

Blue Oak Charter School
450 W. East Avenue, Chico, CA 95926
CHARTER COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING

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MINUTES

Wednesday, October 7th, 2020 - 6:00 PM

Vision: To be a model for successful education of the whole child.

*Mission: To nurture and deepen each child's academic and creative capacities using methods inspired by
Waldorf education in a public school setting.*

*LCAP Goal Summary: Build the parent community, support success for all students, and prepare students for
high school*

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All times noted on the agenda are approximate and listed solely for convenience. The Board may hear items earlier or later than is noted and may move the order of agenda items.

The Blue Oak Charter Council reserves the right to take action on any item on the agenda.

AGENDA

OPEN SESSION - 6:00 PM

1. OPENING - 5 Minutes

1.1. Call Meeting to Order

- Monica McDaniel called the meeting to order at 6:08PM

1.2. Roll Call of Council Members and Establish Quorum

- Present: Trisha Atehortua, Chelsea Parker, Vicki Wonacoff, Laura Swanson, Heather Bonea, Monica McDaniel, Laurel Hill-Ward
- Absent: None

1.3. Invocation - School Verse Read

"This is our school, May peace dwell here, May the rooms be full of contentment. May love abide here, Love of one another, Love of our school, Love of life itself. Let us remember that as many hands build a house, So many hearts build a school."

- Chelsea Parker read the school verse

1.4. Agenda Modifications

- No agenda modifications were made

1.5. Audience to Address the Council

This is an opportunity for members of the community to address the committee concerning items not on the agenda. Persons addressing the Committee will be allowed a maximum of three (3)

*minutes for their presentation. The chair may establish a maximum speaking time for any item.
Persons may not yield their time to another speaker (Gov. Code § 54954.3)*

- Many Blue Oak parents and employees were present and spoke to their current health and safety concerns regarding the reopening of the school.
- Blue Oak Parent (Steve), who has Kindergarten and 1st grade students, is not planning on having his children return to school in the spring semester. He said he will be waiting until next summer to reassess.
- Blue Oak teacher, Cheryl Grant, emphasized the importance of spending more time outdoors and emphasized the need for time, money, and other resources to be allocated for such activities. She also wondered what would happen if there were additional stressing factors, such as poor air quality, on top of the current stressors of COVID-19. She wanted to know if staff preferences will be taken into consideration before moving forward. She urged the Council to consider the length of the school day specific to the Kindergarten program. Finally, she had questions regarding the size of the cohorts and enrollment moving forward. Monica McDaniel noted that cohort size is a question for teachers.
- Blue Oak Parent (Mitchell), who has 1st grade, 4th grade, and 7th grade students, likes the idea of remaining in distance learning for the rest of the semester and reassessing if a change is necessary at the beginning of next semester. He feels as though his children are just getting in the swing of things; he worries about changing things up too quickly and stressed the importance of consistency.
- Laurel Hill-Ward joined the meeting.
- Blue Oak Parent (Jen), who has Kindergarten and 7th grade students, explained that her kids are in a good groove and appreciate how little they are on Zoom. She appreciates what her family currently has at Blue Oak and mentions that her family does not want to go back to school.
- Blue Oak Parent (Eric), who has a 4th grade student, agreed that he would like to hold off on returning to school and is attending this meeting to find out more information.
- Blue Oak Parent (Amanda), who has 3rd grade, 5th grade, and 7th grade students, had questions about what the options are for families who are not ready to return to school. She wondered if the quality of distance learning can be maintained if a portion of students were to return to school. She later addressed the council again looking for clarification about the options given on the parent survey.
- Blue Oak Parent (Jackie), who has a 6th grade student, explained that after traveling around the country recently, she wants the Council to consider waiting to reopen the school to see what other schools experience first.
- Blue Oak Staff Member and Parent (Kellie), who has an 8th grade student, would also like to wait to open after next semester and see how it goes with other Chico Unified schools. She was also wondering if she has a choice as a staff member, not just a parent. Finally, she mentioned that through her position, she has received a lot of calls from families looking for schools who are going to continue distance learning.
- Heather Bonea reminded everyone that the Council previously decided together that Blue Oak would not discuss returning to school until the second semester and that only small groups of students would be approved to return before then, if they were to return at all. (This was later clarified, the actual motion included preparing for some students to return after the first 9 weeks which is October 19th)
- Monica McDaniel reassured the audience that reopening is not going to be happening in the next couple of weeks, the Council just wanted to recognize everyones opinions and ideas.

- Blue Oak Parent (Heather), who has a 1st grade student, wanted to express concerns for teachers and wanted to know if teachers have a choice in how Blue Oak will be moving forward. She is concerned about teachers safety and is concerned the teachers may be overburdened if they have to teach both in person and via distance learning. She asked if the school would consider homeschool options for families who do not want to return to school and explained that her family will not be returning until after next summer. Finally, she expressed worries for the school as a whole; she is concerned that families will permanently leave after a decision is made and the school will lose funding.
- Blue Oak Parent (Tighe), who has an 8th grade student, pointed out that the statement made by Heather Bonea regarding the Councils previous decision did not make sense based on the survey that was sent out prior to today's Charter Council meeting.
- A consensus was reached to move forward with presenting the information the Executive Director, Susan Domenighini obtained by surveying Blue Oak parents and staff members.

