

ROCKFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS
Meeting Minutes
Corrected

Administration Building
Tuesday, August 11, 2020

President Kenneth Scrivano called the regular meeting of the Rockford Board of Education to order at 5:45 p.m.

Present: President Kenneth Scrivano, Vice President Tim Rollins, Secretary Jude Makulec, Mr. Anthony Dixon, Mr. David Seigel, Mr. Michael Connor, Ms. June Stanford

Absent: None

Motion by Mr. Connor seconded by Mr. Seigel that the Board **hold** an executive session to consider the appointment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees; student disciplinary cases; the placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students; collective bargaining matters; security procedures, school building safety and security; the purchase, sale or lease of real property; or other matters provided for pursuant to §2(c) of the Open Meetings Act.

Approved: 7-0-0

The Board was in executive session from 5:45 p.m. to 6:49 p.m.

1. Call to Order – President Kenneth Scrivano called the regular meeting of the Rockford Board of Education to order at 7:12 p.m.
2. Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
Present: President Kenneth Scrivano, Vice President Tim Rollins, Secretary Jude Makulec, Mr. Anthony Dixon, Mr. David Seigel, Mr. Michael Connor, Ms. June Stanford
Absent: None
Mr. Scrivano thanked Derek Eno who was filling in for Conner to produce the Board's broadcast on Channel 20, Zoom, and YouTube Live.
4. Petitions & Communications
Mr. Scrivano read the guidelines.
 - REA President Mel Gilfillan accompanied by REA Vice President Chad Anderson, spoke of the responses to a survey they sent, and asked the Board to consider remote learning for all students.
 - Colleen Blaney spoke of her concerns regarding Covid and asked the Board to consider remote learning.
 - Matt Hotopp spoke of compliance and safety regarding Covid and to consider remote learning.
 - Stephanie Valderrama spoke of social/emotional support for students and asked to consider remote learning.
 - Melisa Miramontes spoke of the risk to herself and supported remote learning.
 - Joanna Randall spoke of children testing positive for Covid and supported remote learning.
5. Board Member Comments
 - Mr. Connor asked Administration comment on the number of available open remote teaching positions, and the number of applicants. There were 120 elementary open positions with 20 applicants. Secondary remote teaching positions will only be available based on medical accommodations.
 - Mr. Rollins thanked teachers who have been working this summer for the start of the school year. He also spoke of the survey results mentioned in the public comments section. The results given were a little misleading. The survey asked if teachers were somewhat uncomfortable or very uncomfortable returning to school. The seventy percent (70%) figure was 70% of respondents. There are 2,000 teachers in the District, and 1,300 teachers responded. Out of 2,000 teachers, approximately 27% said they were very uncomfortable returning. There was another percentage that said they were somewhat uncomfortable. Everyone will be uncomfortable wearing a mask. What was not asked in the survey, "do you think we should go back to school?" "Do you want to go back to schools?" (Disclaimer; Mr. Rollins' wife is a teacher in the District.) Mr. Rollins challenged an educator to physically attend a meeting, and comment that remote learning is as affective as in-person learning. Board members are at the meeting, as education is a priority with everyone and that it is important. The subject needs to be talked about. He ended his comments with the following: *"So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself -- nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts*

to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days." The words are Franklin Roosevelt's words from his first inaugural address in the depths of the great depression. The point made is people can become paralyzed by fear and in doing so we cannot advance. He spoke of his concern that he feels that is the point where our country is in right now. The Administration and Board Members are listening to the experts, State, National, and most importantly local health experts. The Winnebago County Health Department, based on current numbers and trends (8/11/20), that opening schools is the correct thing to do.

