

August 2, 2021

The Board of Education of the County of Kanawha met in Special Session on Monday, August 2, 2021 at the Board of Education Building, Charleston, West Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Board President Pro Tem Tracy White at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Becky J. Jordon, President (via phone)

Tracy White, President Pro Tem

Ric Cavender

Jim J. Crawford, Sr.

Ryan White

Thomas E. Williams, Secretary

Debra J. Lewis, Recording Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Paula Potter, Deputy Superintendent

Mellow Lee, Assistant Superintendent, Elementary

Amon Gilliam, Assistant Superintendent, Middle & Alternative Schools

George Aulenbacher, Assistant Superintendent, High Schools, Technical & Adult Education

Missy Ruddle, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction

Megan McCorkle, Assistant Superintendent, Special Education & Student Support Services

Leah Sparks, Executive Director, Technology

Ron Pauley, Executive Director, Human Resources

Alicia Warden, Health Services

Briana Warner, Communications Director

Lindsey McIntosh, General Counsel

Keith Vititoe, Executive Director, Safety & Security

DELEGATIONS

Sarah Brown-I am a parent of two students at Piedmont. I would like to strongly encourage the Board to continue requiring masking in elementary schools. We know that this Delta variant is highly contagious and is transmissible among children. The CDC is calling Kanawha County a substantial spread county. They are recommending masks indoors even if you are vaccinated and of course we know our students under 12 don't even have that option. I'm afraid without that requirement we will see it spread and then it will be quarantining, shut down and remote learning.

Petra Monroe-At the last meeting, I presented a number of data points regarding the proven dangers of facemasks. There is strong medical and legal arguments against mask mandates. Masks have proven ineffective for the purpose claimed by the mandates. The right for unrestricted breathing and the right to be recognized and the right to display and express one's face is a basic human's right. How can it be legal to continually subject our children to a physical restraint that obstructs a child's respiratory airway especially since children have repeatedly shown not to be spreaders and they have a statistically zero chance of dying from COVID?

DISCUSSION

A. Mask requirements for the upcoming school year.

Dr. Williams-I sent some options today of things that could be done with the masks. One of the options was to require masks for everyone, PreK-12, staff and students, another option is to require masks for elementary only, and then we would need to decide whether to include teachers in that. Mr. White had a comment about masks for people who cannot be vaccinated. The CDC has recommended that masks be worn for everyone K-12, staff and students even if they have been vaccinated. Other counties around us are choosing not to do masks. It's a decision that we need to make.

Mr. White-I think we need to follow the CDC's recommendation which are to require masks for all students.

(At this time, several people who were in attendance, started yelling and disagreeing with Mr. White)

Mrs. White-We need to run a meeting and if we can't do that effectively with people in the room then we will have to ask people to leave the room.

DISCUSSION (continued)

Mr. White-I think we should do what the CDC and Clay Marsh has recommended and what the local Health Department has recommended and that is to require masks for all students in Kanawha County. I think that it is important to listen to our experts. We are just talking about a mask. Our students did well last year, that's why we were able to control the spread.

(Once again, the people were interrupting the Board Members as they were trying to continue their discussion on masks).

Mrs. White-Again, this is the last time that I will warn everyone, if we cannot continue with the meeting then I am going to ask Mr. Vititoe to clear the room.

Mr. White-Our students did well. My kids wore masks the entire time. My son has worn masks when he's been playing basketball. Kids don't have an issue with masks. We need to continue to do this. If we don't do this it is going to continue to spread. We can revisit this when the vaccine becomes available for children under 12.

Mr. Cavender-I'm going to start by saying as somebody who got comfortable last fall and one time went around 2 people who happened to be my very close relatives who had no idea they had it and I got COVID 19. I was in bed for 14 days and my Mother was in the hospital for 23 so COVID is real. I'm not interested in having a conversation about whether people think that this virus is real or not. I know it is and I know everyone in this room has known someone that has been affected by it one way or another. Right now we are embarking on an opportunity to make sure that our students are in class versus last year when we had a huge percentage of them at home which was extremely ineffective. My youngest son did eLearning the entire year and my oldest son did it half of the year and it was not a great experience, not at the fault of the teachers, they did the best they could, but I think we can all agree that it wasn't the best as far as learning is concerned. We were put here by our constituents to advocate for our students and our teachers and all the folks who make this system work. We are embarking on an opportunity to be proactive not reactive. If that means that we are asking everyone to follow what the CDC is recommending, regardless of the rumors you are hearing, kids carry this virus and I can tell you that I never want to experience what I experienced last November and December again. I 100% agree with Mr. White and think that we will be making a big mistake if we don't follow the CDC recommendations.

