

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING AUGUST 10, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District met in regular session, pursuant to law on August 10, 2020.

Members Present: President, Nicole Bunch; Vice President Ralph DiCesare; Dawn Reeves, Jennifer Held and Jeff Bowlin and together with Superintendent, Tom Wood, Secondary Principal, Mr. Moser; Elementary Principal, Ms. Happe; and Business Manager, Jill Gavin.

I. Welcome – Board President

Mrs. Bunch called meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed all guests.

II. Consent Items

Mrs. Reeves motioned to approve the consent items, seconded by Mr. Bowlin. Roll call: 5 ayes.

III. Public Comments

Ms. Happe announced that we are starting our second week of the Jump Start program. We had 67 kids attend the program last week and we are scheduled to have 68 students to attend this week. All the students have been super happy to be here. Masks have been worn by all the students and staff. They each had their own supplies and disinfectants, we had scheduled bathroom breaks, and rooms were cleaned before and after. The teachers have also adapted easily. Ms. Happe applauded the teachers for getting their classes ready. Their summer was not the same but they stepped up and were committed to our kids.

Mr. Moser announced that we had 40 students attend the Jump Start. This gave us the chance to see what the day will look like when school starts. Rooms were cleaned, supplies were brought home from home, no complaints about wearing masks or about any of the other changes we had in place. Teachers were happy to be back and been very successful with how they were prepared. The teachers made this a worthwhile experience. A number of the teachers took on the responsibility to train and coach their peers on new technologies. It was definitely beneficial for our Leadership Team. Mr. Moser thanked the school board for their support and to the parents for their patience.

Mr. Moser recognized the successful seasons of our softball and baseball teams. Congratulations to the softball team for their successful season and to the baseball team for making it to the State Tournament again.

Thank you to the maintenance staff for taking care of a lot of extra requests this summer to prepare for the Jump Start program. All the classrooms were cleaned and ready to go.

Mr. Wood thanked our teachers and principals. Everyone has worked well beyond their contracts and it is very much appreciated.

IV. Presentation

Mr. Wood introduced Laurie Abernathy from the HEAL House of Iowa for Warren County. This program has been around for 3 years now. They have created the ELF program that supplies hats, gloves, coats, to families in need. They purchased the Woods motel and have living quarters and 12 rooms that were remodeled. They have taken care of 80 people and spent \$30K over the last year. Their goal is to have a location in every community within Warren County to help our youth in need. The board thanked Laurie for her presentation.

V. Public Comments

Heidi Kleve, 4874 Johnson St, Prole

Heidi shared the feedback of her two children that attend MStM. They supported recommendation for in person learning would like to make the wearing of masks optional.

Zach Tibbits, 430 Iowa St, St. Charles

Does not support the wearing of masks.

Sara Hawk, 16392 R45 Hwy, St. Charles,

Discussed topics related to mask wearing and transmission among children.

Mrs. Bunch read two public comments

Drennan Fisher – supporting mask requirements

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VI. Old Business

A. Presentations

1) Facilities Report

Mr. Christensen

Mr. Christensen updated the projects going on in the building. Doors have been replaced on two of the three entrances. The preschool and 2nd grade entrances will be done before school starts. Rooms are completed and the hallways are almost done. There are new tables and chairs for the 2nd grade classrooms and new tables for the 3rd grade classrooms. We have been ordering PPE all summer long and are ready to start the new school year.

1) Elementary Report

Ms. Happe

Ms. Happe informed the board about the professional learning that happened over the summer. Teachers have been mentored on Google classroom and if we have to jump into remote learning again, we are in a way better spot then we were back in March. The teachers will also be learning how to use their webcams for in the classroom instruction.

2) Secondary Report

Mr. Moser

Mr. Moser has worked with teachers in small groups to learn how to utilize the different equipment and technology and how to maximize instruction time. It is definitely not going to look the way it has before. We are using all of our resources and time as it relates to instruction and online learning.

3) Superintendent Report

Mr. Wood

I want everyone to know how difficult the last 5 months have been on all of us-as educators, parents, and school leaders. We prepare for nearly every imaginable disaster. We have written plans that are reviewed and revised every year. Drills take place and we teach our students how to respond. No matter the crisis that we plan for, we always have experts who guide that planning and provide best-practice solutions for us to use. This pandemic is not like any of that. We are being forced to make decisions with conflicting guidance, changing rules, and there are strong opinions on both sides of every issue. To say this is something we expected or planned for is an understatement. A year ago at this board meeting we were sharing exciting news of summer projects completed and looking forward to welcoming students back. Today we are making decisions that none of us saw coming. I understand that there are strong opinions on both sides of the decisions ahead of us, but please bear in mind that all we want to do is keep our students, staff, and families safe and give us the best shot at keeping school open for in-person learning.

