

WYOMISSING AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 2021-5966

Minutes March 8, 2021

The regular meeting with committee reports of the Board of School Directors convened at 4:46 p.m. in the JSHS Auditorium with Mrs. Maria Ziolkowski, Board President, presiding.

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the pledge of allegiance, Mrs. Ziolkowski asked if anyone would be recording the meeting. Mr. Arnst indicated he would be recording the meeting.

Board Members Present:

Mrs. Harenza (via Zoom), Mrs. McAvoy, Mr. McCaffrey (via Zoom), Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Pottieger, Mr. Redner (via Zoom), Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Waxler, and Mrs. Ziolkowski

Board Members Absent:

None.

Administrative Staff Present:

Mr. Scoboria, Dr. Woodard, Mr. Boyer, Mr. Arnst, and Mr. Cafoncelli

Attendees:

An audience sign-in sheet is included as part of these official minutes.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Facilities Committee Meeting Workshop – March 17, 2021 4:00 p.m., Community Board Room
- School Board Business Meeting – March 22, 2021, 6:00 p.m., JSHS Library
- Committee of the Whole Meeting – April 12, 2021, 4:45 p.m. JSHS Library

Mrs. Ziolkowski announced an Executive Session was held on March 2nd to discuss personnel issues.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Ziolkowski noted that community members were able to email comments in advance and that a summary would be shared during the meeting. Mrs. Ziolkowski said 12 individuals had submitted comments. She thanked them for their input and assured that all Board Members had received and reviewed them. Mrs. Ziolkowski said six comments were received from students of the Senior Class of 2021 and indicated concern for increasing in person days and the possible negative impact on increased Covid exposure and quarantine, negative impact to the remainder of the school term, and negative effect on spring extracurricular activities. Mrs. Ziolkowski said five emails were submitted by parents of current students and shared the need for more in person days to meet student needs. They encouraged proper planning and discussion to get kids back in the classroom under the right safety protocols for all. Mrs. Ziolkowski said an email containing questions would be addressed through Mr. Scoboria's presentation or follow-up by administrators.

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Mrs. Ziolkowski further noted, the Board has received many communications over the last few weeks and they appreciate the input which enforces how deeply the community cares for students, staff members, and schools. All communications are valued and help to guide the Board in the decision making process. Mrs. Ziolkowski reviewed the procedures for public comment and Board policy and asked for public comment.

Dr. Lysette Ramos – 349 Greenbrier Road

Spoke about the evidence that schools can reopen safely citing scientific literature, CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics. Highlighted the local area schools that have reopened successfully. Spoke about the negative effects on students and parents related to school closure. Spoke about her medical profession and shared the physical and mental effects she has seen. She said schools can open safely and encouraged it was time to do so. Decision should be made by parents and not the Board. Highlighted survey results showing parental support to reopen and requested we do so.

Rachel Kuhn– 4 Blue Jay Drive

Parent of students in the District. Thankful for increased information for planning process to open for in person learning. Safe reopening is the goal. Survey offered meaningful opportunity to provide feedback and concluded 73% of parents want more in person learning. She implores the Board to consider that number and the toll taken on students. Although medical health professional's recommendations are invaluable, she is asking the Board to seek guidance from pediatricians that work with children. Cited Academy of Pediatrics – saying students need to return to school for health and wellbeing. Remote learning is playing a role in increased incidence in depression and suicides in teens. Children and teens need support, structure and socialization that school provides. Urgent attention is needed.

Collette Huber – 1416 Reading Blvd.

Asked the Board to strongly consider bringing students back to five day instruction for reasons of mental health, socialization and general wellness; physically, mentally, and academically. Disservice to students keeping them home where they are isolated. She shared some incidences with her own students, stating class sizes are small and she feels they can be spaced apart. We are a willing group of parents that want to make it happen and will help to make it happen for our kids. Please take into consideration.

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Nicole Wentzel – 1501 Cleveland Ave.

Did speak at last Board meeting. Wanted to be part of the group standing up today. She is a cyber-school teacher and said it does benefit, but virtual environment is not for everyone. Important to consider five-day setup, not Wednesdays off. Conversation can't end after school opens. Conversation must turn to mental, emotional support for students. Are we adding counselors? With a focus on mental health, academic scores will improve. We need to help the kids who have struggled. Please consider those who are speaking up.

Kate Cirulli – 1437 Cleveland Ave.

