



Orland Unified School District  
903 South Street  
Orland, CA. 95963

Minutes of the Special Session Governing Board Meeting  
Thursday, July 16, 2020

## **OPEN SESSION:**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Present: Trustees Aguiar, Ovard, Changus, Kochems

Via zoom: Trustee Allen

**1.1** President Kochems called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm

**1.2** Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Suzi Kochems

**1.3** Public Comment on Agenda Items.

An audience member stated that he wants to see the schools reopen and he believes that it should be a parents choice. If they don't feel comfortable they should be able to keep their kids home and do distance learning. Distance Learning did not work for his daughter.

### **2. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

#### **2.1** School Reopening and District Operations

Superintendent Newman reported that our goal is to discuss the issues and get some sense of where we are headed. This is a decision that needs to be made together. We want to serve our students and our community the best we can. This isn't the last conversation. Mr. Newman will be doing another community forum to answer questions. We want to get a survey out. We have aspects of this that we need to work with our negotiation teams.

Superintendent Newman reported that he cancelled practices on Monday after getting a call from the health department. He made the choice as he was informed that the risk to our students had gone from possible to likely. We may be able to go back and propose alternatives. We don't want to operate without their blessing. Superintendent Newman would like to get some thoughts on how we can do athletic practices.

Graduation is scheduled for next Friday, July 24th. Superintendent Newman has heard that the enthusiasm for that has waned. He would like to get some input.

The big item for us today is a discussion about reopening. Superintendent Newman was made aware this morning that Governor Newsom intends to put controls on which districts can reopen in person and which can not. The conjecture is, which comes from a reputable source but has not been confirmed, the Governor is going to say if your county is on the watchlist you will not be allowed to reopen schools for normal operations, you will have to reopen in a distance learning mode.

Trustee Aguiar wanted to know if the Governor was aware that any mandate that we have to open online will cause us to lose students. Superintendent Newman's answer is he doesn't have a good answer.

The one factor that we need to think about is what are our obligations under the law in terms of following any mandate of that kind.

From the Superintendent of Public Instructions office, on the attendance piece as far as our ADA we are going to be held harmless. There are going to be requirements if we go to distance learning for students to attend, we will have to take roll. Some of the in person attendance requirements have been modified or waived. The direction to school leaders is to follow the science, look at the medical science and determine what we are going to use as metrics. Superintendent Newman's personal stance is that we are a school district and not health care professionals. Superintendent Newman's suggestion is that we ask our local experts to guide us on which metrics we should be using. They are saying part of the science we have to follow is the science around the impacts this pandemic is having on the social and emotional state of our students and staff. We know from research that the best instruction happens when students are in proximity to a teacher in person with peers around them because kids learn from other kids by processing together and watching each other. There is no replacement for that. Students can learn via distance but it's not the same.

We are bound by the education code as well as the health and safety codes. There are health and safety codes that give local health officers the power to control pieces of our operations. Two examples: 1) they shall take measures as may be necessary to prevent the spread of the disease or occurrence of additional cases and 2) the department may take measures as necessary to ascertain the nature of the disease and prevent its spread.

We have an obligation legally and ethically to bargain some of the issues about the safety of our staff. We need to bargain how any distance learning might impact their work. We need to talk about leaves and how that works.

Superintendent Newman shared the results from the parent survey. It was the same survey that was sent out in May. At the end of May almost sixty percent of the parents wanted their children to go back into a traditional classroom, that number is now at thirty percent. The number of parents that want distance learning has doubled.

Some schools are delaying their opening. That is something that we would have to negotiate. We would have to change our calendar.

There was some discussion about distance learning and blended learning.

Trustee Kochems stated that the Governor is holding a press conference tomorrow at noon. She wanted to know if we could hold another special meeting tomorrow or Monday. If we don't have the choice and he is going to mandate, because we are on the county watchlist, that we go to distance learning at least for the first semester, then all of the discussion is for naught. Superintendent Newman responded that's a really good idea. He wanted to know if the board would be willing to buck that trend, if they would be willing to consider it. He wants to get the attorney's opinion on what that means in terms of personal liability and the liability for the district. Will the Governor withhold funds from us because we did something he didn't want us to do. We can schedule a special meeting for Monday and invite the health department.

Trustee Kochems made a recommendation that we listen in on tomorrow's conference with Governor Newsom. We get our attorney on the phone to answer the questions that we have. We work to get public health in contact with us to answer some of the questions that we have outstanding. We hold another special meeting on Monday. We aren't going to make everyone happy but we need to do what's best given current information. The special meeting will be held Monday at 4:00pm.

Superintendent Newman reported that graduation was going to be July 24th but interest has been waning. A survey will go out to the senior parents to see who is interested in still holding graduation. We won't be having a ceremony for eighth grade promotion.

Superintendent Newman will contact Public Health to see if we can hold outside activities for athletics.

Superintendent Newman will put out an FAQ for the questions that were asked on the chat.

**3. ADJOURNMENT:**

**3.1** Meeting Adjourned at 3:46 pm

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Dwayne Newman, Superintendent

10/13/2020

  
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Michelle Allen, Board Clerk

10/13/2020