

North Boone Community Unit School District No. 200

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the
Board of Education

Virtual

Monday, December 21, 2020
6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Joe Haverly.

Present: Brian Haselhorst (6:36 p.m.), President Joe Haverly, Vice President Tom Kinser, Lisa Leden, Secretary Mary Maxey, Ed Mulholland and Carl Rudy.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Kinser and seconded by Mrs. Maxey to approve the Agenda as presented.

The motion was carried by unanimous roll call.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

Mrs. Tracy Schabacker addressed the Board regarding concerns received from her colleagues that wished to remain anonymous. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. She asked how staffing will be addressed regarding exposure and quarantines. She mentioned some staff were concerned with our District being compared to others when our Covid rates are higher than Winnebago County. Teachers would like to use the science and metrics, and noted the Boone County metrics have been rising in the past week. Mrs. Schabacker stated her colleagues want students back in classrooms, but have differences of opinion on how to do that safely.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Return to School Plan

- Hard Start – January 4, 2021
- District-wide Personnel Risks
- Review of Current MOU's
- Review of FMLA and Leave of Absence Requests and Waivers
- Plan for Full Day Instruction Pre-K through 12 by January 19, 2021
- Plan for Targeted Assistance post Hard Start Date of January 4, 2021
- Thresholds for Future Returns to E-Learning
- Communications to Parents
- Communications with District
- Equity Between Remote and In-Person
- Future Plans
- Union Input

Dr. Greenlee stated he brought up the possibility of a hard start at the last meeting. A presentation was prepared to address a list of topics requested by the Board. Mrs. Neri provided an overview of in-person and remote instruction models. Three options were presented. Option 1: Hard Start where all grade levels return in-person on January 19th. Option 2: Accelerated Phase-In Plan with Phases 1 and 2 starting on January 11th and Phases 3 and 4 starting on January 19th. Option 3: Follow previously approved Targeted Assistance and Phase-In Plan. All options would use the same in-person and remote instruction model for students. The instructional model goals provide as much equity as possible between remote instruction and in-person instruction, avoid simultaneous remote and in-person instruction as much as possible, avoid teacher changes for younger students, and have realistic and balanced workloads for staff.

Ms. Geyman addressed the forecast for personnel. She stated the FFMLA act expires December 31st, so going forward if a staff member has a medical condition, they can apply for accommodations under the ADA. She reviewed current open positions, budget impacts for a leave of absence and remote teaching options.

Dr. Greenlee said they will continue to monitor health metrics and trends, and work collaboratively with the BCHD. They will also continue to use flu tracker and monitor Covid outbreaks and spreads.

Dr. Greenlee and the Administration recommended Option 1 with a hard start for all grade levels on January 19th, and felt confident they can follow ISBE and IDPH guidelines and work in collaboration with the BCHD to monitor internal metrics. The proposed schedule for each grade level would be as follows:

Poplar Grove / Capron / Manchester: Pre-K - 4th Grade

In-Person – Pre-K students will be on an alternating schedule each week, with K-4 students will attend mornings on Tuesday - Friday. In-Person instruction will include reading, writing, and math with their current homeroom teacher. In the afternoon, students will engage remotely in music, art, and PE.

Remote - Students will participate in all classes through Google Meet. In the morning, students will engage in music, art, and PE. In the afternoon, students will engage in reading, writing, and math with their current homeroom teacher.

All students will be remote on Monday. Teachers will provide asynchronous activities and small group instruction for students; teachers will have remote planning time in the afternoon.

Upper Elementary / Middle School: 5th - 8th Grade

In-Person - Students will follow an A/B Cohort schedule. Students will attend class in person two days each week. Students will attend class remotely for two days a week.

Remote - Core classes: Students will be scheduled into a remote learning class period. Teachers will teach this class period through Google Meet.

Exploratory classes / Special Education classes: Due to scheduling constraints, remote only sections may not be possible for all Special Education classes. Exploratory classes will all have to be taught simultaneously to both Remote and In-Person students. These teachers may have to teach remote students and in-person students simultaneously.

All students will be remote on Wednesday (C Day). Teachers will provide virtual interventions and supports in the morning; teachers will have remote planning time in the afternoon.

High School: 9th - 12th Grade

In-Person - Students will be split into two cohorts and attend a block schedule. Each cohort will attend in-person twice a week until 12:48.

Remote - Remote students and the at-home cohort will attend classes remotely in the afternoon. Only remote students will attend on Wednesdays for half the day, and teachers will use the afternoon for remote planning. NBHS teachers will teach these classes through Google Meet.

Mr. Mulholland asked if we were waiving metrics and the past decision making plan, why we wouldn't return on January 4th, and move forward to full day instruction on January 19th. He asked if they could expect the plan to change again. Dr. Greenlee stated when Targeted Assistance passed in November, they were hoping they could implement those phased in plans soon. He feels the natural instructional flow to bring students back would be at semester.

Mrs. Neri explained they would add a 6th class for every grade 5-8 teacher and change the schedules at 2nd semester. Mr. Haselhorst was in agreement with the plan, and wished to work toward getting students back in school full time.