She spoke last week. Shared that she works for Governor Mifflin School District in the elementary setting. Shared a writing from a 2nd Grade student experiencing the difficulty of virtual school during a two-week quarantine. She said this is something for you to think about as you weigh the options. Sees a change in her own children. Weigh the cost of academic success. Schools that are open do not do the 6ft. apart and they are not having major problems.

Lori Scargle – 1330 Cleveland Ave.

Regarding the six students who wrote, she is speaking for the majority of students who did not write, but want to come back to see their teachers and friends. They are not thriving. She is concerned about the rigor that we used to have. For those students who are hesitant and afraid, perhaps the virtual program would be for them. Allow the students/parents to make the choice for themselves whether they would like to come back.

Tim Hetrich – 1738 Garfield Ave.

Mr. Hetrich agrees with what parents have said. He is not speaking on behalf of the Association. Teachers have done an outstanding job. He is speaking for himself and would like to see students back on a daily basis. As a teacher, he recognizes the difficulty on students and staff. He asks the Board to think of how to do it in a healthy way. Consider staff who are also under a lot of pressure to keep the rigor. If we are going to have WAVE students with us, he would urge the Board to keep the Wednesday day as a time for teachers to plan. Wednesday are still essential, not for deep cleaning as much, but for teachers to plan their lessons.

No further comments.

Mrs. Ziolkowski thanked all of those in attendance for coming.

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S
REPORT**

Presentation – WASD Administration will present an update and share recommendations to revise the District's education model.

Mr. Scoboria shared general announcements and good news and reported Mrs. Jodi Reardon was recognized as Pennsylvania High School Physical Education teacher of the year. Special congratulations to Jodi on this outstanding award. Mr. Scoboria highlighted and recognized the accomplishments of the Winter sports teams as we move into the Spring season.

Mr. Scoboria thanked the Board for the opportunity to share the update. He said as he makes recommendations, please know they come from a team effort of administration, staff, conversations with teachers and parents, and their input; as well as Board members providing ongoing guidance and direction.

Mr. Scoboria provided an overview of the presentation which will include data/guidelines, stakeholder input, administrative recommendation, and next steps.

Mr. Scoboria reflected on the past year recognizing all that the WASD community has experienced and gains that were made. Mr. Scoboria summarized things to work on moving forward, including safety measures, the need to increase in-person instruction K-12, helping students meet grade level expectations, and continuing the WAVE opportunity K-12. Mr. Scoboria reviewed data reflecting a downward trend in WASD positive cases and quarantine from December to March as well as a shift in students requesting to move from WAVE to Hybrid.

Mr. Scoboria provided an overview of the Berks County schools and the percentages of those that are providing 4-5 days in person learning and shared the vaccine progress for WASD employees; those that have received a vaccine through the programs provided by some of our local medical providers, some that received the vaccine on their own, as well as an upcoming opportunity through the BCIU for the J&J Vaccine, prioritizing educators. Mr. Scoboria reviewed the many sources of information and guidance the District uses to provide the best recommendations for the Wyomissing Area School District.

Mr. Scoboria reviewed the Level of Community Transmission Table and the Berks County move from substantial to moderate, explaining incidence and test positivity as the factors that drive the move and subsequent recommended instructional model. Mr. Scoboria highlighted the parent survey sharing approximately 80% of students were represented and the results reflect approximately 73% of parents that

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want in person days. Mr. Scoboria thanked parents for providing that information. Mr. Scoboria highlighted the staff input and how administration is working with teacher groups to develop plans and strengthen resources.

Mr. Scoboria shared, the Administrative recommendation for school model is four (4) days per week in person instruction, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, beginning March 22nd for K-6 students and March 29th for JSHS and BCTC students. Wednesday will remain as currently provided and WAVE will continue to be offered K-12. Mr. Scoboria said the District will continue to monitor progress and if we can move to five days later this Spring. He said the model for next year is to build for five days in person instruction for the 2021-22 school year.

Mr. Scoboria reviewed the reasons for four days in person instruction stating it strengthens the ability to meet student academic, social and emotional needs, recognizes the time needed for staff members to prepare and provide instruction, provides mid-week deep cleaning, and time to adjust to new schedules and monitor opportunities to increase in person days.

Mr. Scoboria reviewed the ongoing safety measures identified in the WASD Health and Safety Plan, which include approved face coverings, daily/nightly cleaning, 3ft. social distance for students, 6ft. social distance for staff, and 6ft. social distance for lunch/breakfast as well as adherence to PA capacity event restrictions, outside air ventilation and reporting / quarantine / Dashboard updates. Mr. Scoboria shared a graphic depicting the differences between 3ft. and 6ft. social distance in a classroom setting and the possible effect on quarantine. Mr. Scoboria explained the next steps will be District communication followed by building communication to parents, revised transportation information, as well as rosters, schedules, classroom spaces, lunch plans and staffing. The FAQ on the District website will also be updated.

