



JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of Special Meeting of February 23, 2021

Special Meeting of the Jefferson County Board of Education held via Video Teleconference on Tuesday, February 23, 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.

Kevin Brown, General Counsel

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

I. Call to Order

Chair Porter called the February 23, 2021, Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 6:01 p.m.

Chair Porter made the following remarks:

“Tonight's meeting is devoted to hearing from medical experts from our community. Yesterday, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) released an additional 136-page document to guide districts returning to in-person instruction. The Kentucky House is considering a bill regarding legal requirements for districts engaged in non-traditional instruction and late today we learned that the Governor has further addressed a return to in-person instruction with an executive order.

As chair of the Board, I will be calling a special meeting of this Board for Thursday evening, February the 25th to be devoted to voting upon a return to in-person instruction. The additional 48 hours from tonight will give the Board and the community additional time to review and digest tonight's information as well as the other recent information from the legislature, the Governor, and KDE. Because of this, I am asking all Board members to refrain from making motions during tonight's meeting since we will have ample time on Thursday to discuss and debate the larger question of returning to schools.”

II. Update on District Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Discussion of Center for Disease Control (CDC) Guidance

Dr. Sarah Moyer, Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness, Chief Health Strategist; Dr. Mark Burns, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Infectious Diseases, University of Louisville; Dr. Jason Smith, Chief Medical Officer for University of Louisville Health; and Dr. Monalisa Taylor, Internal Medicine, Norton HealthCare; were available to answer questions that Board members had regarding the new Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance and other health-related issues.

Dr. Shull asked if vaccinated individuals could spread the virus to others. He then expressed concern with resuming in-person classes and stated that here in Louisville and across the Nation, the black community has suffered severely because of COVID. He discussed disparities in the black and brown communities and stated that he was concerned that in-person classes will not only negatively impact Louisville as a community but specifically, negatively impact the black community.

Ms. McIntosh asked questions regarding: the six-foot social distance recommendation; where the locations of most COVID cases in Jefferson County have been contracted; how JCPS can learn from other's mistakes; and early COVID-19 symptoms in children.

Mr. Marshall asked questions regarding: the variants coming out and what mitigation efforts will be required as the virus continues to mutate; the spread of the virus and the chances of teachers taking the virus home; symptoms after vaccination and long COVID-19; and the health and safety of pregnant employees. He concluding by asking the physicians if they could offer reassurance, from a medical standpoint, that it would be possible to bring students back into the building and successfully educate them.

Mrs. Duncan asked questions regarding: community infection rates and hot spots; the meaning of *strict adherence* as it is referenced in the new CDC Guidelines; spacing requirements on a non-hybrid elementary school schedule; and the possibility of returning to in-person learning while continuing sports and extracurricular activities.

Mr. Craig asked questions regarding: the timing for the return of vaccinated JCPS employees; the best way for the Board to make a decision based on community rates of infection – looking at the CDC chart/guidelines and the State chart/guidelines; and elementary school density on a non-hybrid model.

Dr. Kolb expressed frustration and stated, “We just got these CDC guidelines 11 days ago, we just got 136 pages of guidelines from the State three days ago, and now in two days we are supposed to vote on a reopening plan. That does not seem to be a recipe for wise decision-making.” He asked the physicians to explain why they feel like the city is doing enough to control the community spread. He referenced data from medical and scientific journals and asked them to explain why we should not heed medical advice and remain fully virtual. He asked Dr. Pollio if his proposal would be in line with the CDC and State guidance.

He concluded by saying, "I have a real problem if we're going to be asked to consider a proposal that we know, based on the evidence, is more likely to make people sick and lead to more death and dying amongst our staff students and community. So, I'm not interested in looking at a proposal that is not in line with CDC guidance or the state guidance."

Chair Porter stated that there is a sense of uneasiness for some of our students to return to school in the international population and in the community that she represents which is largely black and brown students. She asked how they could build trust in the community about returning to school. She then discussed classroom sizes and asked what would be the appropriate number of desks for classrooms.

III. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Order #2021-37 - Motion Passed: A motion to adjourn the February 23, 2021, meeting passed with a motion by Mr. James Craig 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**



JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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.

Public Comments

Children need interaction with other children, socialization. I will support kids back in school and their teachers.

Amy

Just my opinion but I feel schools should remain with NTI for remainder of this school year. I work at a school and really miss the normality of seeing the staff, the students and the way it WAS. Rationale though is that we have some staff who feel they don't need to take vaccine because others are. If everyone felt that way, we would get nowhere. With that in mind, the new variant of the virus hitting the states, I feel the more time we are able to minimize the chances of spreading the covid virus the better. Students are accustomed to the NTI for now (even though it may not be their favorite), another 3 months is little time in comparison to the risk of spreading the virus to others.. The time to get a student used to the in school procedures is anywhere from 2 weeks to 2 months. Throw in there a week off for spring break and it's like starting all over again. I too have a grandchild who is a first grader and I feel for her missing out on so much that is typically taught and experienced in a normal classroom. And the stress of her mother working at home and trying to help her is a major burden. But better a burden for an additional 3 months with a light at the end of the tunnel returning to school next year, with more people vaccinated and less likely to spread covid. Let's keep NTI in place and survive this year to come back stronger next year. This is just my opinion but I felt it worth sharing.

Ginny Marean

We are looking at numbers as if a few kids here and there testing positive is not a big deal. The long lasting effects of COVID are still being discovered. Perfectly healthy athletes that contract the virus are now having lasting heart conditions! "It is not yet known whether COVID-19's effects on the heart could cause permanent damage or might resolve on their own," says Dr. Sealove. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health agencies are continuing to review data as it emerges.

Kids may "get over" the disease quickly but we don't know the long term risks that they may encounter as a result of contracting COVID. How can we say students and staff should return with even the possibility that they may develop life threatening long term effects?

We also have yet to point out to parents of ECE students that their child will not be getting small group instruction or one on one instruction in the building. However they have been getting that one on one instruction virtually.

Thank you,

Karina McCracken