

MONTOURSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING High School Auditorium

Tuesday, February 1, 2022
7:01 PM

Pledge to the Flag
Call to Order - Board President
Roll Call - Board Secretary

MEMBER

☐ Daniel L. Albert
☒ Todd A. Badger
☒ Susan Beery
☒ Joseph B. LeCrone
☒ Dottie M. Mathers, Vice President
☒ David Shimmel, President

MEMBER

☒ Ronald E. Snell
☒ Dale Ulmer
☒ David J. Young
☒ *Richard Galtman, Solicitor
☐ *Christina Bason, Superintendent
☐ *Brandy N. Smith, Business Mgr./Bd.Secretary
*(Non-Voting Member)

OTHERS

☐ Feerrar, Darrin - Elementary School Principal
☐ Gnoffo, Joseph - Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds
☐ Hanner, Timothy - Supervisor of Special Education
☐ King, Christopher - Assistant Middle/High School Principal
☐ Myers, Curtis - Middle School Principal
☐ Peipher, Sebastian - Lead Network Administrator
☐ Taormina, Daniel - High School Principal
☐ Yonkin, Jamie - Elementary School Principal
☒ Residents ☒ Media ☒ Students

Prior Presentation

Mr. Shimmel highlighted what items had been changed in the Health and Safety Plan.

Public Comment

Sharon Meyer gave a proposal for section E regarding contact tracing.

Dan Asiello gave his support for Sharon Meyer's suggestions. He shared concerns about learning gaps due to contact tracing.

Brenda Oberheim said she agreed with Sharon Meyer's recommendations. She said she believes the Board needs to trust the parents to keep their children home when they're sick.

Veronica Lepley shared that she agreed with the plan proposed by Sharon Meyer. She shared that Muncy has been using a similar system and it has worked.

Paula Hornberger shared that she works at a college and she is noticing a large learning deficit from incoming students due to quarantining.

Agenda Items

- **General**

G-1 Approval of the revised Health and Safety Plan. (Available Online)

Motion: Ulmer Second: Young
Yes: Badger, Beery, LeCrone, Shimmel, Ulmer
No: Mathers, Snell, Young
Absent: Albert
Result: **Motion Carried**

Dr. Mathers made a statement over the phone regarding the health and safety plan. She asked everyone to trust the consensus of the experts and consider the district staff who put the plan together.

Mr. Shimmel said he would like to see a change in verbiage to say that the district will consider CDC recommendations so the District is not bound to their guidelines.

Mr. Ulmer and Mr. Young accepted the amendment

Mr. Snell said he wants to know what the numbers are related to COVID because it helps in making an educated decision. He said he likes what Mrs. Meyers proposed and he thinks the plan should be specific.

Dr. Beery suggested an amendment that dictates when the county is at a substantial level for cases, close contacts wear masks for 5 days if they are asymptomatic.

Mr. Taormina shared that the district has special codes for COVID absences and that administration would like to continue to help the nurses with calls related to COVID.

Dr. Mathers said that the plan should be kept broad and not too specific.

Mr. Ulmer said that the two options for parents of close contacts need to be posted on the website.

Mr. Snell asked if the contact tracing would cease and asymptomatic students would not have to wear masks.

Mr. Ulmer said that it would be a good compromise for close contacts to wear masks instead of staying home.

Mr. Young asked why the Board did not have COVID case numbers.

Mr. Shimmel said that when information was shared, students were getting singled out. He asked what numbers were needed.

Mr. Snell said that anyone can tell who is positive by the quarantine process.

Mr. Shimmel said he wasn't sure that the numbers were really needed from his perspective.

Mr. Shimmel said that the health and safety plan would be a blue print, but administration could ease up on rules if cases plummet or if the need faded.

Dr. LeCrone asked if administration is comfortable making those decisions.

Mr. Snell said the decision should not be on the administration so they don't have to question what they are doing and if it is right.

Mr. Ulmer said he wants buildings opened and children in class. He said he doesn't need the numbers, but he wants whatever keeps the students in class.

Mr. Snell stated that he would like to eliminate contact tracing.

Dr. Beery said that you can't ethically not tell parents if their child is a close contact.

Mr. Ulmer said the nurses want to continue contact tracing but reduce the quarantine period. He said he trusts them.

Mr. Snell said that asymptomatic students shouldn't be quarantined.

Mr. Ulmer said that they should still be wearing masks if they were a close contact.

Mr. Snell disagreed.

Mr. Ulmer stated that he would like to defer to the experts in the nursing staff and administration.

Mr. Snell said that he still thinks parents should be notified but there should not be any rules for quarantine and masking when it comes to asymptomatic students.