2. GOVERNANCE - 15 Minutes

2.1. Re-Opening Plan

Susan Domenighini

- There was extensive discussion regarding the documents presented including the reopening plan itself as well as charts and information gathered through surveys, staff and faculty meetings, and charter leader meetings.
- Susan Domenighini explained that the item on the last BOCC agenda was to make an overarching plan that keeps staff, parents, and students safe. We will not be able to have any students on campus until we have established a safety plan. This plan describes general safety protocol if students were to return; this plan does not describe specifics of how and when students will return. Based on the survey information (223 responses in all), teachers and parents are at about a 50/50 split regarding returning to school. According to conversations with other charter leaders, this seems to be the common consensus.
- Both Susan Domenighini and Chelsea Parker re-emphasized that the specifics of how and when to reopen will be discussed and voted on at a later time.
- It was established that the Council would go through the document one page at a time to allow any Council members to share their notes or thoughts. The following suggestions or comments were made:
 - On Page 2, Heather Bonea and Laura Swanson wanted clarification for how sub cohorts will be established and managed.
 - On Page 3, Item 2 Heather Bonea noted there is a statement that may be misleading and suggested removing it.
 - Laura Swanson does not want the document to give the idea that we will be able entirely stop the spread of COVID-19.
 - On Page 4, Heather Bonea noted there are some statements that may not be scientifically based and suggested removing them.
 - On Page 8, Heather Bonea questioned how we would monitor bathroom/sink use of students. She was also wondering how we will implement and manage classroom cohorts.
 - Heather Bonea suggested putting a clarifying statement in the plan to explain these are the safety protocols to be applied if there is any student presence on campus.
 - Monica McDaniel voiced concerns for the teachers if they were to be in charge of two different styles of teaching at once (distance learning and in-person teaching).

- Susan Domenighini explained that Butte County has now moved from the purple tier to red tier which means we no longer need a waiver to open, however we do still need a safety document to provide the health department in the event of a confirmed case on campus. The Council was reminded this document is publicly available on the Blue Oak website. The current safety plan was written primarily by the Facilities Manager, Buck Ernest, along with other Blue Oak administrators. Most of the information in the document comes from guidelines set by the CDC, BCOE, and the Public Health Department.
- Susan Domenighini recommended that the Council members send their specific concerns directly to her so she can review them all at once, adjust the document accordingly, and report back to the Council once the concerns have been addressed. Monica McDaniel supported this suggestion.
- Many members of the Council shared that they also had a lot of positive feedback about this document and did not want any critiques of the document to discredit any of the hard work put into its creation.
- Susan Domenighini spoke to the idea that every classroom is different in how it is taught so it is unlikely that there will be any one option that would fit K-8; there will most likely need to be variety in our approach. Susan and Monica McDaniel both pointed out that our school is unique as well, meaning that our plan may not look like other schools, and it is important to leave flexibility for our teachers to implement these guidelines in a way that is true to Blue Oak.
- Other comments and concerns regarding this process included:
 - Laurel Hill-Ward reminded everyone that there is no perfect plan, the goal is to be flexible and able to adapt to changes when new information arises.
 - Susan Domenighini and Buck Ernest stressed the importance of moving through this process sooner rather than later because there is a lot of work to be done and this is only the first step. Additionally, it is important to make sure Blue Oak staff and parents understand what happens after this document is approved.
 - Laurel Hill-Ward pointed out that many teachers are leaving the profession due to personal concerns and suggested that the Council looks more closely at what the teachers want, what they need, and what works best for them.
- There was discussion surrounding the idea of tabling the approval of this document in order to spend more time reviewing and revising it with both Council members and administrators present. The Council decided to hear the rest of Susan's presentation and any other comments from the audience.
- Blue Oak Teacher, Kate McDonald, submitted a letter to Council and Blue Oak Teacher, Brianna Lee, volunteered to read the letter aloud during the meeting. Kate McDonald's letter outlined how COVID-19 has personally affected herself and her family and spoke to her concerns about reopening the school. She is concerned how she will be able to handle the workload of managing students both in person and via distance learning. She is also concerned about the lack of resources available to ensure the reopening of our school is indeed safe for students and staff, and suggested reallocating the budget for hiring a new Music Teacher to be used to create or implement a more official homeschooling program.
- Blue Oak Teacher, Brianna Lee, also shared her personal observations; pointing out that a big concern of hers is making sure any at-risk students who are deeply struggling with distance learning are taken into consideration when making plans moving forward.
- Many Council members echoed Brianna's concerns for families who are facing hardships during these times and stressed the importance of ensuring that the Council's plans and decisions are equitable.

- Susan Domenighini finished her presentation by pointing out that intervention and special education were two topics that still needed to be added to the document and shared additional comments from the parent and staff surveys.
- After a brief discussion, the Council decided to form a subcommittee for the purpose of reviewing this document with Susan and her team. Chelsea Parker and Vicki Wonacoff volunteered to participate in the subcommittee.
- Heather Bonea made a motion to to approve the formation of a subcommittee and to table the current agenda item. Laura Swanson seconded the motion.
- No discussion.
- Vote:

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Monica McDaniel	x			
Heather Bonea	x			
Chelsea Parker	x			
Trisha Atehortua	x			
Laura Swanson	x			
Vicki Wonacott	x			
Laurel Hill-Ward	x			

- Vote passes.

2.2. Strategic Plan

- Chelsea Parker made a motion to table this agenda item as well. Trisha Atehortua seconded this motion.
- No discussion.
- Vote:

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Monica McDaniel	x			
Heather Bonea	x			
Chelsea Parker	x			
Trisha Atehortua	x			
Laura Swanson	x			
Vicki Wonacott	x			
Laurel Hill-Ward	x			

- Vote passes.
- One final question was asked regarding a survey specifically for staff and Susan Domenighini said she would send one out.

3. NEXT MEETING - Tuesday, October 20, 2020 (Regular Meeting)

ADJOURNMENT

- Monica McDaniel adjourned the meeting at 8:15PM.

Minutes Taken By: Alexandra

Archer

Approved by: *Trisha Atehortua*
Trisha Atehortua (Dec 20, 2020 18:53 PST) Date: Dec 20, 2020