



Monday, April 6, 2020
Vol. 2, No. 14

Just So You Know

I love John Prine. I've referenced his song lyrics many times in various circles. I quote him as much as I quote lines from *Seinfeld*. He has a way of combining ordinary words into clever and thought-provoking syntax and then putting those combinations to music that make me smile, laugh, assimilate, and sing along. John has COVID-19 and is very ill. He is of an age that makes him vulnerable. He has pre-existing conditions that make him high risk. When I heard the news recently, a lot went through my mind as I tried to unpack my emotions. I landed on this, "Old people just get lonely, waiting for someone to say 'Hello in there, Hello.'" The virus is isolationist; it demands more than social distancing for people like John Prine. It involves quarantine, induced coma, ventilation, and the attention of people draped in intense protection.

I am of that vulnerable age too, but more importantly, my parents are critically vulnerable being in their 90's and living in an assisted care facility under quarantine. Their physical needs are being taken care of with three meals a day and regular checkups by medical personnel. My dad is getting his tri-weekly dialysis, and they have their apartment with television and telephone. They cannot, however, leave that space, nor can anyone but care facility personnel, who are also draped in protection, enter that space. They are isolated and as such, their emotional needs are suffering.

As my parents have aged, they have had to shed many things that were important to them. They have had to give up driving, going to church, going out to dinner, shopping, and going to events involving their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Their salvation has been in having family visit them, and when that became impossible, they have no choice but to wait in isolation, hoping for someone familiar and in person to say, "Hello in there, hello."

This loss of human contact is one of the great tragedies of our time, albeit a necessity. Social distancing, certainly the right thing to do, has led to new levels of seclusion for many, to wit, students from their schools and from their teachers and the support personnel that serve their educational and intrinsic needs. I am confident that we are doing all that we can to advance education for our students and to feed the children, providing nourishment for their bodies. But what about the heart? The soul? The whole child? And what about the needs of the adults serving these kids?

The void created by social distancing and isolation is teaching us how interconnected we are as humans as we go through a school year— the parent, the child, the bus driver, the custodian and maintenance worker, the secretaries and aides, the breakfast and lunch workers, the cross-walk people, the counselors and social workers, the human services providers, the vendors, administrators, and of course, the teachers.

These social and interactive needs, too, are being addressed in the best ways possible as so many are reaching out, but without touching, to the kids through internet connections, social media, online games and challenges, community parades, signs and banners, video announcements, photos and drawings, and even brief meetings for tutoring and explanation. These are people who care about all aspects of the children they serve and who are doing all that is possible to make their world a little better.

Some day all of this social-distancing will end, or at least part of it although I have to believe that future handshakes, high-fives, hugs, and noogies will come with some hesitation. But we will get back to the best parts of how it used to be. What we are going through now will become what John Prine describes as "souvenirs." These times will be part of a massive, painful, expensive, and heart-breaking learning experience. I can't help but believe that the lessons learned will include just how much love and kindness can mean to those living in rumpled peace, including my parents whom I call often, just to say, "Hello in there, Hello."

Superintendent Davis

Vision Statement:

"Education is a collaborative effort of home, community, and school. Students experience success on a daily basis and excel in performance through applying knowledge to real life situations. Schools are student-centered, guided by educators who possess excellent leadership and educational skills. Education expands beyond the classroom walls through the use of technology, and the curriculum meets the highest standards of an ever-changing world. Graduates are prepared to enter the workforce or continue their formal education at an advanced technical institution or a college or university. The Emery County School District believes that learning today provides leadership for tomorrow."

Updated information on school “dismissal” in the Emery District

(Previously emailed to the Administrative Council and Board of Education) In light of our current situation, please be aware of the following updates:

Administrative TEAM Meetings: Administrative Team (district supervisors) Meetings will be held Friday, April 17; Friday, April 24; and Friday, May 1. These meetings will be by WebEx (Doug will set things up) and begin at 9 am. Agendas will be emailed in advance of each meeting.

Administrative COUNCIL Meetings: The April 15 meeting is canceled, but the May 12 meeting will continue as planned as an in-person meeting if possible but as an on-line meeting otherwise. Start time is 8:30 am, and agendas will be emailed. Depending on how things play out over the next several weeks, a June Administrative Council Meeting may be necessary. The May 12 meeting will include our final Book Club presentation from Team No. 4 (Yvonne, John, Doug M., and Jody) on *Nuance*. It is likely that the May meeting will last most of the day. Between now and the May meeting, district supervisors will communicate electronically any necessary and timely information. Face-to-face meetings should be minimized.

