

KEWANEE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

August 9, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL FOR SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

A Special Meeting of the Board of Kewanee Community Unit School District No. 229 was held in the Petersen Auditorium at Kewanee High School with President Jeff Johnson calling the Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll call showed the following Members present: Stabler, Dev, DeBord, Christiansen, Salisbury, Steffen, and Johnson. Recording secretary H Hughes and Superintendent Sullens were in attendance as well. In the audience for the meeting were M Schnepple, R Orwig, R Kapacinskas, M Helenthal, and J Russell.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Johnson asked the audience to stand, if able, and join the Board in saying the “Pledge of Allegiance” to the flag.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

IV. DISCUSSION OF RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

A. PRESENTATION OF RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR.

Superintendent Sullens presented a plan for the District to return to in-person learning. This plan was created by group of teachers and administrators. The plan addresses the fact that the State Board of Education wants students to be at school in person learning five days per week. It also addresses mitigations that are already in place such as handwashing and various cleaning procedures. The plan being presented also states that any fully vaccinated individual does not have to wear a mask. Non-vaccinated individuals would be required to wear a mask. This includes both students and staff. The proposed plan recognizes that the Governor, the State Superintendent, and/or the Illinois Department of Health could impose rules or mandates that would change how the plan is implemented. At this time, the Governor’s mask mandate takes precedence over the plan. Once the mask mandate is rescinded the proposed plan would go into effect. This plan also states that masks will be worn by everyone on buses no matter their vaccination status. At any time, the Board can choose to evaluate or change the plan.

Superintendent Sullens stated that guidance for sports haven’t been updated since the Governor’s mask mandate. At this time, masking in sports varies due to participant’s vaccination status and whether the sport is held indoors or outdoors. Superintendent Sullens believes that updated guidance will be coming soon.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF OPTIONAL MASKING (PARENT CHOICE)

Roy Orwig stated that he believed parents should have the choice of whether or not to have their children wear masks. He believes that masks are not effective and can cause other non-COVID health concerns. He stated that the Governor makes suggestions but not laws and that Executive Orders are not laws.

President Johnson stated that he didn’t disagree with everything Mr. Orwig said. He stated that we are all frustrated with the situation but our hands are tied.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF MANDATED MASKING FOR NON-VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS

No public comments.

Superintendent Sullens discussed that the definition of a close contact has changed for this school year from last year. Last year, if you were within six feet of someone who tested positive for more than fifteen minutes you were sent home, mask or no mask. This year if you are within six feet of someone who tests positive for more than fifteen minutes, if you both were properly wearing your mask you will not be required to be sent home and quarantine for ten days as a close contact.

Member Christiansen stated that as Board Members they needed to look at protecting all of the students and staff. The District has a large number of students with medical issues or concerns. There are students who are diabetic, have had congenital heart disorders, or other severe medical issues and they are at higher risk. She stated that there are staff members with health concerns as well and for that reason decisions need to be made to ensure they are all taken care of.

Superintendent Sullens mentioned that the number of students with medical concerns in the District was the reason that two additional nurses were hired last year. This would have been done even without COVID. He stated that the number of students with medical concerns has grown and we need to do our best to care for them.

V. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

Member DeBord asked whether the spectators at extracurricular events would have to would be required to wear masks. The plan currently states that unvaccinated individuals would be required to wear masks. Member DeBord also asked if it was the same requirements for indoor and outdoor events. Superintendent Sullens stated that the plan was completed prior to the Governor's mask mandates. He plans on working with the local Health Department and Office of Emergency Management to make final determinations. Superintendent Sullens believes that the decision will be dictated by IHSA and IESA guidance.

Superintendent Sullens recommended approving the presented Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year.

President Johnson called for a motion to approve. Member Christiansen made a motion to approve the proposed plan. Member Dev seconded the motion. The roll call vote showed Members Dev, DeBord, Christiansen, Salisbury, Steffen, Stabler, and Johnson voting aye. There were no nay votes. The motion carried.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:27 pm President Johnson called for a motion for Adjournment. Member DeBord made a motion to approve. Member Stabler seconded the motion. A voice vote was heard with all present members voting aye. There were no nay votes heard. The motion carried.

Jeff Johnson, President

Jon DeBord, Secretary