



Board of Education

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Call to Order and Roll Call of Closed Session Meeting

President Eileen Kowalczyk called the Closed Session Meeting of the Board of Education of February 24, 2022, to order at 6:05 p.m. Board members present were Vicki Chung, Kimberly Fay, Jennifer Kobus, Jennifer Ciok, Corrin Bennett-Kill, and Eileen Kowalczyk. Absent: None.

Adjournment of Closed Session

President Kowalczyk entertained a motion to adjourn Closed Session. Member Ciok moved, seconded by Vice President Fay, to adjourn Closed Session. All members voted yes, and the Board adjourned Closed Session at 6:57 p.m.

Call to Order and Roll Call of Open Session

President Eileen Kowalczyk called the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of February 24, 2022, to order at 7:02 p.m. Board members present at Fairview School were Corrine Bennett-Kill, Jennifer Ciok, Vicki Chung, Kimberly Fay Jennifer Kobus, and Eileen Kowalczyk. Absent: None.

Community Comments

President Kowalczyk said there were two times on the agenda for community comments. Each time the Board would listen for up to 60 minutes and asked people to limit their time speaking to three minutes.

- The first to address the Board urged that masks are not required in school. The evidence points to masks not reducing the risk. The only masks that reduce the risk are K95 or N95 masks.
- The next speaker is a student in our District and shared that wearing a mask is not good for him. He believes that every family should decide if students should wear masks. Testing has not been the same with masks, and he cannot focus on the test.
- The next parent to address the Board discussed the Board President did not respond well to a comment made by an individual at the last meeting. He did not feel that it was correctly handled. He is asking for more open communication and additional community comments at different times.
- An audience member thanked the teachers and nurses for all their hard work and flexibility. She wants to move forward with how we can improve the curriculum and tests.
- A 7th grader addressed the Board to share she thinks there have been conflicts with masks. She believes it should be a choice.
- A parent addressed the Board to say the mask has been a large distraction in the classroom. Education should be the main focus now and not mandating masks. She showed her child's mask after 3 hours and thinks it is not healthy to wear a mask.
- A 30 year resident of Mount Prospect wanted to share her appreciation to the Board for dealing with a pandemic. Children do not live in isolation.
- A parent addressed the Board to please keep the masks optional. She relayed that her children's overall behavior and demeanor has improved in the last few weeks. She added that the stress of contact tracing has been very difficult.
- A District 57 parent asked to keep masks as optional and long overdue. Mask mandates are going away next week in Illinois and should include schools. Mitigations should include choice.

- The next audience member to address the Board is a former employee of District 57. She mentioned an email to staff and questioned how the highly recommended masks would affect their job if they did not wear a mask?
- The following person to address the Board would like to have masks optional and asked the Board to stop dividing the community. She also would like to volunteer at her child's school and cannot because of mandates. She advised it is time to get back to normal.
- The next parent to address the Board shared she helped at special lunch and a staff member did not have their mask and thought it was terrific. She asked how the administration would address the stigma of those that choose to be mask free and would like it to be fair.
- A long-time resident of Mt. Prospect addressed the Board about freedom of choice. She was appalled at the last meeting to hear that children were watching movies at lunch and advised parents to be involved.
- A parent discussed the number of schools in our state that have now gone mask optional. We need to follow science. Her son has struggled when masks were mandatory. Now without the mask, he is back to participating.
- An eighth-grade student addressed the Board as her last year in the district and has been happy without the mask.
- The next person addressed the Board and thanked them for their time. He does not think masks should be mandatory.
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Board Discussion

The discussion is to possibly take action and update the District's COVID Mitigation Plan. Superintendent Gorr addressed the Board with a presentation of her recommendations. She began the presentation with a review of transmission rates and the metrics. The internal metrics describe the low cases of covid clusters among students and staff. This is a reflection of the hard work of our staff. The vaccination rate for students is 42%, and staff is at 95%. Our current mitigation efforts include vaccination rates, increased cleaning, SHEILD testing, masking recommended, test to stay rapid Antigen testing available, and those that are sick stay home. The risk assessment is to keep monitoring COVID transmission, monitoring absences, and considering social-emotional factors. The recommendation that Superintendent Gorr brings to the Board is to continue with a mask recommended status. A Board member thanked Dr. Gorr and shared that numbers are very encouraging with the last few weeks not seeing an increase in positive numbers. The Board then discussed strategies in the case of increased positive covid numbers. Superintendent Gorr will communicate with the Board with numbers any changes. President Kowalczyk read the Resolution Regarding COVID-19 Mitigation Implementation of mask optional for the 2021- 2022 school year and the safety and guidance.

President Kowalczyk entertained a motion to approve The Resolution Regarding COVID-19 Mitigation Implementation. Vice President Fay moved, seconded by Member Ciok to approve the Resolution as read by President Kowalczyk and the roll call vote resulted as follows:

Yes: Bennet-Kill, Chung, Ciok, Fay, Kobus, Kowalczyk
No: None Motion carried

Community Comments

President Kowalczyk said this was the second time for community comments and that the Board would hear Community Comments for one hour.

- The first to address the Board believes there is confusion with the TRO and she does not understand the last 25 minutes of discussing all the what if's. It would be good to refocus on what our children need not COVID numbers.
- The next person from the audience addressed the Board for a second time about her disapproval of the mask mandate. She continued to discuss testing and her opinions of our curriculum.
- An audience member shared her disapproval of the discussion by the Board and that the word 'power' comes up too many times. She thanked the Board for their discussion but would like to close the gaps.
- The final to speak believes the Board should work with the parents on their decisions.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, President Kowalczyk entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Kobus moved, seconded by Member Ciok, to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote resulted as follows

Yes: Bennet-Kill, Chung, Ciok, Fay, Kobus, Kowalczyk

No: None Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:39 p.m.



Roberta Flack, Secretary



Eileen B. Kowalczyk, President

Date of approval: March 17, 2022