

**Yuma Elementary School District Number One
Governing Board
Special Meeting**

The Governing Board for Yuma Elementary School District Number One held a Special Meeting on **July 31, 2020** at 12:00 pm. *(This meeting is Closed to the Public due to Health Emergency, but was available via WebEx on Facebook Live @ www.yuma.org)* in the District Administration Office, 450 West Sixth Street, Yuma, Arizona.

Members present: Mrs. Barbara Foote, President; Cory Mayrant, Clerk (remotely); Mrs. Irene Montoya, Member; Mrs. Karen Griffin; Member Mrs. Theresa Fox, Member.

Others present: Mr. James Sheldahl Superintendent, and other Members of the Administrative Staff of Yuma Elementary School District Number One.

Call to Order: The Special meeting was called to order at 12:10 p.m due to technical difficulties. Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. A motion was made by Mrs. Montoya, seconded by Mrs. Fox to adopt the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Report – Mrs. Montoya reported that she had attended a few ASBA webinars and felt it was affirming to know that we are on the right track as a District.

Superintendent’s Report - Mr. Sheldahl commented that he wanted to acknowledge that COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges for everyone (school districts and school boards). He thanked and acknowledged the District One teachers, staff and community for all the support and patience during this time. Mr. Sheldahl also acknowledged the Board for always putting the health and safety of our students and well-being of our faculty and staff first.

Consent Agenda - *Approval of these items are of a routine nature and those that normally do not require deliberations on the part of the Governing Board. A board member may pull items, which will be discussed and voted on separately.* Mrs. Foote asked if there were any items that needed to be pulled for discussion, there was none. A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Mrs. Griffin, seconded by Mrs. Montoya. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Consideration to approve the minutes for the Study Session held on June 30, 2020 and Special Meeting held on July 15, 2020 for Yuma Elementary School District Number One.

Approval of Human Resource Items:

Approval/Ratification of Salary Adjustments/Coaching Contracts: Individual requests - (13) Classified Staff, (4) Certified staff, for additional duties during summer months.

Approval/Ratification of resignations for certified, support staff and substitute personnel: (13) Support Staff; (1) Certified Staff and (1) Certified Substitute.

Approval/Ratification of Release of Contract: **It is the administration recommendation that the release of contract request be approved due to extenuating circumstances.* King, Carol, 7th Grade Teacher, Ron Watson, request for release of contract for 2020-2021 school year effective July 24, 2020. Noel, Mariah, 1st Grade Teacher, Sunrise request for release of contract for 2020-2021 school year effective July 22, 2020.

Consideration to Approve the Renewal Agreement between YSD1 and PresenceLearning: The renewal agreement with PresenceLearning, whom we partner with for online speech therapy services is due to our shortage of on-site speech pathologists. We have built a strong partnership with PresenceLearning and look forward to continue working with them for the 2020/2021 school year. The agreement is available for view upon request.

Kindergarten Admission: Early admission to Kindergarten; A student is eligible to enter Kindergarten if she/he is five (5) years of age prior to September 1 of the school year. ARS 15-821c and Governing Board Policy JEB permit an extension of the enrollment period to December 31, if it is in the “best interest” of the child and with appropriate consultation with the principal, school professionals and the parent. The rationale for establishing a specific date is that students within similar age spans will interact socially and be able to perform tasks physically and academically with success. No matter when the date of eligibility is set, there will always be children whose birthday falls outside the parameters. These are some issues that impact admission to Kindergarten:

- Parent requests for the child who has missed the eligibility date
- Parent requests for the “bright” or “ready” child
- Parent and Charter School pressure
- Migrant children who move between states with differing entry ages can be placed in two different grade levels during the same year
- Military children who will be moving to other states with differing entry ages

Current Research:

No new evidence suggests that students will benefit from early admission. Student learning levels will be accommodated when a child enters school, whether the child is above level, on level, or below level. Studies indicate that students who are placed with age level peers tend to be academically successful and tend to maintain positive social interactions with other students. Recommendation of staff to allow early admission to kindergarten were; Nathan Armstrong, Rose West, Thelonus Marquez, Mia Lowry, Analeigh Bautista, Gavin Gottschalk, Kaylie Nachreiner, Harper Pomeroy. Recommendation to deny students to enroll early; Fabian Gutierrez.

