



Board of Education

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Call to Order and Roll Call

President Eileen Kowalczyk called the Regular Business Meeting of the Board of Education of March 4, 2021, to order at 7:02 p.m. Board members present were Vicki Chung, Kimberly Fay, Jennifer Kobus, Brian Maye, Rachael Rothrauff, and Eileen Kowalczyk. Member Gerald McCluskey arrived at 7:03 p.m. Absent: None.

Personnel – Superintendent Search Update

President Kowalczyk announced that Dr. Mary Gorr would replace Dr. Aumiller as Superintendent as of July 1, 2021. She said Dr. Gorr has been an asset to the district for the past ten years. Dr. Gorr started in District 57 as Principal of Westbrook School and is now in her second year as Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. President Kowalczyk thanked the parents and staff who helped in the interview process. Board members and audience members congratulated Dr. Gorr.

Community Comments

President Kowalczyk said she would guess that the majority of those in attendance were there to support full in-person learning. She said the Board received emails from many people wanting full in-person learning and those emails were seen by all Board members and administration and posted to the website earlier that day. She said the Board received emails after the other emails were posted to the website from people who are happy with the current hybrid and remote learning. She asked Members Kobus, Fay, McCluskey and Rothrauff to each read an email from some of these parents. The emails read by the Board members thanked the Board for keeping their kids safe, following CDC guidelines, and to consider full remote with full in-person instead of live streaming.

President Kowalczyk said there would be one hour for community comments now and another hour after the presentation. She asked people to be considerate and respectful of others and limit their comments to three minutes so that everyone would have the opportunity to speak. The first speaker was a pediatrician from Arlington Heights. He spoke for 20 minutes on the benefits of full in-person learning. Eleven adults and fourteen children also spoke to urge the Board to allow students who wanted to return to full time in-person learning to be able to do so. They spoke about the mental and social problems children are having from not being in school and that a majority of parents want their children back. Some spoke about other districts and private schools that have been back full time since September and offered to help at the schools to make it work for in-person learning. A few parents said their children were happy and acting better by just being back hybrid. One man spoke about data that shows that children are not high risk and that the Board should not be giving into what the MPEA wants but what is best for the students. Another parent said this has not been easy for teachers and understands most are really working hard but it is time to get the children back in-person. President Kowalczyk thanked everyone for their comments.

Staff Report – Return to School Update

Superintendent Aumiller said the Board at their last meeting gave administration the task of presenting a full in-person model and that Dr. Gorr would be doing the presentation. Dr. Gorr stated that the events of the past twelve month were unlike any other school year and reviewed the start of this school year as fully remote with the exception for targeted populations and then moving to hybrid or full remote on January 19 with Lincoln's second phase of hybrid beginning February 8. She reviewed the weekly incidence and positivity rates by Suburban Cook County and Mount Prospect zip code. She said the data is moving in the right direction but not quite at the yellow zone. She also gave the number of COVID-19 active cases in District 57 and reported cumulative positive cases of staff and students that were present in a District 57

building during the period that they were infectious. Dr. Gorr spoke about why do this now. She said there has been a lot of emotion surrounding this decision and that the Board and administration hear every day from people who have different perspectives and experiences. She said staff was provided with opportunities to be vaccinated and by April 12, the majority of staff will be two weeks past their second vaccination. There are great benefits of in-person learning for students academically and social-emotionally. Also, there is evidence of success from other districts that have implemented full time in-person. There will be many implications of full time in-person learning, and the first is that likely there would not be six feet of distancing as recommended by the CDC. The distancing could be under three feet for students, especially those at Lincoln. Teachers would be distanced six feet. Another implication unfortunately would be that the district may not have the staffing resources to guarantee the option to families who want full remote. Without knowing the exact enrollment numbers for full time in-person, the district cannot guarantee students will remain with their current teacher. Dr. Gorr reviewed a timeline for implementing the full time in-person learning model with students returning full time on April 12.

Board discussion followed the presentation. One Board member asked if administration thought of not implementing full time in-person for all grades and Dr. Gorr said they thought of just implementing for elementary but the benefits are strong for middle school students as well. There was discussion about a minimum amount of distancing and Dr. Gorr said depending on enrollment, there could be only 2-1/2 to 3 feet distancing at Lincoln even though they would prefer more than three feet. Several Board members said they would like to see the full remote option continue. There was a suggestion to have one or two big tents at each school. Mr. Parisi, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, said it could be done but it would cost about \$2,000 per month per 20'x20' tent and there would also be labor involved to move tables in and out. Vice President Chung asked if the timeline could be moved up to maybe the first full day for students being March 29. Dr. Gorr said that would remove the vaccine two week post second dose. There was also discussion about the return being April 5 and about less than six feet distancing at lunch when the students would be maskless and the times students would be moving for classes at Lincoln. They talked about the shortage of lunch supervisors and also subs. With students returning to full time in-person in April, the goal would be to work out any problems now and be ready for the fall. Board members stated that they would want parents to have full remote option if possible. A major concern was live-streaming especially for younger students. Superintendent Aumiller said there would be an update to the Board at the March 18 meeting. Dr. Gorr said members of the Task Force did great work and she was a little uncomfortable making a different recommendation but things have changed since February 18. The Board was also asked if they wanted the Task Force to continue but the Board deferred that decision to administration. Superintendent Aumiller said there was a meeting scheduled for March 8 and would let the members of the Task Force decide. There was also discussion about exploring opportunities to offer programs this summer for all students.

Recommendations

President Kowalczyk said she would ask each Board member to state whether they were in favor of continuing for the remainder of the school year with the hybrid and remote model which is what the Task Force recommended or going back full time in-person, the recommendation that administration presented.

Administration Recommendation (Return full time in-person with remote or live streaming option)

- Kobus, Rothrauff, Maye, McCluskey, Chung, Kowalczyk

Task Force Recommendation (Continue the remainder of the school year with hybrid and full remote)

- Fay

Superintendent Aumiller summarized the direction from the Board.

- Full time in-person learning would start tentatively April 12 but she would discuss with the administrative team on Friday to talk about if an earlier start date would be possible
- No adaptive pause after spring break
- Task Force will decide if they want to continue

Community Comments

President Kowalczyk said this was the second time for community comments and that the Board would hear Community Comments for one hour and again asked people to be respectful. Five people addressed the Board regarding students returning full time and about the needs of remote students. One suggested that summer school be expanded to include all students whose parents felt they could benefit from it. Someone else stated that the community has felt left out and that the return to full time in-person should be tackled by the community and parents should be invited to help. Member McCluskey responded to the last comment and stated that he has been on the Board six years and usually there are only a couple of people in the audience. He said a few years ago, the Lincoln PTO almost dissolved because there was lack of parent participation. He said people voice a willingness to help but need to keep that in mind for the rest of the year and spread the word to friends.

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 Vice President Chung, to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote resulted as follows

Yes: Chung, Fay, Kobus, Maye, McCluskey, Rothrauff, Kowalczyk
No: None Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m.


Virginia Webster, Secretary


Eileen B. Kowalczyk, President

Date of approval: March 18, 2021