



JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of Special Meeting of February 25, 2021

Special Meeting of the Jefferson County Board of Education held via
Video Teleconference on Thursday, February 25, 2021, at 6 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairwoman Diane Porter
Mr. James Craig
Mr. Joseph Marshall
Dr. Corrie Shull

Vice-Chair Chris Kolb
Mrs. Linda Duncan
Ms. Sarah McIntosh

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Superintendent Martin A. Pollio, Ed.D.
Jimmy Adams, Chief Human Resources
Kevin Brown, General Counsel
Kim Chevalier, Chief Exceptional Child Education Officer
Dr. Carmen Coleman, Chief Academic Officer
Dr. Dena Dossett, Chief of Accountability, Research, and Systems Improvement
Robert Moore, Chief of Schools
Renee Murphy, Chief Communications and Community Relations Officer
Chris Perkins, Chief Operations Officer
Eva Stone, Health Coordinator

In light of the Governor having declared a state of emergency within the Commonwealth on March 6, 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and in compliance with guidance issued by the Executive Branch on March 12 and 16, 2020, regarding the conduct of meetings of state boards and commissions during the emergency period, this meeting was conducted by video-teleconference and available for live public viewing online.

The guidance from the Executive Branch provided that all Kentucky Boards and Commissions take proper health precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and accordingly, with respect to the public attendance at meetings of said bodies, states "members of the public will only be able to view video-teleconferenced meetings remotely."

Members of the public had the opportunity to voice opinions or express concerns by submitting remarks via email or mail.

SPECIAL MEETING

The purpose of this meeting was for the Superintendent to present a plan to the Board for the return to in-person instruction. Board members had the opportunity to discuss, ask questions, and consider a motion to approve the recommended plan.

I. Call to Order

Chair Porter called the February 25, 2021, Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 6 p.m.

II. Recommendation for Approval of Plan for the Return to In-Person Schooling

Dr. Pollio gave a summary of the recommended plan to return to in-person instruction. Each Board member had an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

Dr. Shull asked questions regarding: adequate nursing staff for each school; scheduling problems for the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine; proper sanitation in buildings with underpaid/understaffed custodians; the availability of thermometers for schools and families; transporting students with a shortage of bus drivers; supports for the mental and emotional health of teachers; Individual Education Programs; transporting symptomatic students; and the plan for following CDC Guidelines during emergency drills. He acknowledged that the pandemic has exposed the inequities that continue to persist in society and in JCPS. He concluded by stating the following, "I dare to believe that doing education in a COVID world will finally challenge this district to boldly and comprehensively address our issues with equity. My concern about the plan, as it has been presented, is that it does not prioritize the children who are most vulnerable - the children who have most consistently been failed by JCPS and other educational institutions. Those kids don't have families who have the option of putting them in private schools. Those students don't have the luxury of being sent to other educational institutions where they can receive wrap-around services. They are our responsibility and therefore, I would like to make sure that I put on the floor that as we take into consideration all of these other things that we need to pay acute attention to the most vulnerable students in this district. They are the Latinx community, which I have heard nothing about. They are the immigrant community, which we have said nothing about. They are the black kids who, 70 percent of them are still achieving below grade level, 23 percent of them live with grandparents who are aged 60 years old and above. We need to prioritize equity in this conversation about returning to schools."

Ms. McIntosh stated that she would like to make sure that the District is sending a consistent message and that building leaders communicate protocols of what can and cannot happen in the classroom. She stated, "I want to make sure moving forward, that we are sending consistent, maybe often, repeated messages to some of our leaders about what teachers can expect, how we're working through the logistics of making sure that not only their contract is upheld but that we're also doing everything we can to provide a safe environment for them and not overburden them." She concluded by acknowledging that there are many things that cannot be replicated on a virtual platform - that are best provided in-person for some of our most vulnerable students whether they are completely disengaged, consistently engaged but not fully accessing services that they were previously receiving, or that we have yet to be able to provide to them because we've not been able to see them. She asked about social-emotional rapid response systems to help returning students.

Mr. Marshall questioned resources and trainings for educators in order to give them the best teaching methods possible to move forward and meet the social-emotional needs of students. He asked about the plan for schools that cannot meet the minimum social distancing guidelines. He wondered what challenges would arise for the District if we were to have everyone back on a hybrid schedule. He asked when schools would get the final word on which teachers were given accommodations and which ones were not. He concluded by saying, "I am increasingly discouraged by the amount of information that doesn't seem to be coming from all

sources and there seems to be a breakdown in communication somewhere that we're hearing one thing from Dr. Pollio, your team - we're hearing another thing from administrators - we're hearing another thing from teachers. At this point, this decision is a life-and-death decision and it is time for honesty. It is time for us to just take the gloves off and do what is right and necessary for all of our kids, that's who we're in this for is our kids. I do not, in my time on this board, want to have to continue to play middleman and try to bring this side to that side - that's not what we're here for. We are here to make sure that JCPS moves forward and that we do what is best for our kids. In order to do that, it is going to take some honesty. Whether the vote tonight is no or yes, whatever it is, honesty is the only thing that's going to move us forward."