Mr. Scoboria shared final thoughts stating, we know the risks and there are a lot of sources of information to help guide us. We need to do more for our students; we have the safety measures in place, and they have proven to be successful. He said we may need to alter plans, but we can be successful. We know other districts have demonstrated the ability to go four or five days in person and we can learn from them and continue to monitor and adjust as needed.

**A. CURRICULUM/
TECHNOLOGY**

Mr. Scoboria introduced and clarified the motion starting with item No.1 stating, the Board approves the revised Wyomissing Area School District Health and Safety Plan/School Model as presented. He clarified

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this would be four days in person with K-6 starting on the 22nd and 7-12 moving to the four days on the 29th. A yes vote states yes to that model, a no vote is no to that model. Item No. 2 is similar to the previous updates to the Sports and Extra-Curricular Activities Plan and is an update for the Spring season. Item No. 3 is an item working with the Association to protect teachers that would have an exposure here at school.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Waxler, and second by Mrs. McAvoy, the following Curriculum and Technology Items were approved:

1. Approved the revised Wyomissing Area School District Health and Safety Plan/School Model as presented.

Background Information: This plan was approved in July and revised in December and has been available on the District's website. Revisions include the school model, safety measures, and protocols in place for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.

2. Approved revisions to the Wyomissing Area School District Athletic Department Re-Entry Plan for Sports and Extra-Curricular Activities.

Background Information: This plan was approved by the Board of School Directors on June 29, 2020, revised on December 7, 2020 and has been available on the District's website. Since that approval, WASD has operated the fall and winter sports seasons for teams. Administration and Athletic Department staff have revised the plan to include guidance provided to WASD from the BCIAA, PIAA and Department of Health. The plan provides direction for students, coaches, parents/guardians and spectators regarding the implementation of spring sports and extra-curricular activities for WASD students.

3. Approved Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the Wyomissing Area School District and the Wyomissing Area Education Association (WAEA).

Background Information: The District and WAEA have an approved contract for the period of July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2023. This MOU details agreement between the District and WAEA on some employment conditions and procedures related to the delivery of educational services as detailed in the WASD Health and Safety Plan.

During discussion:

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Mrs. Taylor asked for clarification for Item No. 3; was there time to discuss the idea of a PTO day, but not sick time, for teachers who experience reaction to their 2nd injection? Mr. Scoboria said, yes this is in the current draft.

Mr. Pottieger asked if we need to add to the motion, “return to four days contingent on certain criteria being met”? Mr. Scoboria said that it would be difficult to establish variables and would be hard to identify a particular criterion. Mr. Scoboria said he would keep the Board informed and if any questions or concerns arise, he can take the short term measures necessary and then bring to the Board for further direction. Such things as an increase in spread or cases, or significant cases in Berks County, or new state or county guidance, but he believes it would be hard to identify one or two clearly.

Yeas: Mrs. Harenza, Mrs. McAvoy, Mr. McCaffrey, Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Pottieger, Mr. Redner, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Waxler, and Mrs. Ziolkowski.

Absent: None.

Nays: None. Motion carried.

**B. FINANCE/
FACILITIES**

Upon a motion by Mrs. Waxler and second by Mr. Pottieger, the following Finance and Facilities Items were approved:

1. Accept donation from the Wyomissing Area PTA in the amount of \$2,655 for Brain POP software for the West Reading Elementary Center.
2. Accept donation from Wyomissing Area Education Foundation in the amount of \$2,200 for the purchase of a table tennis robot.
3. Approved budget transfers in the amount of \$850.
4. Approved Maria Ziolkowski, Steven Pottieger, and Mark Boyer as signers for the following approved depositories:
 - a. Fulton Bank
 - b. Pennsylvania School District Liquid Asset Fund
 - c. PLGIT
 - d. Wells Fargo

During discussion Mrs. Waxler asked for clarification on the Table Tennis Robot.

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Yeas: Mrs. McAvoy, Mr. McCaffrey, Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Pottieger, Mr. Redner, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Waxler, Mrs. Ziolkowski, and Mrs. Harenza.

Absent: None.

Nays: None. Motion carried.

