



Board of Education

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Call to Order and Roll Call

President Eileen Kowalczyk called the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of October 19, 2020, to order at 7:09 p.m. Board members physically present at Fairview School were Vicki Chung, Brian Maye, Gerald McCluskey, and Eileen Kowalczyk. Attending through Zoom conferencing were Kimberly Fay, Jennifer Kobus, and Rachael Rothrauff. Absent: None.

Communications

Board of Education

- NSSEO, Education Foundation, PTO Reports, and Board President Report: There were no reports.

Community Comments

President Kowalczyk said there were two times on the agenda for community comments. To give everyone an opportunity to speak, she asked people to limit their time speaking to three minutes. She said everyone has their view and asked people to be respectful. She said the Board appreciated all the emails received and that they help the Board understand the viewpoint of the community. Any emails that needed a response would be answered by administration. The emails were posted to the website early that afternoon. The first two people to address the Board were the Co-Presidents of the MPEA. They thanked the Board for putting safety in the forefront. They said many teachers have anxiety and fear and asked the Board to consider the graduated two phase plan. Nine other people from the audience addressed the Board. One person thanked the Board for attending in-person. Several stated they wanted a task force, focus groups, and more surveys. They wanted full time in-person learning for their children. Some did not feel it necessary that the Board follow six foot social distancing and one parent informed the Board that she is on a wait list for a private school for her children and that her children would not return for the 2021-22 school year. One questioned the district metrics versus metrics from experts. President Kowalczyk thanked everyone for their comments and said there would be another time for community comments after the Board discussions.

Board Discussions

- Lincoln Return to School Hybrid Model

President Kowalczyk opened the discussion. Vice President Chung started with a question about the teachers concerns. Elizabeth Straczek, MPEA Co-President, said the greatest feedback from teachers is about the maskless time and that it will be hard to monitor students with all the safety issues. There were suggestions about surveying parents if they want half days or prefer two full days in person. Dr. Mary Gorr, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, said 51.4% of the survey said they wanted the two full day hybrid model. Administration felt the two phases would allow for students and staff to adjust to the new school day and allow time for teachers to get use to live streaming. There was lengthy discussion about the two phases. Phase 1 would start November 30 and run for three weeks. The students would be in two cohorts – am or pm with no mask-free time. The hybrid plan would then switch to two full days with two full days of live streaming and one full day of remote learning. There was also discussion on the timeline for returning to in-person, the possibility of not having two phases, and travel bands for Thanksgiving and winter break. Member McCluskey said he talked to teachers and parents of the Catholic schools. St. Raymond's is not moving kids and are keeping the six foot social distancing. The students' masks are off only while eating and they all face forward. There was discussion about using Plexiglas partitions instead of abiding by the six foot social distancing. The idea of filling half day slots for students who want full day in-person learning was discussed. This may result if more than expected number of students stay with remote learning. Dr. Gorr said we would need to be

cautious about any guarantees as we would have to be fair to all families. Self-certifying and temperature checks at all doors was also discussed.

President Kowalczyk asked each Board member their position.

- Member Maye - Phase 1 or Phase 2 through March.
- Member McCluskey – Start with Phase 2 right away.
- Vice President Chung – Start with Phase 2 on November 30.
- Member Kobus – Phase 1 on November 30 and then move to Phase 2.
- Member Fay - Phase 1 November 30 and Phase 2 on January 4.
- Member Rothrauff – Phase 1 November 30 and Phase 2 on January 4.

Vice President Chung asked the MPEA about the two phases. Mrs. Loretta Rose, MPEA Co-President, said because of the teachers' fear of mask-free time, she supports Phase 1 on November 30 and then move into Phase 2. Vice President Chung said she was going to change her position but President Kowalczyk said it didn't make any difference because she was going with Phase 1 November 30 and Phase 2 on January 4.

President Kowalczyk asked administration to let the parents know that Lincoln would start with Phase 1 of four half days and then would go to Phase 2 of two full days in-person. If a family decides to stay half days in Phase 2, there would only be two half days of in-person and the rest would be live streaming. They still have the choice of full remote learning until March 20. Families would have the choice to take kids out at lunch time. Member Maye said he would like to see what was going to be sent to parents before it went out. Superintendent Aumiller said the survey would be sent to the Board before it is sent to Lincoln families but the Board should communicate back individually. President Kowalczyk reminded the Board that they have reached consensus regarding Lincoln and their decision will stay regardless of what is in the survey.

The Board took a short break.

- Return-to-School Task Force

President Kowalczyk opened the discussion on the task force by acknowledging Vice President Chung. Vice President Chung was very enthusiastic about the task force and suggested a plan for the remainder of the school year following spring break which would be either full remote, hybrid, or full in-person. She suggested the task force consist of ten people – four employees, (one administrator to run it, one teacher, one MPESPA employee, and one nurse) and six parents with diverse backgrounds who could volunteer or be nominated. All members were supportive of Vice President Chung's recommendation. They further discussed how the members of the task force would be chosen. The Board agreed that they would still want focus groups in addition to the task force. There was further discussion on administration's role and there was discussion whether a Board member should be part of the group. It was pointed out that the other task force members might speak more openly if a Board member was not part of it and Superintendent Aumiller agreed. President Kowalczyk asked how often the group should meet and Superintendent Aumiller said she would get back to the Board at the November 5 meeting about parameters.

Community Comments

President Kowalczyk said the Board would hear additional comments from the audience. She reminded everyone that people have different opinions and to be respectful. Four people addressed the Board. One person commented why everyone is confident the teachers will be okay with lunches starting January 4 when they fear the lunch time for November 30. Another person asked if there would be discussion about increasing student in-person time at Westbrook, Fairview and Lions Park. Another person thanked the Board for thinking out of the box and stated that the surveys are really critical. The last person thanked Vice President Chung for her enthusiasm and said she hopes the task force brings the community together.

The Board asked Mr. Parisi to get information on the temperature scanner for the next meeting and also what the cost would be for partitions for lunch time.

Closed Session

President Kowalczyk said there was no need for Closed Session.


Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, President Kowalczyk entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member McCluskey moved, seconded by Member Fay, 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 11:10 p.m.



Virginia Webster, Secretary



Eileen B. Kowalczyk, President

Date of approval: November 19, 2020