Dr. Greenlee also noted the state requires us to continue to offer remote learning this year as well. Mr. Mulholland asked why we can't synchronously teach in-person and remotely at the same time. Dr. Greenlee said he had heard of negative impacts to teachers by teaching both synchronously.

On the topic of MOU's, Dr. Greenlee will be meeting with NBEA leadership on 12/28/20 on the impact of Federal legislations. Mr. Haverly thought they should consider opening up the MOU and discuss a new deadline for people to apply for leaves. Mr. Kinser felt an MOU was an executive session topic, as it was a bargaining piece. He felt it was inappropriate to bring up contract language and discussions in open session. Mr. Haverly said this is a pivotal aspect to getting the vote passed.

Mr. Mulholland wanted to know why we weren't going to move toward the goal of full day instruction. Dr. Greenlee said he would have those discussions at the Administrative level. Mr. Mulholland would like to have Board goals, then task Administration to bring back solutions. Mr. Mulholland stated he was not in favor of being surprised at a public Board meeting.

Mr. Haverly asked if we should bring back the RTS Committee in case we may need to return to remote learning. Dr. Greenlee spoke with the BCHD and they will support bringing students back if we follow the guidelines of the IDPH and ISBE. Mr. Haselhorst felt the BCHD and nurses should stay involved in making the decision. Mr. Kinser said his view of the metrics has evolved, is comfortable with the way the Superintendent has described the situation and feels it is a more appropriate use of metrics. Mr. Mulholland requested one final vote on the plan for the remainder of the school year.

Mr. Rudy asked about equity in minutes of instruction for in-person and remote learning. Mrs. Neri suggested an end of year curriculum review, but they have not yet developed a way to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning platforms. Mr. Rudy asked if we were receiving feedback on the pacing of instruction and the way our students are learning. Dr. Greenlee will work with the principals to obtain feedback on their informal teacher observations. Mr. Mulholland said last Tuesday night was grossly unfair and feels like a line was crossed in surprising the Board. He felt the community had information before the Board received it, and feels like a Board agreement was violated. Mr. Haverly fears the Board seems to be keeping Dr. Greenlee and his Administration from implementing their plans. Mr. Haselhorst encouraged the Administration to keep working to get kids in full time when possible and expects changes as the situation is fluid.

A motion was made by Mr. Haselhorst and seconded by Mr. Rudy to approve Option 1 of the hard start return to school plan on January 19, 2021 as presented.

Mr. Haverly asked for discussion. Mr. Mulholland asked why stop here and not open this up to a different process. He said this is clearly not working, and this must appear like chaos. Mr. Rudy asked if it was the process or hard start that was concerning, and feels we need to find a more constructive way to pivot quickly, as the Board is not structurally set up that way with monthly meetings. Mr. Rudy was not opposed to giving the Administration team more autonomy to make these decisions as merited, but was sympathetic with Mr. Mulholland as we could again be putting in effort without results. Mr. Haverly said it is his desire to move out of the way and feels like the Board is looked at like a road block to Dr. Greenlee's plan. Mr. Rudy asked Mr. Mulholland if modifying the motion would help. Mr. Mulholland would like to set a goal that we want kids back full time and, with the staff feeling free and safe to come back. He doesn't feel like we have been served well by the BCHD based on their moving the bar on the metrics.

Mr. Haverly asked how Dr. Greenlee went from following protocol to throwing that out last Tuesday. Dr. Greenlee said he worked with Administration and the BCHD to figure out what is best for students. Mr. Rudy commented that it makes sense to acknowledge the mechanics from the last few meetings are not something they like to see repeated. He would like us to make a commitment to revisit this situation as soon as possible. Mr. Mulholland would like to see a more goal oriented approach as an important line had been crossed. He felt there has been damage done to the Board and Administration relationship, and it may manifest in the future. Mr. Haverly thinks we should bring more staff on board and would like to see Dr. Greenlee bring more plans.

Ayes: Mr. Haselhorst, Mr. Kinser, Mrs. Leden, Mrs. Maxey and Mr. Rudy
Nays: Mr. Haverly and Mr. Mulholland
The motion passed 5-2 with no abstentions.

Mr. Mulholland would like to Board to lay out their plans and goals and provide them to the Administration to execute those plans. He does not want more plans presented. Mr. Mulholland would like to see the Board dictate a plan and let someone else figure out how to execute the plan, instead of having a plan presented to the Board. Mr. Haverly asked Dr. Greenlee for his intentions on bringing any other plans. Mr. Kinser thought Mr. Mulholland wished not to have more plans presented, yet others want more plans, which seems to be sending mixed messages to the Administration.

OTHER ITEMS

Mr. Rudy wanted to publicly give thanks to the bus drivers and cafeteria staff for the lunches and the artwork on the lunch bags.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Haselhorst and seconded by Mrs. Maxey to adjourn at 8:48 p.m.
The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

PRESIDENT _____

SECRETARY _____

APPROVED: