

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of Special Meeting of February 09, 2021

Special Meeting of the Jefferson County Board of Education held via Video Teleconference, on Tuesday, February 09, 2021, at 6 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairwoman Diane Porter Vice-Chair Chris Kolb
Mr. James Craig Mrs. Linda Duncan
Mr. Joseph Marshall Ms. Sarah McIntosh

Dr. Corrie Shull

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

Renee Murphy, Chief Communications and Community Relations Officer

Chris Perkins, Chief Operations Officer

Eva Stone, Health Coordinator

Robert Moore, Chief of Schools

Christy Rogers, Assistant Superintendent for High Schools

Michelle Dillard, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Joe Leffert, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools

Paige Hartstern, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools

Lamesa Marks-Johns, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools

Nate Meyer, Assistant Superintendent for Accelerated Improvement Schools

Alicia Averette, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Supports

Katy Deferrari Assistant Superintendent for School Culture and Climate

Shervita West, Principal at Brandeis Elementary School - District 1

Scott Collier, Principal at St. Matthews Elementary School - District 2

Jason Neuss, Principal at Ballard High School- District 3

Laura Mullaney, Principal at Gutermuth Elementary School - District 4

Rob Fulk, Principal at Iroquois High School - District 5

Robert Gunn, Principal at W.E.B. Dubois Middle School - District 6

Terra Greenwell, Principal at Ramsey Middle School - District 7

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: WORK SESSION

The purpose of this work session was to allow Board members an opportunity to interact with assistant superintendents and principals who have been planning for an in-person return to school. The District team shared plans and answered questions.

I. Call to Order

Chair Porter called the February 09, 2021, Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 6 p.m. and made the following announcement:

"Before we go forward, I like would like to read a statement to ensure to people that we do read their emails before we start the meeting.

Pursuant to the adopted policy of this Board, Robert's Rules of Order govern the way we conduct this meeting. This means that board members are expected to abide by the Parliamentary procedures and customs as outlined and defined by Robert's Rules. The public also expects the board to be an example to our students. This board should be an example for how policy-making bodies act in a democratic society. Vigorous but respectful debate is expected. Our students are watching. As members, we shall all act in good faith so that when we disagree, we will not be disagreeable. Because of this, I will do my best to maintain and enforce the following Parliamentary standards:

- 1. Remarks from members should be confined to the issue in question.
- 2. Members should refrain from attacking the motives of other members and from the use of inappropriate or vulgar language.
- 3. Remarks should always be addressed to the Chair and not to other members.
- 4. Questions directed from a member to another member are to be directed to the Chair. At that point, the Chair will then ask the member if he/she will yield to a question.
- 5. We should strive to use the formal names and titles of members whenever possible.

We are dealing with what may be the most complex issue of our time in public service. We all bring different ideas and thoughts to the table. Let's proceed in a manner that recognizes those differences, celebrates common ground, and always seeks to find solutions that benefit our students."

II. Work Session: District Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dr. Pollio introduced a group of JCPS leadership staff and announced that this special called meeting was to continue the conversation about the potential return to school and to provide a couple of updates on the timeline. He reminded everyone that there will be no vote tonight on the return to in-person school - this is a part of the conversation. He stated that there would be a separate Board meeting on February 16 to provide greater detail regarding the JCPS return to school plans.

JCPS principals and administrators provided a short presentation that highlighted different areas of the return to in-person learning plans. Each Board member had 15 minutes for questions, answers, and comments.

Dr. Shull asked questions regarding protocols and safety mechanisms at alternative schools; transportation; temperature checks; protocols for those not in compliance with face masks; the availability of nurses for every school; and vacant positions for bus drivers and custodians.

Ms. McIntosh asked questions regarding the possibility of hybrid models for in-person learning; the utilization of certified staff members; Chromebook availability/use in school and at home; processes for day-to-day classroom activities; mental health; and extra custodial staff.

