

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING – RUSSELL ELEMENTARY HEARING
March 18, 2024

1. OPENING ITEMS

- A. The special board meeting of the Board of Trustees of Moscow School District No. 281 was called to order at 7:00 PM, March 18, 2023, 2024 by Trustee Ken Faunce, Chair, pursuant to Idaho Code Sections 33-502 and 33-510. The meeting was held in Moscow Middle School, 1410 East D St., Moscow, Idaho, and broadcasted live via YouTube.
- B. A quorum of the Board was determined, and trustees present were Ken Faunce, Chair, Zone 2, , Jim Frenzel, Zone 1, Dulce Kersting-Lark, Zone 3, and Dawna Fazio, Zone 4. Brian Kennedy, Vice-Chair, Zone 5, was absent and excused. Staff members present were Shawn Tiegs, Superintendent, Angie Packard, Board Clerk, and Butch Fealy, Operations Director. There were 61 viewers online and 68 patrons in attendance at the physical location.

2. HEARING ON FACILITY RECOMMENDATION

- A. Presentation and Recommendation – Shawn Tiegs, Superintendent gave a presentation and the reasoning behind the recommendation to close Russell Elementary and the reduction in force that would occur with this recommended closing.
- B. Public Input/Comments
 - 1. Cyndi Faircloth/Katelyn Lyons, MEA co-presidents, comment on the concerns from MEA membership related to cutting teaching staff but adding an administrative position. Also spoke on the proposed configuration for West Park and their concerns for the students.
 - 2. Kristin Haltinner, concern with the teacher layoffs and the effect on the younger teachers. Also, reasonable workload for specialists.
 - 3. Lisa Kilger (mom)/Chole Barnes, former student who attended Russell, spoke about her experiences there.
 - 4. Angela Colt, concerned with her children changing schools, especially her student going into 5th grade.
 - 5. Margaret Dibble spoke on the schools her children attended throughout their schooling in Moscow.
 - 6. Steve Miller questioned why this needs to be done now. Where is the data that shows why.
 - 7. Matt Lindquist commented that the plan proposed seems nebulous. What is the plan going forward.
 - 8. Tiffany Stubblefield spoke on the pros and cons that were mentioned. What is coming next?
 - 9. LaDene Edwards, concerned on how fast things are moving. Would like to see the presentation posted on the website. Concerned about the children that are having to move multiple times.
 - 10. Rusty Baker, has children at Russell and West Park, agrees with knowing the plan but doesn't agree with the status quo about not changing.
 - 11. Bjorn Pellmyr spoke on when the middle school changed from 7-9 to 6-8 and the high school to a 9-12. Encouraged the board and superintendent to talk to those that were there when this change took place.
 - 12. Kristin Stoop spoke on the trauma to students that are affected by this change. Has students at Russell and West Park. Needs more of a definite answer on why. Disagrees strongly with the 5th grade plan and this should be addressed before closing a school.
 - 13. Jenni Hightower, WP counselor, read a statement she prepared about the proposed changes. Concerned with the many changes that will affect those students moving multiple times to multiple schools.
 - 14. Molly Hierschbiel, works at Russell, noted this is not an ideal situation for anyone, spoke about the students that come to Russell and spoke about it being their job to make those students feel secure.
 - 15. Kris Freeland, WP teacher, has worked at West Park since it was a K-6 grade and has been through many changes in the grade configuration. Make West Park an equitable school and not have it looked at as a lesser school.

16. Marie Duncan, PAT for Russell/WP, said she is only speaking for herself and noted that Shawn is very open to solutions. Concerned with not having 5th grade students at West Park. Very supportive of the change.

Shawn made some final remarks and noted that he is always available for a conversation.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

DRAFT