Canceled Meetings:

Association/Board/Superintendent Meetings for April 15 and May 12 are canceled with no makeup date planned.

Juvenile Justice Committee Meeting for April 27 is canceled with no makeup date planned.

Miscellaneous:

2020-21 Planning: Staffing for the next school year is in limbo right now. Everything was in place until the “soft closure” and other COVID-19 directives became effective. The main issue now involves the budget. Although the state legislature approved a favorable funding package for public ed, that is now tenuous as state revenues are in decline. Governor Herbert is calling a special session later this month to address these shortfalls, and that may impact funding to our district which, in turn, may impact what we are able to do with respect to staffing needs. Until we know more, hopefully by the first of May, we are not advancing staffing priorities.

Midterm Minimum Day, April 20: Agendas will be set by principals and collaborative team leaders but no in-person meetings involving more than three people should be held. Electronic meetings are preferable. However, under the circumstances, Midterm Minimum Day could also be a No-Meeting-Day.

End-of-Term PLC, May 22: To be determined

Commencement Exercises: This too is “to be determined,” but our high schools should be having the discussions of how to honor our graduates in ways that would be dignified while within the restraints of social distancing. Planning

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should involve faculty, students, community councils and other stakeholders. Middle schools should also be considering ways to honor eighth graders but with less urgency than graduating seniors. The former is a formal rite-of-passage while the latter is a promotional program.

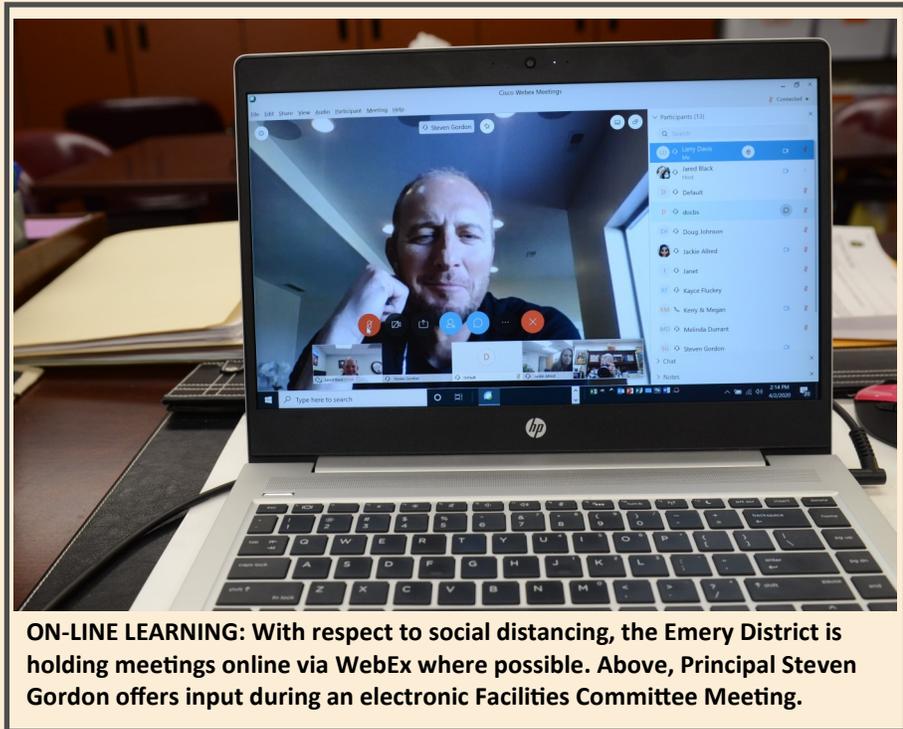
Lands Trust Plans:

The inflexible deadline for schools to submit 2020-21 Lands Trust Plans is April 17. The superintendent will then review the plans for compliance and either accept them as they are or send them back to principals for revision. Once all plans have been approved by the superintendent, they will be sent to the Emery Board of Education for review. School Lands Trust Plans will be a consent item on the May 6, board agenda. Once the board approves the plans, they will go to the USBE for review. Funding will be available by July 1.

Professional and Staff Evaluations: All evaluations of teachers and classified staff need to be finalized and accessible to district office supervisors by the end of the school year. Remember that the final step of the evaluation involves a conference with the employee. That may be done in person but with respect to social distancing.