Mr. Marshall asked questions regarding services for ECE students in virtual learning and supports for staff working with ECE students; staff safety in smaller spaces; school supports from the District level; and timing on the safe return to in-person learning.

Mrs. Duncan asked questions regarding the meaning of *safe opening*; temperature checks; sanitizing during class-changes; procedures at bus depots; class scheduling; and standardized responses for all schools.

Mr. Craig asked questions regarding protocols for students who develop symptoms during the school day; student behavior issues and physical interactions; ventilation; and space issues.

Dr. Kolb asked questions regarding the process of selecting virtual or in-person learning; class size/student-teacher ratios and the ability to de-densify classrooms; and liability concerns with in-person learning.

Chair Porter asked questions regarding ventilation; protocols for hand-washing; the availability of custodians and bus drivers; sanitation in school buildings and other District buildings; quality of instruction; protocols for those not in compliance with safety guidelines; and procedures to care for a student having a fever over 100.4.

Chair Porter concluded the meeting by instructing Board members to send additional questions to Dr. Pollio.

III. Adjournment

Mr. James Craig

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Order #2021-31 - Motion Passed: A motion to adjourn the February 9, 2021, special meeting at 8:38 p.m. passed with a motion by Mrs. Linda Duncan and a second by Mr. Joseph Marshall.

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

Yes

Diane Porter Dr. Martin A. Pollio

Chairwoman Superintendent/Secretary

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



Persons Requesting to Address the Board

(Deferred to Email Due to COVID Attendance Limitations)

Until meeting room capacity returns to normal, members of the public will have the opportunity to voice opinions or express concerns by submitting remarks via email. Remarks should be limited to 500 words or less and sent to the Assistant Secretary to the Board (angela.gilpin@jefferson.kyschools.us) for dissemination purposes prior to the meeting. Public remarks will be shared with each Board member and recorded in the Official Minutes.

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Meeting of February 09, 2021

Public Speakers Comments

I am wondering what our plan is for teachers who are high risk themselves and also caregivers for high risk children or family members. I am not able to put my son in childcare this year due to his autoimmune disorder, this is why we have kept him home this school year (we live in Indiana.) Are teachers who are in this situation able to continue virtually teaching from home? Is taking FMLA or a medical leave the only option they are given to keep themselves and their family safe, and will they be able to use sick days if a medical leave is needed. If they are not able to continue teaching from home, what are the expectations if they're required to be in person. Will they have to attend faculty meetings in person as well, or will they be isolated to a classroom? Will they be expected to cover for other teachers when subs are limited prior to COVID? I look forward to hearing your replies. Thank you for your time. Sheehan, Krystina krystina.sheehan@jefferson.kyschools.us

Dear board members: if you are still meeting on zoom, then why are we discussing going back to school in-person? We must protect our most vulnerable, particularly with the new variants appearing as of today in Jefferson County. Even one kid, one employee, one family death from covid is too many, and it is your responsibility as a board to be sure that doesn't happen. Teachers being vaccinated doesn't protect students or families. Now if teachers are forced back into the building, single parent teachers must send their kids to school since no one will be home to watch them, so selecting virtual academy is impossible. Hybrid will be a nightmare for these folks as well. The year is almost over. Dont risk people's lives over societal pressure. Do what is right, safe, and backed by science. Our community hasn't closed bars, restaurants, or even enforced mask wearing well. Those are key according to cdc to opening schools. Thanks,

A concerned parent and JCPS Teacher RoseMarie McCandless <u>msrgoble@gmail.com</u> Several high schools have many more students than Iroquois and there is not enough space to distance students to have only 15 students in the classroom. So what other strategy's will be used for the higher density schools?

Sent from my iPhone

Watkins, Stephanie K. stephanie.watkins@jefferson.kyschools.us

What are the current official numbers of students intending to return, not the 60%, that was anticipated in the fall?