C. PERSONNEL/
POLICY

Upon a motion by Mrs. Taylor, second by Mrs. Waxler, the following Personnel and Policy items were approved and ratified:

1. RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS

a. Athletic Staff

- 1) **Maria Neff, Jr.** High Cross Country Head Coach, JSJS, resignation effective last day worked October 24, 2020.
- 2) **Mark Young, Jr.** High Softball Assistant Coach, JSJS, end of seasonal employment effective last day worked May 7, 2020.

2. APPROVED THE LEAVES OF ABSENCE PER ATTACHED

3. APPOINTMENTS

a. Athletic Staff

- 1) **Derek Moser**, Boys' Volleyball Asst. Coach, JSJS, rescind previously approved appointment at applicant's request.
- 2) **Henry Smychynsky, Jr.** High Baseball Assistant Coach, JSJS, at a stipend of \$1,084, effective date to be determined pending completion of pre-employment paperwork.

4. POSITION/TITLE/LOCATION CHANGE

a. Hourly Support Staff

- 1) **Gloria Claudio**, Full-time Custodian, JSJS, to Full-time Custodial Foreperson, District-wide, at a wage rate of \$19.10/hour, no change in hours, effective March 9, 2021.
Background Information: This position is being filled due to a retirement.
- 2) **Kendra Snyder**, Part-time Cafeteria/Recess Monitor, WHEC, 3 hours/day to Part-time Instructional Aide, WHEC, 5 ½ hours/day, at a

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wage rate of \$11.60/hour, ratification effective March 5, 2021.

Background Information: This position is being filled due to a resignation.

5. VOLUNTEERS

6. POLICIES

Second Reading/Approval of the following policy:

011 Principles for Governance and Leadership

Yeas: Mr. McCaffrey, Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Pottieger, Mr. Redner, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Waxler, Mrs. Ziolkowski, Mrs. Harenza, and Mrs. McAvoy.

Absent: None.

Nays: None. Motion carried.

Mr. Scoboria introduced Dr. Woodard to provide updates and exciting new initiatives regarding additional supports for students and staff.

Dr. Woodard shared information related to Mrs. Waxler's earlier question regarding the Table Tennis Robot and said the student's robotics class will be putting it together but it will be utilized by the Adaptive Phys. Ed. students and allows the game of tennis to be played by one person. She is excited to be able to incorporate this as a cross discipline activity. Multiple classes will benefit.

Dr. Woodard provided an update to the Community Mental Health Night that occurred on January 27th, reminding everyone the link to the recording is available on the District website, under *District News*. Dr. Woodard welcomed community members who may have missed it to access the recording. Dr. Woodard said the link to the Parentguidance.org site which was part of the Mental Health Night, can also be found on the main page of our website as well as each school's home page. Dr. Woodard stated Parentguidance.org is filled with webinars and educational opportunities for parents relating to different mental health topics and is a compilation from renowned therapists from across the country.

Dr. Woodard stated she is also excited for the Cook Center for Human Connection and the Hope Squad explaining that WASD has earned the grant and they are moving forward and posting positions. She explained the Hope Squad is a school based peer

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to peer suicide prevention program that empowers students. She is hopeful the program will be fully implemented at the beginning of next school year.

Dr. Woodard shared they are researching grant funded opportunities for students and staff to engage in sessions related to mindfulness as well as yoga practices to support mental health. They are also working collaboratively with the Education Foundation to share opportunities for mindfulness with teachers so they can share with students. More details will come.

Dr. Woodard stated they have posted positions for instructional coaches and thanked the Board for enabling WASD to move forward in creating these positions for staff. This will support our teachers in refining their instructional practices and increasing student achievement and learning for Wyomissing Area students. Dr. Woodard said successful candidates will be identified, trained and ready to begin by the start of the next school year.

Dr. Woodard shared they are working on teacher support and growth in the areas of literacy as well as computer science integration. She explained, pre-Covid, WASD was awarded the PA Smart Grant. Dr. Woodard can report they are ready to move forward with training and they have had three sessions with a group of K-6 staff over the past month who are excited and enthusiastic to move forward in integrating computer science in all content area discipline. Dr. Woodard explained computer science aids in all areas of learning and is founded upon creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication and the idea of choice, giving students the opportunity to showcase their mastery of skills. Dr. Woodard commended the group for their efforts saying they are excited and motivated to get a jump on this professional learning and teacher support.

OLD BUSINESS None.

NEW BUSINESS None.

**RIGHT TO KNOW
REQUEST** None.

**UPDATES FROM
ORGANIZATIONS** None.

WYOMISSING AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 2021-5976

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ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mrs. Waxler, second by Mrs. Taylor, to adjourn at 6:54 p.m.

Board Secretary