May 6 School Board Meeting: This meeting is scheduled to be held at Ferron Elementary at 6:30 pm for work session and 7 pm for the general session. Be aware that the meeting may be held electronically and times may change. In any event, the May board meeting will include the final public hearing on the district's proposed fee schedule for 2020-21.

Note of Appreciation from the Superintendent: I am very proud of the leadership coming from the Administrative Council in these difficult times. We truly have become a school district that functions at a very high collaborative level. Your guidance has brought out the best in everyone you supervise, and as a result, our students are continuing to learn and grow academically and socially. Peace and good health to all of you.



ON-LINE LEARNING: With respect to social distancing, the Emery District is holding meetings online via WebEx where possible. Above, Principal Steven Gordon offers input during an electronic Facilities Committee Meeting.

Ferron Elementary needs are detailed



CONNECTION TO THE PAST: Part of the original South Emery High School building is still in use at Ferron Elementary. It was built in 1918. The building now supports the preschool program.

The Emery School District Facilities Committee has determined that Ferron Elementary is a top-3 priority school for remodel and/or new construction. Along with Emery High and Huntington Elementary, Ferron is in need of critical upgrades. Following is information compiled by the Emery Maintenance Department regarding these needs.

Ferron Elementary School opened in 1964

Remodels or rebuilds include:

1966: Office, Hall, Kindergarten, Octagon.

1918 Building C.

1981 West Classrooms and Gym and Portable Building with Two Classrooms.

Ferron Elementary, remodels or additions: Ferron elemen-

tary uses what we call “Building C” which was built in 1918 and was part of the original South Emery High School. It is very old and has required a lot of upkeep and maintenance over the years it has been in service.

The Ferron Elementary School initially used a coal boiler steam heating system and no air conditioning. Over the years the heating system has been converted to natural gas boiler steam heating, then natural gas hot water heating with individual fan coil units and evaporative coolers in classrooms and other areas.

The Heating system is getting old. The problems with it stem from older piping and fan coil unit valves that are no longer functioning correctly and which require repair or replacement at

each unit. With the age of the system, it has become inefficient, and requires a lot of preventive maintenance and replacement parts. Correcting this would require replacing the classroom units, boilers, and piping in the school at a substantial cost to the district and with some doubt about achieving the success hoped for, especially in regards to improving overall efficiency.

The gym has a gas fired roof top unit for heating and cooling. It is relatively new and works well.

Cooling system has individual evaporative coolers for classrooms and other areas of the building. They work well overall but have ongoing maintenance problems especially as they get older.

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Electrical systems, for a building built in 1964, are inadequate for today's electrical and technology needs. Demands for electrical capacity will only continue to grow. Meeting electrical needs has required several creative adaptations. One power addition was added to support heating retrofit and to bolster electrical needs. The power services that were added were brought in through the tunnels with an electrical panel in the library closet. Surface-mounted molding for wires and cables have been required. Most of the power in the building is at maximum capacity.

The Fire alarm system needs to be upgraded to meet the Fire Marshall's recommendations. This school does have fire sprinklers that are surface mounted and are not original equipment in the

older part of the school. The Fire Marshall is requesting fire system upgrades throughout the district which is ongoing two or three schools at a time. In order to stay up to code at Ferron Elementary School, a new system needs to be installed.

Water and Sewer Systems: Besides being older and of an older technology, the school has a lot of the piping that is underground under the building which is inaccessible, so when we have had pipe failure, we have been required to reroute the water lines or abandon sinks in certain classrooms. This results in significant classroom disruption and inhibits personal hygiene needs.

Roofing is an ongoing problem in every building, Ferron Elementary School is no exception, and Ferron Elementary has Carlisle TPO roofing over the older part of the building and EPDM roofing