Follow up to the above question--Do we have enough bus drivers to meet the needs of the returning students without them sitting 3 to a seat?

To all board members & Dr Polio:

In regards to students returning with a waiver or doctor's note, do you feel that it is ethical to ask teachers to return to a classroom with students that are not wearing masks, after they have also been exposed to students with and without masks on a bus?

Thank you for your time.

Mccracken, Karina R. karina.mccracken@jefferson.kyschools.us

I have many concerns, but I'll limit it to (4) in particular. My first concern is the fact that children are expected to return 3/15 in which they will turn them around and head to spring break two weeks later. As I'm sure you're aware, we now have three different strains of this virus in Jefferson Co. Per the usual flow of things, we can expect their to be yet another spike in cases as families return from vacationing in hot spot destinations. So why not wait until April at least to head back once the curve will have a chance to flatten?

Secondly, what instruction is expected to take place when the children will be trapped in four walls all day after a year out? While they will have interaction with one another, there will undoubtedly be behavior concerns as students will come back to a structured setting after one year away from one. There's no way that children will acclimate to the expectations in such a short time to ensure expectations are met for learning. I am seriously concerned about the mental and emotional well-being of children being

coupled together without release for so many hours. There will be a lack of stamina and restraint. Is there not a way to do a hybrid or slow release back instead of what seems like a massive roll out?

Third, the district still has no plans to deal with uncooperative students/parents. During a normal cold/flu season parents send sick student to school. Therefore, if that same type of child comes back and refuses to cooperate with a mask what is the teacher to do?

Lastly, I don't think it's fair for teachers to practically be forced back when they don't feel safe. There should be a legitimate option for them to pick a virtual option without fear of losing their jobs. Teachers don't sign up to be front line workers. It's bad enough that they go into the profession knowing that they might risk their life in the event of an active shooter. It's not fathomable that they have to now assume the role of a healthcare employee now as well. That's not what teachers are trained to do or be. Why is it that teachers are expendable and not valued? Their lives matter, too.

Respectfully,
Patrice J
Patrice Johnson patriceljohnson9@gmail.com

Our staff was just made aware that the district is not requiring students to bring back their devices for in person learning. What are the students supposed to work on when at school?

I absolutely DO NOT feel comfortable accepting workbooks or paper from students or getting close to them to take their work from them. I am pregnant and I am not risking my child's life because kids aren't bringing devices. How is this safe?

Brianna Harper, Second Grade Teacher

McFerran Preparatory Academy

(502) 485-8297

As a mom, my concern is that students that are in special classes do not have a clear plan in place for them. There are generic guidelines to follow, but they IN NO WAY provide specific ways for the children to receive their services safely. On most school sites, the only mention of ECE is the district response, which is quite generic and unspecific. Children with special needs are subjected to many extra adults, close contact with other students (simply due to cognitive delays that don't allow them to understand distancing), and they often have personal and medical needs above and beyond what their "typical" peers have. My son is 14, a freshman in HS, and approximately 18-24 months cognitively. So he is essentially a toddler in a 14 year old's body. He is strong, he can be aggressive, he is nonverbal, doesn't keep a mask on, and cannot complete tasks or directives without one-on-one assistance. How is his safety truly going to be ensured? Caregivers are no longer granted the ability to stay virtual, so he will have to return to school...for what? 6-8 weeks just to say schools open?? His safety, the safety of his classmates, and the safety of his teachers/staff are not being addressed. No one can give me answers and I am terrified of losing my child due to negligence on JCPS's part. It isn't worth losing him or any other child or adult to this.

As a teacher, I am a resource teacher and have a full caseload with children spread among 4 grade levels and in 7 classrooms. How am I supposed to provide the services in their IEPs without blending children from different classrooms together? It is impossible to only service children from the same classroom at the same time. It is impossible to safely do my job and no one can provide me answers. I keep being told that "we haven't heard yet." It is unacceptable and terrifying to think we could be thrown back into the schools without REAL guidance from the ECE department. I am sad as a parent and a teacher of students with special needs and that learn differently. Where is the equity for them?