Action Items:

Resolution Authorizing the Superintendent to Take Actions to Ensure District Compliance: This Resolution authorizes the District’s Superintendent or his/her delegees, to take the following actions to ensure that the District complies with Executive Order 2020-51 and the provisions of Executive Orders 2020-41 and 2020-44 which are still in effect: In conformity with Order 1 of Executive Order 2020-51: Mr. Sheldahl explained that the intent of the resolution is to give the Superintendent or other district level personnel the latitude to make decisions or act on behalf of the District during these uncertain and fluid times amid COVID-19. There is an accountability piece built into the resolution to report to the Board any decisions or actions taken. Full disclosure of the resolution can be viewed upon request. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Mrs. Montoya, seconded by Mrs. Fox. Mrs. Foote wanted to note for the record that regarding the arrangement for providing in person service on August 17th is that the Arizona Department of Health Services has not provided enough information or guidance which has not been clearly outlined in regards to the health and safety measures for students. After some discussion the motion passed unanimously.

Consideration to Establish and Approve a Date for the Beginning of In-Person Instruction Via the Hybrid Model at Yuma Elementary School District #1 schools:

Background:

Governor Ducey, via Executive Order 2020-41, pushed back the opening date for Arizona Schools until August 17th. Subsequently, Executive Order 2020-51 gives school districts the latitude to further delay the opening of schools for in-person instruction with full funding for remote learning, subject to the condition that schools provide free on-site support services for students who need them.

Given the persistent community spread of the COVID-19 virus in Yuma County and around the state of Arizona, school districts are facing the difficult decision of determining when it will be safe for schools to open up for in-person instruction.

Currently, the data relative to community spread in Yuma County in terms of total cases, trajectory of total daily new cases, percent of positive cases, and turnaround time for testing results are all above the levels recommended by health care experts. Though school districts have not received specific or consistent guidance regarding benchmarks for reopening schools, most recommendations include a downward trend in key categories for between 14 and 28 days.

Executive Order 2020-51 states that benchmarks for resuming in-person, teacher-led classroom instruction will be available August 7, 2020. That date is one school week before the opening date of August 17, established in Executive Order 2020-41.

Recommendation:

Superintendent recommends the Yuma Elementary School District #1 postpone the opening of schools to in-person hybrid instruction beyond August 17, 2020. This action will promote the health and safety of students and staff members, and it will give parents and teachers sufficient notice for planning purposes. Therefore, a motion was made by Mrs. Griffin, seconded by Mrs. Montoya, that the Yuma Elementary School District #1 Governing Board, postpone in-person, teacher-led classroom instruction until at least September 8, 2020. The Board will continue to monitor relevant local COVID-19 data to determine that in-person, teacher led instruction can safely resume on that date. Governor Ducey’s Executive Order 2020-51 grants local school boards this authority. Discussion followed with Mrs. Foote commenting that she would like to move the date to October 5, 2020 because of the high number of cases. Discussion resumed with Mrs. Montoya commenting that the additional 5 weeks will give more time to see how the trends are going. Mrs. Fox also said this would allow for the benchmarks from the Arizona Health Department be in place. Mr. Mayrant did not want to put an exact date to start the hybrid model with in-person instruction until there was more information available from the health department. Mrs. Foote reiterated the same concerns and suggested that an October 5, 2020 would be more likely and practical. Mrs. Griffin stated she agreed with all discussed. Mr. Sheldahl said, announcing a date now will give parents and our teachers time to plan. We may have to change that date again but for now at least there is a scheduled date and to keep in mind that parents still have the choice on whether or not to send their child to school for in person instruction. After much discussion a vote to approve the recommendation of the September 8, 2020 start date for in-person instruction was as follows; Mrs. Foote - nay, Mr. Mayrant - nay, Mrs. Griffin - aye, Mrs. Montoya- aye, Mrs. Fox - aye, the motion passed 3-2.

Future Agenda Items: Mr. Mayrant asked for a special meeting after the August 7, 2020 Health Services Meeting to gain more information. Mr. Sheldahl reminded the board that the regularly scheduled meeting would be upcoming on August 10, 2020. Mrs. Montoya asked for a number of students that would be attending on August 17, 2020 for support on campus. Mrs. Foote wanted the public to know that even though the Governing Board expressed their individual thoughts, the School Board’s focus is on the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff.

Adjournment: Special Meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Quintero, Secretary to the Board

Barbara Foote, President

Cory Mayrant, Clerk

Karen Griffin, Member

Irene Montoya, Member

Theresa Fox, Member