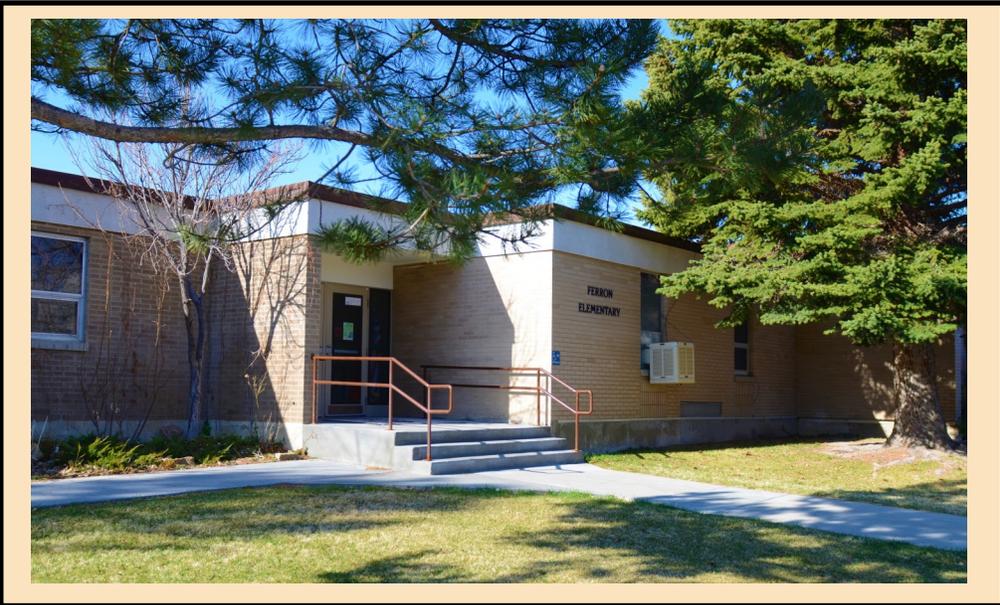
over the gym. The district has been vigilant to keep the roofing issues addressed as they arise, but in the near future it will require replacement of the roofing over the gym area.

Asbestos: Being an older building, asbestos was commonly used in construction. Over the years we have done many abatement projects and have encapsulated any asbestos that is remaining. The only way to get to the remaining asbestos would be to remove the building. All areas that are remaining are maintained and inspected regularly. All documentations are available to the public upon request.

Safety: In addition to these issues, from a security standpoint, Ferron Elementary would require a considerable upgrade at the front entrance to allow for the security buzz-in system we are now installing in our schools, which

include the designing and building of a vestibule.

In the opinion of the Maintenance Department, funding a new building is a needed expense and would be an effective use of district resources.



April 1 Emery School Board summary

The Emery County Board of Education met for its regularly scheduled meeting on April 1, 2020. Although the meeting was originally scheduled to be held at Emery High School, social distancing requirements led to the meeting being held electronically.

Board members, superintendent Davis, and Business Administrator Black were part of a WebEx broadcast with each participant separated from the others. The open board meeting also allowed other employees and members of the public to participate via WebEx.

After the Board finalized regular agenda items, it adjourned into closed session after all other participants had logged off.

Following is a summary of the meeting:

Board President Tracey Johnson called the meeting to order at 7 pm and then led the participants in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Discussion & Reports:

COVID-19 UPDATE: Superintendent Davis updated the Board on the current status of the state-wide “soft Closure” due to the COVID-19 virus. He told the Board that the Utah State Board of Education has accepted the district’s Closure Plan which outlines services in the event of an ordered school closure. The superintendent noted that most of those services are already in place during the soft closure. For example, 1500 to 1700 meals (one Grab and Go with two meals in each bag) are being prepared and distributed at schools and various bus stops each week-day. Homework is primarily being distributed and collected online, and with few exceptions, every student has internet and the necessary device to utilize it. Teachers have received training in use of teaching platforms and on-line instruction. Initially, schools were keeping to the 10-person per gathering limit but that has been minimized where possible to gatherings of three or fewer. The district office has limited its office hours from 10 am to 2 pm weekdays while office staff members are working at home as much as possible. Schools are adopting a grading system of A, B, P, I for fourth term. The Business Department has established protocol for employees working at home, those who are at home but not working, and those who are at-risk due to age and/or pre-existing conditions. The superintendent said that moral

among employees is quite high, especially given the circumstances that exist. Schools are supporting daily activities and challenges to maintain the bond between home and school.

Proposal for Elementary PLC Time: The Board accepted a proposal by the elementary principals and Elementary Supervisor JR Jones to build in weekly time for PLC and Collaborative Team work. The proposal would give elementary schools an early-out Wednesday when students would be released before 1 pm, giving teachers and administrators a 2-hour contract block of time for: 1) School-level PLC work; 2) District elementary collaborative team work; and 3) professional development. The elementary principals and Supervisor Jones have been working with the Transportation Department to facilitate this early-out plan. This plan does not involve secondary schools. The Board accepted the proposal as well as supporting documents for review and will take action on the matter in May.