Previously the board approved our Return to Learn Plan with the three possible models of instruction: on-site (in-person), hybrid (every other day attendance to limit the number of students in the building), and continuous (or remote) learning. My recommendation is that we return to on-site, in-person learning which was supported by 67% of respondents to the parent survey that we reviewed last month. Since the initial plans were established and shared we received further guidance that parent choice for remote learning should be provided, and we believe that parents should have a choice if they are not comfortable sending their kids to school or have a medical reason for keeping them home. Providing both in-person and online learning is providing challenges for us. Bigger districts have been able to condense classrooms and free up teachers who are dedicated to providing the online instruction. We do not have that luxury, so our teachers are going to have to do both if they have students who are staying home.

Unlike the spring voluntary learning this will look different. Teachers have been provided with webcams, and they will be providing real-time or recorded lessons for students at home. This will be combined with independent learning activities, online activities, and daily correspondence. We recognize the family schedules may not allow for some students to be online at certain times, so we are working to make sessions viewable at their own convenience. All of this is new for our teachers, and we are focusing all professional development this summer through August on technology and teaching in multiple environments. Remote learning will not be just like a regular school day at home. It will be a combination of teacher led instruction and independent work to reinforce skills and concepts.

We have asked families to choose in-person learning or remote learning for a quarter at a time. We will be flexible with families. The quarter at a time decision was made to allow us to properly plan for students learning remotely and to prevent kids from bouncing back and forth between models. If a family starts one way and finds it is absolutely not working for them, we will allow them to change.

Once we finalize plans tonight, more details on remote learning will be shared with families. We are also designing a Return to Learn Summary that will be sent to parents and posted to our website.

2-week positivity rate:

Warren: 6%

Madison: 9%

Families opting for remote learning as of 8/10/20:

11 families/20 students

Neighboring District Decisions on Masks/Face Coverings:

I35: Required for adults. Required for students with breaks when social distancing can be maintained.

Winterset: Required for all staff and visitors. Recommending masks for students and have included language that states all students are required to have masks and may be required to wear them when social distancing isn't possible. Masks will be required on buses and in certain areas.

Norwalk: Required for all adults. Required for students when social distancing cannot be maintained. Norwalk considering a hybrid model with less 50% kids attending but not likely to go this route.

Indianola: Required for all adults. Required for students in grades 6-12.

Rationale for masks

Social distancing cannot be maintained in many settings within the school even with proper planning. Furniture has been removed from classrooms, and desks/tables have been rearranged. Public health entities are recommending masks while in school. We have vulnerable children and staff members, as well as family members of each group, that could face dire consequences if they contract COVID-19.

Wearing masks gives us the best chance to keep school in person while protecting students, staff and families. I feel fortunate that we are able to start in-person; wearing masks is a mitigation effort to allow us to continue to have school as normally as possible.

The benefits of wearing a mask are limited if kids cannot wear them appropriately: limit touching, covering face and nose.

Mask Exceptions

Medical reasons and other special needs

3-year-old preschool will likely not be required. Other preschoolers will be able to wear a mask or kid-sized face shield if a mask is unable to be worn.

V. New Business

A. Discuss/Approve Final Return to Learn Plan and Safety Requirements

Supt. Wood

Mr. Bowlin asked Mr. Wood about the last letter that mentioned that wearing masks were going to be mandated. He hasn't seen a mandate from the CDC and Warren County Public Health. Mr. Wood confirmed that we are not saying that wearing masks are mandated. Mr. Bowlin asked about pre-entry temperature checks. Mr. Wood provided that the problems of doing this. If we required students to use one entrance only to check temperatures, this would cause long lines and extra time. The district will be asking parents to please check temperatures before their child leaves home.

Final Return to Learn Proposal and Procedures

School will begin in-person on August 24:

- Parents may opt for remote (online learning) for one quarter at a time
- Iowa Department of Public Health guidelines will be used to help guide the school in making decisions to move to one of the alternative models of instruction
- Warren County Health Services will advise on case activity, procedures related to positive cases, and recommendations based on the situation

Procedures within the Building

- Face coverings (nose and mouth) are required to be worn in school buildings by students and staff in grades PK-12 when physical distancing is difficult or not possible (mask breaks, recess, physical education, and other times identified by MStM will be mask-free). *
 - Accommodations will be made for students with legitimate medical, religious, or disability-related needs
 - Students are encouraged to bring their own masks but the district will provide washable cloth face coverings for each student if needed.
- Physical distancing will be practiced when possible
- Classrooms rearranged to promote physical distancing
- Physical barriers may be used in office area and some classroom situations
- Alternative spaces, including outdoor space, will be used when feasible