Mr. Crawford-My prospective is I think that every parent has to make a decision whether they want their child to wear a mask or not. Personally, I think we are free to make up our mind. We shouldn't be telling people to wear a mask if they don't want to

DISCUSSION (continued)

do that. I think that this thing is pretty serious and it is real and it's not going to go away and we know that, but if the Governor would give us a mandate that everybody wear a mask then I would be all for it, but otherwise I'm for the parents to make up their mind. We are overstepping our bounds if we tell them what to do with their own child.

Mrs. Jordon-I have a question. Today when the Governor said he's not mandating masks in the school, was that from Dr. Clay Marsh because I respect his opinion? Mr. White-No, I heard what the Governor said and he said he wasn't there yet and it was going to cause too much division. It wasn't based on science at all. I don't think we should be concerned about division, we should be concerned about the health and welfare of our students.

Mrs. White-I have received a lot of calls and emails for the past two months but I will say without a doubt 4 to 1 are requesting not to do a mask mandate. I feel it is a parent's decision to make. I feel that as a Board we provide our schools with PPE and anyone that chooses to wear a masks we have them available for them to do so. However, saying that, just like we have entrusted Dr. Williams since he took over, if our numbers don't reflect the current path that we are taking, I have confidence in him to step in and say if we need the masks to come back then we can change our plan. That's the faith that I am putting in him. My opinion would be to let parents make the decision. To me it's all or nothing. I don't want to do a vaccinated versus an unvaccinated. I don't want kids being bullied over wearing a mask or not wearing a mask.

Mr. Crawford-Whatever policy we pass, we need to do it so the administrators can enforce it and not cause them a lot of difficulty. They do a pretty good job of stopping the bullying. In my personal opinion I think we need to let parents make up their own mind and if the Governor puts out a mandate then immediately Dr. Williams can move that everyone wear a mask.

Mrs. White-Dr. Williams did you contact other Superintendents? Dr. Williams-I contacted about 10 of the Superintendents of the counties that touch Kanawha. One or two hadn't made a decision but the rest were all leaning towards making it a parental choice.

Mr. Cavender-If we are following science, then making the decision for your child to not wear a mask, you are not making it just for your child, you are making it for other children that are around your child who aren't wearing a mask who could potentially be infected. The science has said all along that wearing a mask not only protects you but those around you.

DISCUSSION (continued)

Mr. Crawford moved: The Board allow the parents to decide if they want their child to wear mask or not and if there is a mandate that comes down from the State Department or the Governor that we wear a mask, then Dr. Williams be empowered to do that immediately. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Tracy White.

Mr. Ryan White moved: To amend that motion to say that we require K-6 to wear masks and the rest of the students who have had a chance to be vaccinated be able to choose, so the parents of 7-12th graders can choose. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Becky J. Jordon.

Mr. Crawford-Repeat the motion please. Mr. White-The motion says if there's a mask mandate for K-6 then anything 7-12 becomes up to the parent. Dr. Williams-That's the amendment.

Mrs. Jordon-It's going to be difficult in the middle schools for the 6th graders who mingle with the 7th and 8th graders. Mr. White-If you want to do 5th grade that's fine. Mrs. Jordon-Let's just say elementary students. Mrs. White-It's going to be difficult if one sibling in 5th grade has to wear it and their brother in 7th grade doesn't.

The above motion carried 3-2 with Mr. Crawford and Mrs. White voting No.

Dr. Williams-Now you need to vote on the amended motion which states that only PreK-5 will wear masks and 6th grade and above will be the parent's choice.

Mr. Cavender-Just for clarification, we aren't making 6-12th graders wear a mask if they are unvaccinated, is that correct? Dr. Williams-Yes, the motion on the floor says that for 6-12 it would be parental choice. Mr. Crawford-We are going to more problems with this than you can shake a stick at.

