Director Samora questioned the cause and effect for students, as well as one submission that said the teacher is not certified for the class. Director Thomas said she will review the packet and update the information for the next board meeting.

Mount Baker/LaVenture Middle School Course Schedule Modifications: 1st Read

Any changes made will be highlighted and shown. Will consider for adoption at the next meeting.

Construction

- Preliminary Design Proposal for Additional Classroom Building at MVHS from TCF
The preliminary design and work TCF and Lydig will perform is more than the additional tenant improvement work that we will have to do to convert temporary classrooms in the shop to final shop places.

Upon motion by Director Coffey, seconded and unanimously approved, the board approved the Preliminary Design Proposal for Additional Classroom Building at MVHS by TCF Architects.

Public Comments: There were no public comments. All questions will be answered in the Superintendent's Blog.

Student Comments


- Student Grechishkin said she agrees with the concerns exhibited with online learning, but feels the data is still too precarious, particularly with the new variant. She thanked the counselors for their work. They do a terrific job in student advising and she appreciates Paige at the high school for assisting with setting up meetings and offering direction. She appreciated hearing the gender-neutral proposal and said it is great that Mount Vernon is taking steps to go forward. These improvements impact the entire student body.
- Student Conde-Martinez said he is not afraid to admit that it has been a mental health toll. With the new variants there is still a lot unknown and there are so many ways it can impact families. He also thanked the counselors, with a particular shout out to Mr. Virata, who always responds immediately. He also sent a shout out to his peers for their amazing presentation on gender neutral bathrooms. It will create a safe and inclusive. He said the ASB group visits kindergarten classes and read and talked to the students. He said it was fun to engage in the teacher lesson plan and help them.

Adjournment: Director Otos said if information is needed on the return to in person learning, it can be found on the district website, including the blog and the Facebook page.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM.



Larry Otos, Director
Board President



Ismael Vivanco, Superintendent
Secretary to the Board