Mrs. Duncan asked for clarification on when middle and high school teachers would be required to return to the building. She asked when teachers would know which students they would have. She wanted to clarify the plan/process of wiping down classrooms during hall-changes. She asked about standardized testing, water bottles for students, and graduation plans.

Mr. Craig wanted to clarify that staff members would not be required to work inside of a building until 14 days after their second vaccine shot. He questioned custodial vacancies and asked for clarification on HB 208. He discussed concerns regarding elementary school density and the potential of offering a hybrid option for elementary students. He stated, "I'm not entirely clear that I see four (yes) votes on this board for coming back full time for all of our elementary school students. So, I will throw this out there and Dr. Pollio, if you'd like to comment, Dr. Coleman, Kevin Brown, anybody else who'd like to comment, generally on whether or not a hybrid option, AA BB, for elementary school students is feasible for us to implement by March 17th and whether that might meet some of the very legitimate concerns that Dr. Shull expressed earlier." He went on to ask, "If we did a hybrid option for elementary school could we also implement a full-time schedule for ECE students or would that be impossible?"

Dr. Kolb stated that he cannot support the proposed plan that seems to rely on state guidance when it suits us and ignore it when it does not. He focused his comments and questions on how the plan does not adhere to its own stated guiding principles. He discussed the possibility of having buses with as many as 44 kids, no bus monitor, no symptom screening, and no way to ensure kids wear their masks properly. He acknowledged the lack of custodians to adequately clean buildings in a COVID world and the level of stress on educators. He discussed the inequities in the plan and asked, "Why are we going against CDC and KDE guidance by considering a plan that will benefit whiter and wealthier families more than disadvantaged ones?" He stated that the District has until at least March 29th to make the plan better, he suggested the Board direct Dr. Pollio to revise the plan so that it embodies its own guiding principles and conforms to HB 208.

Chair Porter discussed principal involvement in the plan and asked, "Have we been able to listen to the voice of all of our principals?" She wanted clarification regarding what would be done with the results of state testing. She expressed concern as she discussed academics and acknowledged that there are students that are very far behind specifically in her district. She is interested in developing a plan that deals with multiple things beyond the return to in-person learning such as summer school and community involvement. She wants to know how the District will reach out to the students that are behind and include more community voice for the children who are struggling the most. She asked if the District has enough custodians, bus drivers, medical personnel, and nutritional service workers hired as of now. She discussed sanitation and asked about overnight disinfecting, students eating in the classroom, and trifold sneeze guards. She asked how the District would manage the start date for those who have not had their second shot due to rescheduling; she suggested surveying principals. She discussed ventilation and requested follow-up for a school in her district that has issues.

Motion made by Ms. Sarah McIntosh, seconded by Mrs. Linda Duncan to approve the plan presented for the return to in-person schooling. This plan includes the following:

- An elementary K-2 in-person start date of March 17 with five days a week of instruction.
- An elementary 3-5 in-person start date of March 18 with five days a week of instruction.
- An early childhood in-person start date of March 22 with five days a week of instruction.
- A middle/high school in-person start date of April 5 comprised of a hybrid model with two in-person days and three remote learning days each week for students.
- The continuation of a virtual option for all students PreK through Grade 12
- Elementary and early childhood staff workdays on March 15 and March 16 with asynchronous learning for students.
- Middle and high school staff workdays on March 25 and March 26 with asynchronous learning for students.
- Acceptance of the addendum to the Student Support and Behavior Intervention Handbook regarding COVID-19 Behavior Guidance.

Each Board member had a chance to speak in favor or against the motion.

Dr. Shull highlighted some letters that the entire Board had received and went on to say, “Any plan about reopening during a time where so many people have been adversely affected and impacted by COVID must prioritize equity, it must prioritize the students who have been most severely impacted by learning disadvantages that have been exacerbated by COVID. Again, I say these are Black students, these are immigrant students, these are Latinx students, and these are ECE students. If they are not central to the plan for reopening, we are missing the mark.

