



**WOODLAND JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

**April 7, 2021**

Consistent with the Shelter in Place orders from the Governor and Yolo County, this meeting was compliant with the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, which allowed for a deviation of teleconference rules required by the Brown Act. In-person attendance was not permitted. The meeting was available for live stream viewing, and recordings are available at <https://livestream.com/wjUSD> (click on the Board Meeting date).

Attendance Taken at 8:00 PM:

Present:

Deborah Bautista Zavala  
Morgan Childers  
Bibiana Garcia  
Kandice Richardson Fowler  
Noel Rodriguez  
Rogelio Villagrana  
Jake Whitaker

**A. CALL TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION - 8:00 P.M.**

Minutes:

The Board President called the meeting to order in Open Session at 8:00 p.m. via Zoom and the meeting was live streamed and recorded via Vimeo Livestream.

**A.1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Minutes:

Trustee Deborah Bautista Zavala led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**B. APPROVAL OF BOARD AGENDA - ACTION**

**Motion Passed:** Motion was made to approve the agenda. Passed with a motion by Kandice Richardson Fowler and a second by Rogelio Villagrana.

Yes Deborah Bautista Zavala

- Yes Morgan Childers
- Yes Bibiana Garcia
- Yes Kandice Richardson Fowler
- Yes Noel Rodriguez
- Yes Rogelio Villagrana
- Yes Jake Whitaker

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON SPECIAL BOARD MEETING AGENDA - In-person attendance at the Board Meeting will not be permitted. Please email public comments by 4:00 pm on the Board Meeting date to [public.comment@wjusd.org](mailto:public.comment@wjusd.org). Per Board Bylaw 9323, comments (emails) received shall be limited to three minutes per person, and the Board shall limit the total time for public comment on each item to 20 minutes. Public comments may also be submitted by voicemail by 4:00 pm on the Board Meeting date, at 530-406-3202, or by mail postmarked on or before the Board Meeting date, at Attn: Public Comment, 435 6th Street, Woodland, CA 95695. If you wish to leave a comment regarding a specific agenda item, please indicate the item's number and title in your message. The meeting will be available for live stream viewing at <https://livestream.com/wjused> (click on the Board Meeting date).**

**Motion Passed:** Motion was made to extend the public comment time to 25 minutes. Passed with a motion by Deborah Bautista Zavala and a second by Noel Rodriguez.

- Yes Deborah Bautista Zavala
- Yes Morgan Childers
- Yes Bibiana Garcia
- Yes Kandice Richardson Fowler
- Yes Noel Rodriguez
- Yes Rogelio Villagrana
- Yes Jake Whitaker

Minutes:  
Please see the attached public comments.

## **D. REPORTS**

### **D.1. Superintendent's Report**

Minutes:  
Superintendent Pritchard provided brief updates to the Board of Trustees on actions taken since the last Regular Board Meeting.

## **E. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**E.1. Action: Resolution 57-21 to Approve the Return to In-Person Instruction Five (5) Days per Week for Grades 7-12 on April 26, 2021**

**Motion Passed:** Motion was made to approve Resolution 57-21 to Approve the Return to In-Person Instruction Five (5) Days per Week for Grades 7-12 on April 26, 2021 with one edit. Passed with a motion by Rogelio Villagrana and a second by Morgan Childers.

- Yes Deborah Bautista Zavala
- Yes Morgan Childers
- Yes Bibiana Garcia
- Yes Kandice Richardson Fowler
- Yes Noel Rodriguez
- Yes Rogelio Villagrana
- Yes Jake Whitaker

#### **M. ADJOURNMENT**

Minutes:

The Board President adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

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BOARD CLERK

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BOARD PRESIDENT

**Special Board Meeting  
April 7, 2021  
Public Comments**

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Hello WJUSD School Board and Cabinet,

My name is Melissa Edsall and I work at Douglass Middle School and have worked for WJUSD for 15 years. Last week I got to welcome my leadership students to campus to help prepare for the return of our students. We were painting posters, cutting out paws and leading Orientations for our 7th grade students. It was wonderful to be around students again. Out of my possible 45 8th grade student leaders I only had 10 return to help with Orientation. There are a variety of reasons for this but a big one being that about 40% of my students have opted not to return to in-person learning during Phase 3. I'm telling you this so that you remember to think of those students when planning for Phase 3. Wednesday is the one day where their entire class will be "together" even while online. We need to remember that their current "normal" is to learn online and it is what they have become comfortable with. This is the only day where 40% of my students would have felt fully included in class and have more "facetime" with me as on the other days I will be more addressing the in-person class. This is also the day where we provide our SEL curriculum lessons and for me would be a lot easier to do with all of my students in the same "place".