Ms. Melissa Goldsmith ECE Resource Teacher

Jessie R. Carter Elementary melissa.goldsmith@jefferson.kyschools.us

- 1. how will quarantine work for students/teachers, logistically? what work will be done on quarantine days, how will parents know, will bus drivers not pick those students up, will whole families be quarantined because of a single student being exposed, shouldn't that be the case? etc 2. if devices are to be left home in case of quarantine, what will instruction actually look like in the classrooms?
- 3. will there be consequences for students not wearing masks?
- 4. if teachers request to teach virtually, why would they still be expected to be in the buildings-doesn't that defeat the purpose?

Jillion Becker jill.mikebecs@gmail.com

Greetings Board members:

After deeply considering the Q&A during the February 2nd 2021 meeting, I am concerned on two accounts:

- 1) The current stance from JCPS and Louisville and Kentucky state public health officials appears to be ignoring areas of JCPS' reopening plan that do not or cannot meet safety guidelines put forth by the CDC and other international agencies for school reopening. These include, but are not limited to air flow and social distancing in buses and classrooms.
- 2) Much anecdotal or unrelated data is being offered as to mental health impacts. This weak data was used repeatedly to make the case that the harm due to mental health impacts outweighs that of the physical harm done by COVID.
- 3) The real risks to teachers is not being acknowledged, and is being downplayed.

I would request that if there is a risk assessment that has been made, that it be shown. During the last year, every individual - every family - is making these assessments on their own. Most pointedly, teachers are being asked to make this decision now - and they deserve to have this information and this conversation heard. And as COVID is a community concern, it should be done transparently in public.

Respectfully,

Ben Wilson
Lincoln Performing Arts School and Noe Middle Parent
LPAS SBDM Parent Representative
(and Cross Country Coach)
Ben Wilson ben@thelocust.org

I have several questions that have been asked but we have never really received a final answer. I think these are important answers to have so we can properly prepare for the return to the building.

- 1. Will we be allowed to teach small groups? Elementary uses the workshop model for both reading and math and if we will be unable to do this, we will need plenty of notice to make necessary changes.
- 2. Will we be allowed to used common materials? (library, math manipulatives, literacy centers, etc)
- 3. When will the schools receive the Chromebooks or replacements? My school had them all removed and since we don't have textbooks, they are used all day every day. They will be especially crucial if we are unable to do teach small groups or use shared materials.
- 4. What will be the steps taken if a child refuses to wear a mask? (ex. 3 warnings and then to VLA) Will this be consistent throughout the district or will each school make their own procedures for this? Autumn Mitchell Hite Elementary

I am writing to you as a JCPS teacher and parent regarding my concerns about returning to in-person instruction.

In a normal year we have had problems receiving coverage for substitutes and custodial staff and typically just have to make do, but in a pandemic these things are unacceptable. Teachers providing their own cleaning supplies or cleaning to the level necessary in a pandemic, on top of other duties is neither a reasonable or fair solution. Similarly, last year we were short bus drivers. Wave 3 reported in January that this is still a substantial problem. I am concerned with the inability to social distance in my own classroom let alone the ability for my students, most whom ride further than 15 minutes to and from school, to social distance on the bus.

For my 29-student line, socially distanced at 6 feet, to get to the cafeteria would take 174-feet of hallway. Norton (where I teach) has one central trunk like hallway, where it would be impossible for students to travel in only one direction. Our lunches in previous years stretched from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. I know our administration has worked hard to do the impossible but unless we are teaching on an A/B schedule of some kind there will be too many students in the building to effectively distance ourselves. I realize you have been put in an impossible position. I think the pandemic has shined a spotlight on the ongoing historic problems that arise from the consistent lack of funding. JCPS infrastructure, both physical buildings and human resources, are lacking too much for us to safely reopen in person. This is not your fault or any one persons, but it seems to be the situation we find ourselves in.