School Facilities/Bonding Update: Business Manager Jared Black updated the Board on work being done toward proposed bonding in November for several school priority building projects. The Emery District Facilities Committee previously set priorities for building upgrades at Emery High, Ferron Elementary, and Huntington Elementary. Most recently, committee members toured newly constructed elementary and secondary schools in the Sevier, Millard, and Alpine School Districts. Mr. Black said that it is now time to advance the planning to include the hiring of architects and other professional building planners to get more concrete ideas of specific needs and new construction costs.

Hunter Solar Donation: Previously, the Board had learned that the developers of the Hunter Solar Project near Clawson are donating \$50,000 to the Emery District to go toward STEM-related programs. The Board had agreed that the funding would best serve the entire district through the Robotics Program which exists in all schools. However, the county commission was supposed to provide more detail on use of those funds to the school district. That hasn’t happened, so the district is awaiting further input.

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Board notes

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Board Action Items:

Personnel Items: The Board was given an update on the 2020-21 full-time English Language Arts position at Emery High. That position has been filled via transfer when Jodi Sitterud accepted the move from Canyon View Middle School to Emery High. The opening at Canyon View is currently being advertised.

Surplus Vehicles: Transportation Supervisor Roger Swenson asked the Board to approve designating two of the fleet's older school buses as "surplus." The Board approved the request which will now allow the buses to be sold.

Reports:

Principal's Report: It was announced by Board President Johnson that, because of the circumstances under which the meeting was being held, the principal's report had been waived. The report was to be given by Emery High Principal Steven Gordon.

Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Davis noted that since the end of the 2020 Legislative



Session, the Utah economy has experienced serious setbacks in the collection of anticipated revenue. Because of that and other concerns, Governor Herbert is planning on calling the Legislature into special session to deal with budgeting issues. How this session may impact funding for public education for 2020-21 is uncertain. The superintendent will be involved later this month in two meetings online with the Utah School Superintendents Association to breakdown new legislation. Regarding district-level committee reports, the superintendent said that the Technology Committee has submitted the new Digital Teaching and Learning Grant Application to the state for review and approval. However, the remaining meetings for the Juvenile Justice Committee and the Association/Board/Superintendent Team have been canceled.

Closed Session:

Following a discussion in closed session on proposals to change the current Extracurricular Pay Schedule for coaches and advisers and to also consider adding additional paid coaching positions to some high school athletic programs, the Board tabled these matters with the belief that the current educational climate and budget uncertainties do not warrant making changes at this time.



STAYING IN TOUCH WHILE NOT TOUCHING: Top photo-Cleveland Elementary prepares to start the staff parade which traveled through each of the school's communities. Left: Parents and student line the parade route to express their appreciation for the efforts of their school.

**Emery School District
Mission Statement:**

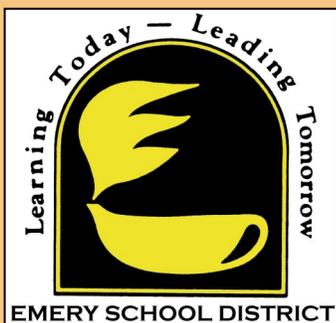
***“The mission of the
Emery County
School District is to
provide a compre-
hensive education
that will prepare
students to take a
proactive and re-
sponsible role in an
ever-changing
world.”***

**Emery County School
District**

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District Calendar

During the “school dismissal” period, March 16-May 1, district and individual school calendar events have been canceled or postponed for future scheduling.

This is in compliance with the “social distancing” rule of gatherings of 10 people or fewer and separation of individuals of at least six feet. As schools resume, many events will be reinstated onto district and school calendars but may still be subject to some rules with respect to the COVID-19 virus.



STICKY NOTES:



District Office Personnel and Work Schedules:

During the school dismissal period, the district office hours have been minimized. The office will be open from 10 am to 2 pm weekdays. However, phone calls to the district office will be answered from 7:30 am to 4 pm. These changes are in line with social distancing practices as well as safety for vulnerable populations (65+, pre-existing conditions, pregnancy, etc.) The public is encouraged to take care of business with the district by phone where possible rather than coming in person to the office. Also, office staff will be rotating work hours between home and office and may not be in the office during business hours.

School Lands Trust Plans/Budgets: Local School Community Councils are working on setting Lands Trust Budgets for the 2020-21 school year. The budgets need to be submitted to the superintendent by April 17. After a review of each school plan, the superintendent will submit the approved plans to the Emery Board of Education for action in the May 6, School Board Meeting.

Questions, Concerns? If you have questions or concerns about the management of schools or the school district during the school dismissal period, please email Superintendent Davis at: larryd@emeryschools.org.