The above motion carried 3-2 with Mr. Crawford and Mrs. White voting No.

PERSONNEL

A. Personnel Agenda for August 2, 2021 (Enclosure 9)

Mr. Ric Cavender moved: The Board approve the revised personnel agenda as included in Enclosure 9. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Out of State Travel Requests (Enclosure 13)

Mr. Ric Cavender moved: The Board approve the Out of State Travel Requests as contained in Enclosure 13. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

FIRST READING

A. KCS Series I02 Instructional Materials and Resources Adoption (Enclosure 10)

Missy Ruddle-This policy is one you passed five years ago. We changed the language in a couple of places. The part about the first reading by the Board, we wanted to go back to just one reading. We still put materials out for the public to see ahead of time but what happens is that it becomes so late in the year before we can do the adoptions and we have to wait 30 days to do the second reading, then we can't get textbooks in by the time school starts. This year we did it as quickly as we could and we are still struggling to get textbooks by the time teachers are in for the very first day of school. If we would have waited 30 more days we definitely wouldn't have had textbooks.

Mr. Crawford-When we have a textbook adoption you have a committee is that correct?
Missy Ruddle-Yes sir. Mr. Crawford-Is that committee made up of people who teach in this county?
Missy Ruddle-Yes sir. Mr. Crawford-Why don't we have people that have children in school on that committee?
Missy Ruddle-It's just never been done. Mr. Crawford-I know it's never been done, but the problem I see with this is whenever you all bring an adoption to us as Board Members, we don't know what the heck you have done. All we know is you come to us and tell us that this is that this is what we have adopted. I think every Board member should be able to appoint a citizen in this county to be on that textbook adoption so we can be assured that we don't have something in there that we don't want.
Missy Ruddle-Okay. We adopt from the State multiple list usually. Dr. Williams-We don't really have a choice on what we can adopt, they give us two or three selections. Mr. Crawford-If there's something in there that I don't think we should be teaching I should know about it. Missy Ruddle-Anything we choose, we choose based on what the content standards are for the State of West Virginia but we can rewrite this. We can rewrite the policy if that is what you want. Mr. Crawford-Are you saying there is nothing in the law that says we can't have citizens that we appoint that have children in the school?
Missy Ruddle-No. Mr. Crawford-I think that every Board member sitting here should know what we are going to vote on. Missy Ruddle-Well we do come and present to the Board. Mr. Crawford-But you don't

FIRST READING (continued)

tell us anything. Dr. Williams-Well, what would you like to know? Mr. Crawford-If there is anything in those textbooks that we adopt that is inappropriate to be teaching our children that is against the Constitution of the United States of America. Dr. Williams-We have our teachers on this committee that are very subjective and they are the ones who will be teaching this material in the classroom and they know our content standards and what needs to be taught. They are the professionals, they are the ones that we need to trust. Mr. Crawford-So are you saying I'm not a professional? Dr. Williams-I did not say that. Mr. Crawford-After 38 years in the classroom I think I have some right to say what I think about this. Dr. Williams-You do when you vote Mr. Crawford. Mr. Crawford-Don't you think we need to have somebody from outside? Dr. Williams-I don't have a problem with that but saying that we are trying to keep something from the Board members and we don't put forth all the information that is false. Mr. Crawford-Let me tell you this Dr. Williams you and I have never disagreed on anything. Dr. Williams-Oh yes we have. Mr. Crawford-This time I think that we need to let each Board Member put someone on that committee so we know what's going on. Dr. Williams-That is fine. I don't have an issue with that, what I have an issue with is accusing us of not presenting all of the information that needs to be presented and also talking about our teachers like they don't know what they are doing. Mr. Crawford-I'm not talking about the teachers I'm talking about the subject matter.

Mr. Cavender-Maybe I'm lost, has there been an instance where there is something that is in our textbooks that we shouldn't be teaching? Dr. Williams-Back in 1974 and 1975 there was according to some people. Mr. White-Have you heard of something inappropriate? Mrs. White-Years ago I sat on a non-biased panel for the State. Do we have that at the county level? Dr. Williams-We have an opportunity for students and parents who disagree whether they want their child to read something like a Prayer for Owen Meany that is sometimes controversial so the students always have an option to have another novel to read and do the same assignment. We have that in place now.