I realize that not all students are getting everything they need, but we are doing our best and providing quality instruction. My 4th graders are learning many things and my amazing Kindergartener has grown to be an awesome reader this year. I would not have wished this Kindergarten year on her but she is doing well and we are healthy. I am working harder than I ever have before and my stress level is incredibly high. Going back to in-person teaching does not solve all the problems, in my opinion, it creates different and greater, maybe even deadly issues.

Another reason returning to school is scary at this point is that we frequently teach students who have been sent to school ill. Knowing that the symptoms of COVID-19 are not always measurable and that screening for fever is not always a tell-tale sign of infection should give us pause. The Nurse's office at my school is barely bigger than a closet with a bathroom. Two people in it cannot physically be 6 feet apart. Asking school staff to isolate and monitor students in non-existant spaces and monitor students' temperatures is unacceptable.

I appreciate the push to get teachers vaccinated but I was unaware until the week of the vaccine that it was still possible for me to bring the virus home to my family, all of whom are unvaccinated. I have a 9-month old who upon our return to school will start daycare. She has been exposed to very little in her short lifetime and right now I can control the few people my family sees. If I am asked to return to in person teaching I could be exposing my family to the virus we have tried so hard (and managed) to avoid for the past 11 months.

Thank you for your tireless work to make hard decisions and put students and JCPS first,

Katie Rupp Katie Rupp <u>katiekar@gmail.com</u> Good afternoon! I am writing to the board members and asking to please wait to open schools. The building I teach in is so very old. One of the oldest. The classroom sizes are small. There is no way we can socially distance. I am very fearful of what will happen.

Brittany meers brittany.meers@gmail.com

Hello - I'm emailing a comment/question in hopes of hearing it addressed at tonight's meeting or sometime soon. I teach at a high school in Dr. Kolb's area and live in Ms. Porter's area of Jefferson County.

I would really like some on-the-ground information about what high school classrooms look like in schools that have been opened successfully. The plans to have everyone sit facing one direction and limit movement to set pathways - does that mean that any kind of lab or group work is not possible to do safely? What do we know has been working? Since schools across Kentucky HAVE been in session, I would really like more specific guidance.

While I mean no disrespect to the hardworking administrators at the high schools who are doing their best with the information provided.... my school's entire school plan for classrooms related to instruction (not movement) is:

- Teacher delivers instruction from front of class, at least 6 feet away from students
- Instruction and materials delivered via Google Classroom to student devices

Another high school plan says simply:

• Teachers will receive training/feedback on appropriate class activities.

For another high school, the only relevant classroom teaching guidance is:

• Students will not share items (colored pencils, rulers, pens, etc.)

I do not understand why we do not have more help and guidance about how to conduct our classes effectively and safely based on other districts' experiences. Each school's administrators (and certainly not each individual teacher) should not be left guessing what will and won't work. We should have HELP and we should get it SOON.

Also - many classroom teachers at the high school level used computers on a daily basis for instruction. I personally had conducted several DonorsChoose projects to supply 15 chromebooks to use exclusively in my classroom (though I did share them with other teachers). My understanding is that all the district chromebooks have been issued to students (which is appropriate and I am glad for)...but how do we follow my school's guidance that "instruction and materials will be delivered via Google Classroom to student devices" if we do not have computers?

At least at the high school level, can we expect that students will bring their own devices? I can conduct group work safely while collaborating on digital projects, but if there are no computers then our options for effective instruction are greatly restricted.

It is February and we are talking about returning to school buildings, but I would really appreciate having some actual DATA from WORKING CLASSROOMS about what this should look like for safety AND for classroom instruction.

Barbara Bennett

Hello,

Why is the district not requiring students to bring devices when they return in-person?

Students have built relationships with teachers since August. If a student chooses virtual, why give them another teacher for the remaining months of school? It seems it would be better to stay NTI instead of uprooting the students.

