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Special Meeting
Board of Education
Unified School District #211
March 24, 2020
7:00 P.M.

The special meeting of the Board of Education, U.S.D. 211, was called to order at 7:00pm by Sean Kats, President, at the Alice Tweed Center, 105 E. Waverly, Norton, Kansas. The meeting was broadcast live at live.usd211.org for public viewing. Seven members were present so a quorum was declared.

Call to Order

Quorum

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sean Kats, President
Deena Wente, Vice-President
Craig Renner
Jamie Amlong
Jennifer Miller
Michael Terry
Nathan Donahey

OTHERS PRESENT:

Phil Wilson, Superintendent
Gina Riley, Board Clerk
Julie Schrum - Principal
Dustin McEwen - Principal
Corey Roy – Principal (arrived at 7:11)

Supt. Wilson updated the board with what has happened and what the district's plans are for the remainder of the school year since Governor Kelly has closed school buildings across the state, which was an unexpected consequence of the recent outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. The district will follow the states requirements to provide educational opportunities to complete the year without in-person classes. The guidelines that have been developed and received from the state-formed committee are very good and are being used to develop a plan for District 211 students. Supt. Wilson and administrators cut their spring break short to begin meeting last Friday to start working on a plan and started with sending out a survey to parents to complete over the weekend. Results of the survey were very positive and helpful as they met again on Monday to work on the plan. Principals met with teachers and worked to finish up initial plans for online and remote learning. Those plans will be sent out to students and parents soon. Supt. Wilson also met with our Food Service Director, Kim Chambers, and the head cooks, to develop a plan for providing lunches and breakfasts to our district students. Other changes taking place was the KSHSAA cancelling all spring sports, which allowed Hellas Construction company to begin the work on the track earlier, so at this time the facilities at Travis Field are closed. There has not been a final decision made regarding graduation at this time.

Supt. Report

Principal Schrum updated the board about the continuous learning plans for the high school. Teachers will be setting "office hours" to be available to students and parents. It is suggested that students spend about 30 minutes per class per day, or around 3 hours per day, on their school work. Students should check in to their Google classrooms to find assignments and duties. She described the "soft start" approach that will be taken at the high school, with a schedule of different classes posting on different days of the week, so as not to overwhelm students, but also keep them from procrastinating. Ms. Schrum also mentioned that if they do not have consistent response from a specific student or do not have a reply for a week's time, for example, they will reach out directly to the student and/or parents to see what's happening and get them back on track.

NCHS
Principal
Report

Principal McEwen also updated the board with plans for the junior high, first mentioning that many items are similar to the high school, with the students’ starting point being to check in to their Google classroom. Their teachers will also hold “office hours” to be available to students and parents. Some teachers will also use email to send items to students either through a parent’s or student’s email. He mentioned that many of his staff are still reporting to work at the school, working with each other, and he is happy with the support system they have developed. He also mentioned that the schedule for students to pick up items from the school has been sent out, and asked that school owned items, such as library books and track uniforms that were sent out before spring break, be returned to the school at the same time.

NJHS
Principal
Report

In Principal Roy’s update to the board, he outlined how the elementary learning plan would be much different than the high school and junior high. The elementary will be dealing with parents as much as, if not more than, students because the younger students are unable to do most of the work themselves without some parental guidance. He stated that he has had a very positive response so far from parents and feels that parent involvement will be good. When asking his teachers to set up “office hours”, he asked that they include some evening hours as well, since many parents work during the daytime hours. Teachers are working to communicate with parents, and will be providing instruction materials both online and through weekly packets. Mr. Roy stated the emphasis will be on reading and math instruction, working on the minimum essential learning for students to reach the requirements to move to the next grade level. The recommended time spent for elementary students is 1 hour per day. The teachers will be sending home the students’ workbooks that they use in the classroom and will continue to use those in the learning process. Mr. Roy asked for patience as they continue to update and revise the learning plan, as changes may be necessary as they work through this new method of learning. Lastly, he mentioned that plans for the IEP(special education) students have not been finalized, but that they are diligently working on them.

EES Principal
Report

Supt. Wilson informed the board that one of the requirements for obtaining the waiver for the minimum hour requirement for the year would be that the district would have to continue paying hourly staff, to minimize the financial hardship that they would otherwise experience. He asked the board to approve the resolution for approval of continuing pay for hourly staff during the emergency closing. Motion by Deena Wentz, seconded by Craig Renner, to approve the resolution regarding wage payments during the emergency school closing. Motion carried 7-0.

Approve
Resolution for
Hourly Pay

Supt. Wilson informed the board that with senior students being in a new and different situation regarding finishing their classes for this year, the state is allowing school districts to waive district graduation requirements included in board policy that are more stringent than those required by the state. All students will still be required to meet the minimum state requirements for graduation. A resolution is necessary to make that waiver. Motion by Jennifer Miller, seconded by Nathan Donahey, to approve the resolution for suspending board policy graduation requirements for the current year graduates. Motion carried 7-0.

Approve
Resolution for
Graduation
Requirements

Supt. Wilson next asked the board to approve the Waiver Assurance Document and Continuous Learning Plan to be filed with the Kansas Department of Education for final approval. This will allow the school to operate under the new plan and waive the 1116 hour minimum attendance requirement under state statute. Motion by Michael Terry,

Approve
Waiver and
Learning Plan

seconded by Jamie Amlong, to approve the Waiver Assurance Document and Continuous Learning Plan. Motion carried 7-0.

Supt. Wilson stated there was a high interest in the district continuing to provide meals to students, and described the plan allowing the school district to provide breakfast and lunches to district students and their siblings ages 1 – 18. We are qualified to provide free meals to all students during this time since the percentage of free and reduced lunch students that we have at the elementary is over 50%. The meals will be a grab and go format, with students being allowed to pick up sacked meals at the designated locations in Norton and Lenora. Although we have several students from Norcatur, the district is unfortunately unable to deliver to Norcatur since that is actually located in a different school district. If approved by the state, the plan is to serve from April 1 – May 15. Families should call weekly to sign up for meals so the kitchen staff can plan and prepare enough. It is a federally funded school food service program through USDA, so nutrition requirements must still be followed, as well as other regulations, one being that the child must be present to receive the meal. Mr. Wilson asked the board to approve the plan for providing breakfasts and lunches, so they could move forward with applying for approval from the state. Motion by Deena Wente, seconded by Jennifer Miller, to approve the food service plan. Motion carried 7-0.

Approve Food Service Plan

Board member Craig Renner asked if anything could be done for graduation this year so families could plan. Supt. Wilson replied that he understands the frustration and they are holding off the decision as long as possible but stated that nothing could be guaranteed at this time.

Graduation Plans

President Kats adjourned the meeting at 8:02pm.

Adjourn

Gina M. Riley
Board Clerk