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- Outdoor activities will be encouraged

Transportation

- Parents are encouraged to transport their own children if possible
- Transportation will have assigned seating and will require face covering for students and drivers
- Siblings will be seated together
- Students riding the bus will not be allowed to have guests ride with them

Mitigation and hygiene

- Hand sanitizer stations in common areas and hand sanitizer available in all classrooms
- Students will receive training on mask wearing, hand washing, and hygiene
- Frequent cleaning of high touch points and buses
- Extensive cleaning and disinfecting each night
- Frequent hand washing opportunities for students and staff
- Drinking fountains are closed – students are encouraged to bring reusable water bottles
- The nurse’s office will have areas for routine health services and separate area for sick students only
- Visitors access to the building will be restricted to necessary personnel and students
- When students need to be released early parents will call the school upon arrival and the student will be released

** Masks for students are recommended by the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, United States Department of Education, National Association of School Nurses, Iowa Department of Public Health, and Warren County Health Services*

Mrs. Reeves made the motion to approve the final Return to Learn Plan and safety requirements, seconded by Mr. DiCesare. Roll call: Ayes: Mrs. Bunch, Mr. DiCesare, Mrs. Reeves, and Mrs. Held. Nays: Mr. Bowlin.

B. Discuss/Approve 2nd Reading 409.1, 409.2, 409.2E1, 409.2E2, 409.3, 409.3E1, 409.3E2, 409.3R1, 409.3R2
Mr. DiCesare motioned to approve the 2nd reading, seconded by Mrs. Reeves. Roll call: 5 ayes.

C. Discuss/Approve 2nd Reading 414, 501.9, 501.9E1, 601.2, 604.11, 907, 907.R1
Mrs. Reeves motioned to approve the 2nd reading, seconded by Mrs. Held. Roll call: 5 ayes.

D. Discuss/Approve 2020-2021 Certified Employee Handbook Supt. Wood
Mr. Bowlin motioned to approve the 2020-2021 Certified Employee Handbook, seconded by Mr. DiCesare. Roll call: 5 ayes.

E. Discuss/Approve 2020-2021 Elementary Student Handbook Supt. Wood
Mrs. Held motioned to approve the 2020-2021 Elementary Student Handbook, seconded by Mrs. Reeves. Roll call: 5 ayes.

F. Discuss/Approve 2020-2021 Secondary Student Handbook Supt. Wood
Mr. DiCesare motioned to approve the 2020-2021 Secondary Student Handbook, seconded by Mrs. Reeves. Roll call: 5 ayes.

G. Discuss/Approve 2020-2021 Coaches Handbook Supt. Wood
Mrs. Held motioned to approve the 2020-2021 Coaches Handbook, seconded by Mrs. Reeves. Roll call: 5 ayes.

H. Discuss/Approve 2020-2021 Preschool Handbook Supt. Wood
Mrs. Reeves motioned to approve the 2020-2021 Preschool Handbook, seconded by Mrs. Held. Roll call: 5 ayes.

I. Discuss/Approve 2020-2021 Daycare Handbook Supt. Wood
Mr. Bowlin motioned to approve the 2020-2021 Daycare Handbook, seconded by Mr. DiCesare. Roll call: 5 ayes.

J. Discuss/Approve 2020-2021 Title I documents Supt. Wood
Mrs. Held motioned to approve the 2020-2021 Title I documents, seconded by Mrs. Reeves. Roll call: 5 ayes.

K. Discuss/Approve Foreign Exchange Students Supt. Wood
None to approve.

L. Discuss/Approve Personnel Resignations Supt. Wood
Mrs. Reeves motioned to approve the resignation of Justin Stoullil; Physical Ed Teacher and Dylan Gibson; JH Football Coach, seconded by Mr. DiCesare. Roll call: 5 ayes.

M. Discuss/Approve Personnel Recommendations Supt. Wood

Mr. Bowlin motioned to approve the recommendations for Danny Webster; Physical Ed Teacher and Dylan Gibson; HS Football Assistant Coach, seconded by Mrs. Held. Roll call: 5 ayes.

N. Confirm – Next Meeting Dates

Supt. Wood

The next board meeting will be held on September 14, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

Mrs. Reeves motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. DiCesare. Roll call: 5 ayes. Time: 5:02 p.m.

APPROVED

Board President

Business Manager