Do parents realize instruction time will be lost with returning in person? Teachers will have to take time to teach safety procedures which could take more time for younger students. Walker <theewalkers@gmail.com>

If vaccinations are the motivation for a return to in person learning, I would like to address recent reports that say just because you are vaccinated doesn't mean you still can't spread the disease. I also think the rush to use elementary teachers as Guinea pigs is scary. Keep everyone home and safe until more people can get the vaccine and one is approved for children.

Jennifer Noah

Special Ed teacher

https://www.kentucky.com/news/local/education/article249099280.html Noah, Jennifer N jennifer.noah@jefferson.kyschools.us

I have never done this before but feel that it is time to let someone know how I am feeling about returning to the building in the middle of a pandemic. I am completely stressed and worried.

I am worried for my own family and potentially bringing the virus home to them. I am worried about the kids taking the virus home to their families. I am worried about visiting my own parents in case I am carrying the virus. I am worried about the students not bringing devices back to school and if they do then how will jcps wifi be able to carry all the devices. Our wifi is completely out of date. I am also worried about the students writing with paper/ pencil and then Having to collect these assignments to grade. I think the logistics of eating in the classroom and having special area in the classroom are going to cut into my duty free lunch and planning time. I think the logistics of keeping the classroom cleaned and sanitized is just one more thing that will be added to the teacher in our already overworked and underpaid day. Mentioning cleaning, teachers already buy soap, sanitizing wipes, etc for our classrooms. I think it is absurd to expect us to really sanitize our rooms the way they should be. We will not be able to afford this task. The buses at full capacity as long as everyone is wearing a mask? Are you serious? Our classrooms are poorly ventilated with most not having a window (at least at my school). How is it safe to shut the door (for state law) and teach 25 students who are already not going to be 6 feet apart due to the size of our classroom. I think returning to school is absolutely the last thing our students need. What about teachers that are called in the middle of the day for our own children? Who will cover our classrooms? We have a number one obligation to take care of them first. I can continue on and on with all the things that are worrisome with this plan. Thank you for hearing my thoughts.

Bennett, Candace L candace.bennett@jefferson.kyschools.us

Good evening,

As a 3rd grade teacher in JCPS, I want to voice my opinion regarding the possible return to school.

I believe we should not return at this time for the following reasons:

- *likely 2 weeks of learning will be lost as we instead "teach" the children routines, procedures, and expectations
- *this transition should be save for the beginning of the year, when we expect to spend the time on those types of instructions
- *students are in a routine. ALL of my 3rd graders come to live meets, turn in their work, and interact with me via chats, email, or the GC stream. Taking them out of routine for 8 weeks is ridiculous at this point.
- *Virtually, students receive small group instruction (7 students max), meeting their exact needs from me. Return to school takes away this small group instruction/individualized instruction.
- * students who have been with their parents for the last year will likely struggle with separation anxiety. Why would we put students through this for a return of 8 weeks, or possibly shorter, if students have to quarantine?

In addition, I do not believe there should be a return until there are specific answers to some very important questions.

- 1. If a student in my class is exposed to COVID/is diagnosed with COVID, does the entire class quarantine? How does this work if you are departmentalize and have a team teacher who stays at school?
- 2. If I must quarantine due to another colleague or student COVID exposure, how will those days be covered? I do not believe that I should be required to take my sick days, when I am not the one sick.
- 3. If 98% of my students return, how do I separate them 6 feet when my room is not big enough? What happens when a parent tries to sue because my students are not 6 feet apart from one another, and their child became sick?
- 4. When there are not enough staff members to cover individual classrooms in the morning (before my contractual hours), or the afternoon, will the district provide that staff? I should not be "expected" to arrive early or stay late, even with extra pay, as I have my own family to attend to before and after hours.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration, Medina Dean

Dean, Medina P medina.dean@jefferson.kyschools.us