I also would like to bring up another concern I have with regards to returning students to campus on Wednesday. Our schedule on Wednesday is a whirlwind. We see students for 30 minute classes. Online this works because I'm not greeting students at the door, getting them in seats with materials out and ready to learn also while trying to let my zooming students "into the room". At most they will get 25 minutes of good instruction per class. Beyond that the CDC recommendation for return to school with 3 feet distancing also specified that these students be in "stable cohorts" If these cohorts cannot be reached (which is the case for the secondary schools at WJUSD) then 6ft is still recommended. 6ft would not be happening in a large portion of our secondary school classrooms and students will be exposed to 6 or 7 different groups of classes on Wednesday. This is because the Covid-19 transmission rate is different in older students. But I'm sure you know this, I just didn't know if you were aware of the logistics of our Wednesday schedule and the circumstances it would create on our campuses.

One idea I did have in order to get more students on campus more days would be in the Elementary grades. What if our Elementary teachers combined their online afternoon classes at each school site across grade level. Meaning, if there were 2 or 3 classes for 1st grade at one school, those teachers would combine their classes in the afternoon. I see this as a win in many ways. Students would be able to be in a class with more of their peers, instead of what looks like for most cases 2-4 students per teacher. Teachers would then trade off teaching the group. The teachers would have a bigger group of 8-15 students which is a better learning environment for all. Kids want to "be" with other kids, even if virtually. Students would still see and learn with their teacher for a portion of the time, and most likely would know the other teacher they would learn from because they have seen them on campus. I know my son is in 1st grade and knows the other teachers on his campus and currently his school and teachers combine classes sometimes for fun activities, this makes him comfortable with the other 1st grade teacher. This would also allow for more teacher prep time for Elementary teachers and

could allow in-person students to return on Wednesday mornings, since teachers would be gaining prep time in the afternoons on other days. I think this is a good compromise to a tricky situation. I know virtual students want to stay with their current teacher, but I also think we need to use our resources wisely. If I think about equity (which we do a lot at WJUSD) in the current plan for Phase 3 students in the afternoon will be receiving almost one on one instruction almost daily, while our returning students will be back to normal, with fewer hours than normal with their teacher. I don't think that is an equitable situation. I hope this makes sense and I truly believe it is a manageable plan for the last 9 weeks of instruction.

I know you are all under a lot of pressure to return students to class, and believe me I am so excited to see my students on the 12th, but I think we need to stop and access before rushing into hasty decisions that might have bigger repercussions in the long run. Thank you for your time. I hope you all have a wonderful Spring Break!

Respectfully,  
Melissa Edsall

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Hello, I am emailing regarding item E.1 on your agenda.

This is ridiculous and vile to bring up over spring break when most teachers are resting.

Wednesdays are 30 minute days where most of that time will be used for transitions and to even bring it up after teachers and students are tired and disrupted by these schedule changes is disgusting and greedy.

You haven't even approved a stipend for your staff yet, and you're again trying to put even more work and stress onto overworked staff and students who struggle to find their footing in an already challenging year.

Teachers are tired of playing this stupid cat and mouse game of having our time and mental health be respected. Don't we and our families count too? Or just the ones whose children in seats pay your pay checks?

There are nine weeks left. Worry about the schedule for next year or maybe the emails from your actual staff and their concerns. All this change is helpful to no one at this point.

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Dear Trustees,

I am asking you to let us try the current 4 day plan before making more changes.

Unfortunately politicians everywhere are treating this situation as a race back to how school was before the pandemic rather than trying to really evaluate what is best for all at a given time.

Transitions can teach us quite a lot, especially if we allow time to really learn from each stage. Despite the challenges, there have been valuable tools on zoom that have improved communication with students: private chat and individual breakout rooms. Both of these tools allowed students to ask and answer questions privately without worrying about the judgement of their peers. They have allowed me to get to know my students and academic abilities in a new way.

Continuing with zoom classes on Wednesday would provide continuity for classes, allow distance and in person students the opportunity to interact, allow us to continue using effective zoom tools, and provide less opportunities for students to catch Coronavirus.