Ms. McIntosh said that she does not disagree with Dr. Shull’s remarks and stated that she has a lot of experience in the classroom and her heart is with students. She said, “I know from experience and from talking to those kids, to parents, and service providers, that the students who are in most need of services right now are the ones who are not receiving them.” She concluded by saying, “All of the reasons that Dr. Shull laid out for why our students need us, are the reasons that we need them in the buildings so that we can provide those services to them that they’re most in need of.”

Mr. Marshall briefly discussed the weight of the situation, and the decision-making process to survive this pandemic and to move education forward. He stated, “I think that tonight, whatever the vote is, has to be based on what is best for JCPS moving forward - and as a community, does this plan move us all forward? Does it hold some back while pushing more forward? We have to ask those questions and once again meet them with the honest expectation that our students, our families, our staff, and our educators deserve.”

Mrs. Duncan expressed optimism as she discussed the difficult journey in deciding whether or not to bring kids back together. She said, “From the beginning, I said for me, this is a medical kind of issue whether we should go back or not and I wanted to hear the medical community’s opinion.” She continued by saying, “I drew a great deal of comfort from their (medical professionals) assurances that this can be done in a safe way.” She noted the falling community infection rate and concluded by briefly discussing HB 208 saying, “Finally, we have to face the reality that we have a legislature that’s getting ready to pass a law that will require us to open.”

Mr. Craig said that he agreed with his colleague's concerns and echoed Mrs. Duncan's comments by stating, "The public health officials that have come before us are in complete unison that it would be better for our students to return to in-person learning than not. The doctors who appeared on Tuesday evening told us that we could do this safely." He continued by saying, "I want to acknowledge the realities of the world though that we find ourselves in this evening. There is great concern about the elementary full-capacity proposal and the size of these elementary classrooms. And, it's not clear to me that the motion that's on the floor already has enough support of this board and so with that in mind I intend to make a motion to amend what is on the floor."

Motion by Mr. James Craig, seconded by Mr. Joseph Marshall to amend the main motion on the floor - The substance of the amendment was that JCPS would offer a hybrid elementary option AA, BB schedule much like the hybrid options for middle and high school students, with the lone exception, that ECE elementary students would be offered full-time services if they are in the elementary K through 5 grades.

Each Board member had an opportunity to debate the amendment to the main motion.

Dr. Shull stated, "For this motion, I'm not sure how it addresses any of the equity issues that we have highlighted during this conversation. I am also concerned about the position this would put some of our teachers, principals, and other staff people in who work in middle schools and high schools and how that would impact their ability to serve in their in their designations."

Mrs. Duncan stated, "I was surprised about the ECE part because I don't know how that will affect our regular schedule." She asked, "I'm just not quite sure how the teachers would manage that. That would be my only question, is that manageable?"

Mr. Marshall stated that he believed that the amendment was a step in the right direction to fix some issues; however, he acknowledged it would not address many of the concerns that had been discussed tonight.

Dr. Kolb agreed with Mr. Marshall, that the amendment was a step in the right direction but he still intends to vote against the overall motion.

Chair Porter stated that she supports the amendment and understands the rationale but would like actual data regarding how this would affect teachers who have younger students.

Motion Passed: A motion that the Board of Education AMEND the recommended motion on the floor and the substance of the amendment is that JCPS will offer a hybrid elementary option AA, BB schedule much like we are offering hybrid options to middle and high school students, with the lone exception, that for our ECE elementary students we would offer them full-time services if they are in the elementary K through 5 grades - JCPS's back to in-person school plan will include the following provisions: an elementary K through 2 in-person start date of March 17th comprised of a hybrid model with two in-person days and three remote learning days each week for students; an elementary 3 through 5 an in-person start date of March 18th comprised of a hybrid model with two in-person days and three remote learning days each week for students; an elementary K through 5 in-person start date of March 18th for all of our ECE students as discussed; and an early childhood in-person start date of March 22nd comprised of a hybrid model with two in-person days and three remote learning days each week for students; a Middle and High School in-person start date of April 5th comprised of a hybrid model with two in-person days and three remote learning days each week for students; the continuation of a virtual option for all students pre-k through grade 12; Elementary and early childhood staff workdays on March 15th and March 16th with asynchronous learning for students; middle and high school staff workdays on March 25 and March 26th with asynchronous learning for students; and the acceptance of

the addendum to the student support and behavior intervention handbook regarding covid-19 behavior and guidance passed with a motion by Mr. James Craig and a second by Mr. Joseph Marshall.