Dr. Beery asked to compromise and keep them in school but have them wearing masks.

Dr. LeCrone asked if the health and safety plan gives the nurses liberty to allow students who have certain learning disabilities to not wear a mask if it impacted their learning.

Mr. Shimmel said that he wants to give a level of flexibility to administration on those types of decisions.

Mr. Snell asked if the plan can include that masking and quarantining for asymptomatic students is optional.

Mr. Ulmer said he would be okay with removing the masking requirement if there is a negative test from an asymptomatic student.

Dr. Mathers stated that it could take up to 3 days for a close contact to return a positive test so they would test negative if they were tested right away.

Mr. Snell said that it takes up to 4 days for a test to come back. He said by time contact tracing is complete it has been over 3 days since someone was a close contact.

Mr. Snell asked if the district accepts rapid tests.

Mr. Taormina said if it is done by the parent in front of an administrator.

Mr. Snell asked if the District had COVID tests.

Mr. Shimmel said that the District has tests available, but the parents conduct the tests.

Mr. Snell stated that the current health and safety plan does not allow for tests to be done on school property.

Mr. Shimmel said that they are being conducted by the parents. He said the plan should be seen as guidance.

Sharon Meyer said that the committee wanted the plan to be specific so parents knew exactly what is going on and what the requirements are.

Mr. Shimmel asked the Board how they would like to proceed with ironing out a motion.

Mr. Snell said that it should not be vague.

Mr. Shimmel stated that a detailed amendment to section E would need to be made.

Mr. Snell offered an amendment to section E that states for asymptomatic close contacts of a confirmed case quarantining and masking for both staff and students will be optional.

Dr. LeCrone said that he would like to follow the nurse's recommendation that close contacts wear masks.

Mr. Ulmer did not accept the amendment.

Dr. Beery proposed that masks be optional when the county numbers are low or moderate and masks would be required when county numbers are high or substantial unless a negative test is presented.

Mr. Shimmel and Mr. Snell said they do not want to be tied to county numbers.

Mr. Ulmer said that he would like to vote on the plan as presented.

Mr. Shimmel stated that he trusts administration to handle the details of the plan.

Dr. Beery said that it should be required that updates and changes be posted to the website and sent to parents and the Board.

Mr. Shimmel proposed an amendment to section E that the district will continue to consider PDH recommendations for contact tracing requirements. He said that this gives administration and the nurses freedom to do what they feel is best.

Dr. LeCrone asked if that needed to be written in the policy.

Mr. Shimmel said that Policy is the Board stating how the District will handle the situation and administrative regulation would outline the details of their plan.

Dr. LeCrone said that he feels it should be stated in the policy that administration is making the decision on quarantining and masking.

Mr. Ulmer said that tomorrow a communication should go out to parents so they are aware of the rules.

Mr. Snell said that everything should be in the health and safety plan.

Mr. Ulmer accepted Mr. Shimmel's amendment.

Dr. LeCrone proposed an amendment that administration will notify the public immediately of any operational changes related to masking and quarantining protocols.

Public Comment

Motion to extend the meeting by 30 minutes

Motion: Snell Second: LeCrone

Yes: Badger, Beery, LeCrone, Mathers, Shimmel, Snell, Ulmer, Young

No: None

Absent: Albert

Result: **Motion Carried**

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Dan Asiello said that he thought there was disfunction and a lack of information at the meeting. He said that all information needs to be communicated so appropriate decisions can be made. He said the board should be listening to the nurses, administration, and teachers on issues like the health and safety plan. He asked the board if they have talked to teachers about learning gaps or difficulties for students returning from quarantine.

Brenda Oberheim said that other districts communicate their numbers to the public and some districts do not even have contact tracing at this time. She said that the health and safety plan should have no masking in it.

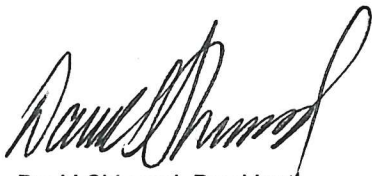
Sharon Meyer asked the board to make sure the administration communicates the changes and it should be consistent throughout the district. She said she was told that the numbers couldn't be shared in fear of the positive case being identified. She said with the masking rule then it will be clear which student has tested positive.

Veronica Lepley said that she doesn't think asymptomatic students should have to wear masks. She said that the district should have followed some of the others in the area with contact tracing rules. She thanked the board for their work.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE REGULAR MEETING 9:11 PM

Motion: Beery
Result: **Motion Carried**

Second: LeCrone



David Shimmel, President



Brandy N. Smith, Board Secretary