Zoom classes would also provide teachers and students a bit of grace in the middle of the week to help mitigate the challenges of concurrent instruction. Please realize that right now I know how to teach a zoom class quite well, the same is not true for a concurrent class. Don't we want to maximize the number of excellent educational experiences for students?

I cannot think of any educational benefits to having students in class in person on Wednesdays. If you want this to happen, please reflect on why and consider if this will really benefit students. Please understand that this has been a very difficult, frustrating, and disillusioning time for teachers. Your decisions have impacted us both positively and negatively. I would like to believe that you care about our well being also and would ask, on behalf of the whole school community, that you make no further changes this school year.

Thanks for reading my letter,

Jessica Dille

Math Teacher

Woodland High School

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Dear Board of Trustees and Cabinet,

I am writing to ask you all to please keep Wednesdays an all virtual day. The most recent decision to dissolve the A/B cohorts in order to have students attend 4 days a week was very jarring for many of my students. In my weekly check-ins, my students stated that they felt very overwhelmed with the new change. I can only imagine how much more stressed and overwhelmed they'll be having to come 5 days a week with less than a week's notice.

Teachers too.

Keeping virtual Wednesdays would allow our in-person and virtual students to reconnect with one another in the middle of the week via Zoom. Many teachers have already planned special activities to do on those short days. I, personally, have already planned to meet with students one-on-one in breakout rooms so they can get my full attention since they won't be getting that on any of the other days. That would be very, very difficult to do while students are in our classrooms. Our students deserve to have at least one day where their teacher's attention is not split between two groups.

Lastly, please consider how this new change would impact our families who have already arranged child care for those days **and** consider our custodial staff. Custodians were planning to use Wednesdays as a day to properly and thoroughly clean the classrooms. I worry that if people are on campus, they will not have enough time in the day to do this.

Within the past few weeks, so much has changed. While teachers and students are flexible and adaptable, I believe many of us have reached our limit. It may be tempting to jump from 4 to 5 days a week, but please allow those returning to have a transition period in order to get used to such a drastic change.

It is the middle of spring break. We have less than a week before classes begin. Please don't make any more last minute changes.

Sincerely,

WHS Teacher

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Hello WJUSD School Board Members,

I am emailing you as a member of the WJUSD community. Having in person classes on Wednesday is a bad idea for a number of reasons.

- Custodians need a chance to deep clean the classrooms. Expecting them to deep clean every room before or after classes is unrealistic, and puts too much pressure on employees who are already stretched thin. The rooms need to be clean, especially in High schools as the classes are not in stable cohorts.
- Students need to be eased back into in-person teaching. Students haven't been in class for the past year, and will undoubtedly struggle with being back in person.
- Teachers need to be eased back in as well. It has been a year since they have taught in person, immediately going to a fully hybrid model is incredibly stressful. Having a day to not teach in a hybrid model would allow them to not have to split their attention every day, and allow them to ease into hybrid teaching.

Making these last minute decisions is detrimental to everyone. It is forcing parents, students, Teachers, Custodians, and Administration to have to re-evaluate their plans on incredibly short notice. I implore you to vote against opening school campuses on Wednesdays.

Best,  
Chris Gerken

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Good evening. My name is Jenna Myers and I am a 7th grade history/ 8th grade AVID teacher at Lee. As you make your decision tonight I am asking of you to consider our students who are continuing distance learning. We have heard of all of the concerns about students emotional health and the need for connection. Starting Monday we will be providing that for the students who are coming back to campus, but I worry for our students staying home. We have been informed that students on campus will not be able to be on zoom due to internet limitations. They will not have access to the zoom chat which has been where I have seen students make friends with others, agree and disagree about the meaning of a primary source and enter heated debated about our welcome question of kong v godzilla. It is where the kids have been kids! I am trying to problem solve the loss of this connection between all of our students both home and school but fear it will not be the same. Giving them Wednesdays for everyone to come back together is key to maintaining the connections and relationships. On the flip side, I don't not think virtual wednesdays will be a huge loss to our at school kids. The 30 minute periods feel like a blink of the eye and much of their day will be taken up with passing periods and transitions. I understand that you are under immense pressure to make it feel like covid is over but honestly it is not. Please don't forget the students whose families have had to make hard choices about what amount is risk is safe for their family. We are here for ALL of our students and please show them this by chosing to keep virtual Wednesdays.

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