Mr. James Craig	Yes
Mrs. Linda Duncan	Yes
Dr. Christopher Kolb	Yes
Mr. Joseph Marshall	Yes
Ms. Sarah McIntosh	Yes
Ms. Diane Porter	Yes
Dr. Corrie Shull	Yes

Dr. Kolb stated, “We definitely have to comply with HB 208, but I would like to remind my colleagues that the nation's leading health agency and experts on infectious disease have unequivocally said it is not safe to resume in-person instruction in Louisville Kentucky at this moment.” He continued by reading an email from a teacher who discussed the difficulties of returning to in-person learning and advised that it is not worth the risk to go back to school when we are amid a deadly pandemic. He then explained, “Here is why I’m voting against the amended motion and what I need to see and what I’m hoping this board directs Dr. Pollio to provide us. A plan that has more intentional focus on equity as Dr. Shull said. This amended motion still does not address the equity issues and so the plan still increases inequity in the District. Use KDE suggestions to ensure six feet is always possible. Do not separate kids from their teachers and conform to HB 208.”

Chair Porter acknowledged some concerns that she had received from families and briefly discussed the lack of healthcare opportunities and vaccination opportunities in her district. She said that she visited two schools and they were not ready to open yet. She expressed concern with the early start date of the elementary hybrid plan. She continued and said, “I would like for Dr. Pollio to, based on everything that has been said tonight, where we still have some question marks about where we are with things - that we could tighten up this proposal and bring it back with everything - with the blanks filled in. I think that would be helpful.” She concluded by saying, “I currently have struggling schools and to not acknowledge that, yes - we do need to go back to school, yes - we will be further behind than we were in March in 2020. So I am voting because I was elected to speak for and I will always, as long as I have breath in my body and I’m elected to serve as a Board member, I am speaking on behalf of the constituents.”

Order #2021-38 - Motion Passed: A motion to approve the amended motion as follows: JCPS will offer a hybrid elementary option AA, BB schedule much like we are offering hybrid options to middle and high school students, with the lone exception that for our ECE elementary students we would offer them full-time services if they are in the elementary K through 5 grades - JCPS’s back to in-person school plan will include the following provisions: an elementary K through 2 in-person start date of March 17th comprised of a hybrid model with two in-person days and three remote learning days each week for students; an elementary 3 through 5 an in-person start date of March 18th comprised of a hybrid model with two in-person days and three remote learning days each week for students; an elementary K through 5 in-person start date of March 18th for all of our ECE students as discussed; and an early childhood in-person start date of March 22nd comprised of a hybrid model with two in-person days and three remote learning days each week for students; a Middle and High School in-person start date of April 5th comprised of a hybrid model with two in-person days and three remote learning days each week for students; the continuation of a virtual option for all students pre-k through grade 12; Elementary and early childhood staff workdays on March 15th and March 16th with asynchronous learning for students; middle and high school staff workdays on March 25 and March 26th with asynchronous learning for students; and the acceptance of the addendum to the student support and behavior intervention handbook regarding covid-19 behavior and guidance passed with a motion by Ms. Sarah McIntosh and a second by Mrs. Linda Duncan.

Mr. James Craig	Yes
Mrs. Linda Duncan	Yes
Dr. Christopher Kolb	No
Mr. Joseph Marshall	Yes
Ms. Sarah McIntosh	Yes
Ms. Diane Porter	No
Dr. Corrie Shull	No

Dr. Kolb suggested the Board give direction to Dr. Pollio and his team to put together a plan for the Board to review that more intentionally promotes equity.

2021-39 - Motion Passed: A motion that this board instructs Dr. Pollio and his team to develop a comprehensive plan to promote equity in the District reopening plans passed with a motion by Dr. Christopher Kolb and a second by Mr. Joseph Marshall.

Mr. James Craig	Yes
Mrs. Linda Duncan	Yes
Dr. Christopher Kolb	Yes
Mr. Joseph Marshall	Yes
Ms. Sarah McIntosh	Yes
Ms. Diane Porter	Yes
Dr. Corrie Shull	Yes

III. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Order #2021-40 - Motion Passed: A motion to adjourn the special meeting of February 25, 2021, at 9:14 p.m. passed with a motion by Dr. Christopher Kolb and a second by Dr. Corrie Shull.

Mr. James Craig	Yes
Mrs. Linda Duncan	Yes
Dr. Christopher Kolb	Yes
Mr. Joseph Marshall	Yes
Ms. Sarah McIntosh	Yes
Ms. Diane Porter	Yes
Dr. Corrie Shull	Yes

Diane Porter
Chairwoman

Dr. Martin A. Pollio
Superintendent/Secretary

**THESE ACTIONS, ALONG WITH THE AGENDA ITEMS, MAKE UP THE OFFICIAL MINUTES,
WHICH ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**