

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
MINUTES OF THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting – February 24, 2021

The Grandview Heights Schools Board of Education met in special session via video conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Call to Order: President Jesse Truett called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Roll Call	Members Present:	Members Absent:
	Eric Bode	
	Emily Gephart	
	Kevin Gusé	
	Jesse Truett	
	Molly Wassmuth	

Mr. Truett explained the agenda included a proposed resolution regarding state testing brought forth by Ms. Wassmuth. He provided an overview, explaining that testing is actually a federal requirement and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) would have to request a waiver to be exempt from testing. He also explained that ODE does not want to waive the testing, even if the U.S. Department of Education granted a waiver. However, the Ohio legislature could still take action to waive the testing. In addition, the federal government recently announced that testing is not being waived so in all likelihood, our students will test and that testing window opens in approximately 17-18 days.

Ms. Wassmuth explained that her purpose in bringing the resolution to the Board for consideration. She explained that if and when students return to school in a fully traditional model, there will be a finite amount of time with students and she feels the time with students could be better spent than conducting testing. Many other districts have passed this same resolution, including Worthington, Westerville, Reynoldsburg, Dublin, Gahanna, and Columbus.

Mr. Gusé asked if the resolution had to be considered in whole. He stated that he agreed with some of the language but not all of it. He specifically mentioned that he did not feel comfortable with the language stating that testing will cause unnecessary health risks for students.

Mrs. Gephart stated that she agreed with Mr. Gusé.

Ms. Wassmuth stated that the proposed resolution language could be modified. She also stated that she perceived the unnecessary health risks as mental health risks.

Mrs. Gephart asked if the proposed resolution is the same resolution passed by the other districts.

Mr. Truett stated that he believed the language was likely from Columbus City Schools as they were not in school and it may have been believed that bringing students to school just for testing may be a health risk in that case.

Mr. Gusé also stated that language in the resolution states that the testing results wouldn't be available until after the end of the school year and would, therefore, be no help. He stated that he does not think that is true as the results would still be helpful.

Ms. Wassmuth stated that she thought it was acceptable to remove that language.

Mrs. Gephart stated that she felt the final 'whereas' statement was too strong. It read, "WHEREAS, the worst introduction to in-person instruction this Board can imagine would be a battery of biased standardized tests given to students that will be useless in determining what those students need to learn academically."

Ms. Wassmuth stated that she did agree with that language.

Mrs. Gephart stated that the issue isn't about whether testing is good or bad, but whether testing in this particular situation of COVID-19 is good or bad.

Mr. Truett stated that the language in the suggested resolution was probably written by people who think testing is never good. Mr. Truett also stated that there is already no accountability or report card impact with the testing and he would actually like to see the results to see how our district is performing.

Ms. Wassmuth stated that she does agree with assessments, but feels like state testing needs to go. She also stated that she was fine with removing that particular language that Mrs. Gephart identified as problematic.

Mr. Truett stated that the language put forth in the resolution is important because that is all that this is – a statement issued by the Board. The Biden administration is not going to change its position on testing as a result of this resolution; the testing is going to happen, so the words matter.

Mrs. Gephart stated that while she appreciates different perspectives, her perspective is from an analytical standpoint. She feels like there will be so much to study as a result of the pandemic, with countless data mining and research opportunities. She feels the data is important for the government to have to evaluate and make changes for improvement.

Ms. Wassmuth stated that she feels the testing would be okay if it wasn't used for punitive measures. She also asked the Board members if the language in the last 'whereas' statement was removed, if that would be acceptable to them.

Mr. Gusé suggested the resolution be tabled so Board members had more time to analyze it.

Ms. Wassmuth stated that with the testing window open very soon, tabling it would be too late to take action.

Mr. Truett suggested that a motion be made, if desired.

Motion 21-081 (Action Taken by the Board of Education) Ms. Wassmuth moved to approve the following amended resolution:

1. State Mandated Testing

Recommend the Board approve the following resolution urging the Ohio General Assembly to waive all state mandated standardized testing requirements for the 2020-2021 school year, request a waiver from state mandated testing for the U.S. Department of Education, and declare the Grandview Heights Schools Board's support for House Bills 67 and 40, which would fulfill both requests, and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, it is the statutory duty of the Grandview Heights Schools to deliver the educational programs and services to the school children of the Grandview Heights Schools school district, and

WHEREAS, the members of the Board are elected by the Grandview Heights Schools school community to ensure that students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, and

WHEREAS, the elected board of education is responsible to the community including taxpayers, parents and other patrons, as well as the state, and

WHEREAS, the state of Ohio requires annual, statewide standardized testing in accordance with federal mandates, and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has created instructional challenges and forced educators to quickly adapt to new practices during the 2020-2021 school year, and

WHEREAS, the administration of standardized tests may create additional, unnecessary health risks to students and district staff, and

WHEREAS, the State of Ohio waived standardized testing last Spring when learning was disrupted for less than half of the academic year, and

WHEREAS, the Grandview Heights Schools school district and its educators already perform formative testing on every district student – tests that during a pandemic are far more helpful and accurate in addressing student need, and

WHEREAS, the education professionals in the Grandview Heights Schools school district are best able to assess those COVID-19 related needs better than an out-of-state standardized test developer, and

WHEREAS, the Grandview Heights Schools school district and its educators are committed to ensuring every district student is able to succeed, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION THAT:

SECTION ONE:

The Board of Education urges the State of Ohio to not require the Spring 2021 statewide standardized assessments to be given and the Ohio Department of Education to apply to the U.S. Department of Education for a waiver from federal standardized testing requirements. And the Board fully supports House Bills 67 and 40, which would do exactly those two things.

SECTION TWO:

The Grandview Heights Schools Board of Education finds and determines that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the adoption of this Resolution were taken in open meetings of this Board and any deliberations of this Board and any of its committees that resulted in those formal actions were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements.

SECTION THREE:

The Board declares this to be an emergency immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Grandview Heights Schools school district. Provided that this legislation receives the affirmative vote of three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$ ths) of the members elected or appointed to the Board, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage.

Mr. Bode seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Mrs. Gephart asked for clarification from Mr. Truett about accountability.

Mr. Truett explained that there really is not accountability for traditional school districts; they will stay open even if every student failed the tests. And, the report cards will not be published with the grades from the state testing.

Mrs. Gephart stated that she isn't against testing, but feels that this school year is unique due to COVID-19.

Roll Call: Mr. Bode, aye; Mrs. Gephart, aye; Mr. Gusé, aye; Mr. Truett, aye; Ms. Wassmuth, aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

Motion 21-082 (Executive Session) Mr. Bode moved to enter into Executive Session for the following purpose:

- a. To consider the employment and evaluation of personnel.

Ms. Wassmuth seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Mr. Bode, aye; Mrs. Gephart, aye; Mr. Gusé, aye; Mr. Truett, aye; Ms. Wassmuth, aye.

Motion carried 5-0.

The Board of Education entered into Executive Session at 6:30 p.m.

The Board of Education returned to Regular Session at 8:09 p.m.

Motion 21-083 (Adjourn) Mr. Bode moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gusé seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Mr. Bode, aye; Mrs. Gephart, aye; Mr. Gusé, aye; Mr. Truett, aye; Ms. Wassmuth, aye.

President Truett declared the meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

President

Treasurer