Dr. Williams-These are just out for first reading, this isn't a vote on these policies.

B. KCS Series I03 School-Library Materials Policy (Enclosure 11)

Missy Ruddle-This went into effect in 1975 and I think it was in response to the textbook controversy in 1975 and it has to do with library materials and everything that needed to be done to put a book into the library. There was a report that was written for every book that got put into a library. It isn't needed now based on what we do now. We left

FIRST READING (continued)

that in that if a parent disagrees with a book in the library, they can request alternative reading selections.

C. KCS Series I11 Promotion and Classification of Students K-5 (Enclosure 12)

Missy Ruddle-The only thing we took out of this policy was the part on double promotion because, one we don't do a lot of double promotions, but if we do we go back to the SAT process the same way we do with retentions.

Mr. White-How much double promotions do we do? Missy Ruddle-little to none, I couldn't tell you the last time that it's happened.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Ric Cavender moved: The Board approve Item VI .on the agenda, letters A-K as presented in our packets. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

A. KCS Series C55 Volunteers in the Schools Policy (Enclosure 14)

B. KCS Series I01 Programs of Study Policy (Enclosure 15)

C. KCS Series I04 Homework Policy (Enclosure 16)

D. KCS Series I05 Promotion and Classification of Students Secondary (Enclosure 17)

E. KCS Series I22 Graduation Requirements Policy (Enclosure 18)

F. KCS Series I25 Instruction/Controversial Issues Policy (Enclosure 19)

G. KCS Series B01 Central Office Operations (Enclosure 20)

H. KCS Series B02 Public Access to Information Policy (**REPEAL**) (Enclosure 21)

I. KCS Series C10 School Year Policy (**REPEAL**) (Enclosure 22)

J. KCS Series I36 School Year Calendar and Recovery of Lost Time Policy, amended to be Series C10 (Enclosure 23)

K. KCS Series A01 Meetings Policy (Enclosure 24)

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

Mr. Crawford-How close are we to having the heating and cooling at Capital High School and George Washington and all of our air conditioners at the schools up and going? Dr. Williams-Let me go through my list. At Capital the gym and lockers rooms won't have any air conditioning when school starts. It should be ready shortly after school starts. At Dunbar Middle the gym and locker rooms will not have AC, but it should be ready shortly also. Riverside is a multi- year project. St. Albans, Nitro, GW, Lakewood, Alum Creek and Elk Center are substantially complete. Mr. Crawford-Do we have everything cleaned up at Dunbar Middle School because of the fire? Dr. Williams-Yes. It was cleaned up very quickly.

Mrs. White-Before COVID we had talked about voting on the school calendar two years in advance, so when will we be able to get the school calendar voted on for next year? Dr. Williams-I can talk to Dr. Gayton tomorrow. The one thing we have to be careful about is we can only move it so far or our employees will have to skip a paycheck. We were allowed to do that last year because the Governor allowed it due to COVID. I will see what the furthest date when we can start will be and let you all know.

Mrs. White-Now that we have revamped the Maintenance Department, have we filled all of those positions? Dr. Williams-The one position that Amanda was in we are having trouble filling. We had 3 people apply for the construction part so we still have that to fill. We are going to start off with 4 Foremen and see how it goes and build it and then we will add the other 4 foremen.

ESTABLISHMENT OF MEETING DATES

- A. Monday, August 2, 2021, 4:00 p.m.-Special Session
- B. Thursday, August 19, 2021, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session
- C. Tuesday, September 7, 2021, 4:00 p.m.-Special Session
- D. Thursday, September 16, 2021, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session

NOTE: The above meetings of the Kanawha County Board of Education, unless otherwise indicated, will be held in the Board of Education Building, 200 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, WV.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ric Cavender moved: That the Special Session of the Board be adjourned. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ryan White and unanimously carried. The Special Session was declared adjourned by Board President Pro Tem Tracy White at 4:50 p.m.

President

Secretary

djl

8/16/2021