- David Seigel spoke of sharing a common view of how fear is playing on decision making. Teachers took a survey some time back, and parents completed a more recent survey. The best input has been given at a time when it is extremely challenging, and anxiety filled. Things are difficult, every decision is challenging, and everyone is being asked to make very difficult decisions. Whatever decision is made about the return to school, there will be dire risks for students, teachers, and staff. There is not a clear cut blueprint in how to go forward, all safe and all secure. There is an Administration in cooperation with teachers, and health department, asking many questions, conducting a lot of research and application to create an infrastructure that may work for the greatest number of students and teachers. Mr. Seigel spoke of receiving messages regarding the optics of the School Board that won't meet face to face but was expecting students to. There was one meeting in July, while the region and State were under Phase 3, and not permitted to meet face to face. A meeting took place the previous week, and a greater bulk were in the building versus the number of students returning to school. The decisions being made through the optics of that particular lens is extreme, especially as all Board members are present in the building. Everyone is appropriately masked and prepared to defend and speak of individual positions on the plan going forward. It is his belief the Administration is prepared, and the next three weeks need to be viewed as an opportunity to make educated decisions on what is the best way to meet the needs of the greatest number of students.
- Mr. Connor mentioned the appropriate time to comment about the school year would be either the modified academic calendar item or during the Superintendent's Update.
- Mrs. Makulec spoke of her absence for the previous week's meeting. She publicly shared her husband's health issues and the importance of her staying as healthy as possible. She continued and explained why she was physically present at the meeting by doing three things the rest of the world is doing to stay safe; wearing a mask, meticulous handwashing, and social distancing. The District is doing what is necessary to keep everyone safe by following the guidelines. Board members and Administration are not health experts and are relying on them not just locally but nationally and internationally as to what to do to be safe. This will not go away in three months. Everyone will have to develop the habits that keep us safe and continue those for perhaps eighteen months. The best way for students to model those habits is for them to be in school, washing their hands, practicing social distancing, and to be careful with interactions. These guidelines can be enforced in the schools. Board members required more stringent enforcement of cell phone use in schools and it was a success in getting students focused on learning in the classroom. People have said that children can't be compelled to wear masks in the classroom; however, younger children do follow direction. It is more challenging for middle and high school students but there are consequences of not washing hands, social distancing, and either not wearing a mask or incorrectly wearing it. If the guidelines aren't followed, then students will have to change to remote learning. There is no perfect plan, but execution will be problematic but is very important to follow. Mrs. Makulec stated following these guidelines are very important. Unfortunately there may be students and probably teachers who do become ill, but the District can deal with this as the health department will assist the District in decisions that may need to be made. Students in the District deserve a chance, and 49% of parents want their students in school. She spoke to the availability of remote positions at the elementary level and the lack of applicants and of health concerns raised for secondary teachers and how they will be handled.
- Mr. Scrivano spoke of what he likes of the District's plan and the amount of work that was done administrators and teachers. This gives parents a choice. Mr. Scrivano is respectful of decisions parents want to make about their kids. There is also a choice for teachers, and they may apply for the remote positions.

6. *Consent Items

- A. Meeting Minutes 07-14-20
- B. Payroll
- C. Accounts Payable
- D. Purchase Orders
- E. Contracts Under \$10,000
- F. Construction Bid Request Log

7. *Other Consent
A. 2020-2021 Academic Calendar (Modified)
B. Workers' Compensation Settlement Agreement
C. Resolution Authorizing and Directing Preparation of Tentative 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Budget – Ms. Michele Sather, Executive Director of Budget
D. Monthly Cash and Investment Report – June 2020 – Jamie Murray – Executive Director of Finance
E. Freedom of Information Log

Motion by Mr. Connor seconded by Mr. Seigel to approve Consent items not pulled.

Approved: Unanimously

8. *Closed Session Consent Items

A. HR Organizational Report & Addendum

9. *Closed Session Consent Items – Student Discipline

Unless otherwise modified below, the Board adopts and accepts the Hearing Officer's findings and recommendations in the following cases in which students expelled or suspended are prohibited from being on school grounds and school-sponsored activities without the prior written permission of the principal.

A. GDM-4371-20 – expelled for the entire 2020-2021 school year

B. GDM-4372-20 – expelled for the entire 2020-2021 school year

10. Closed Session Consent Items – Student Discipline (EIAs)

A. GDM-8092-20

B. GDM-8157-20

C. GDM-8158-20

D. GDM-8159-20

E. GDM-8160-20

F. GDM-8161-20

G. GDM-8162-20

H. GDM-8163-20

I. GDM-8164-20

J. GDM-8165-20

K. GDM-8166-20

L. GDM-8167-20

M. GDM-8168-20

N. GDM-8169-20

O. GDM-8170-20

P. GDM-8171-20

Q. GDM-8172-20

R. GDM-8173-20

S. GDM-8174-20

T. GDM-8175-20

U. GDM-8176-20

V. GDM-8178-20

W. GDM-8179-20

X. GDM-8180-20

Y. GDM-8181-20

Z. GDM-8182-20

AA. GDM-8183-20

BB. GDM-8184-20

CC. GDM-8185-20

DD. GDM-8186-20

EE. GDM-8187-20

Motion by Mr. Connor seconded by Mr. Seigel to approve Closed Session Consent items not pulled

Approved: Unanimously

11. Superintendent's Report

A. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Jarrett

Dr. Jarrett ceded his time to Mrs. Dettman and the Back to School Plan, and to Mrs. Brooke Peterson and Dr. Blaiklock of K-12 Insight for the 2019-2020 School Quality Survey Results. He spoke that safety, equitable opportunity for achievement, and social emotional support are key tenets and interests that need to be balanced into the community.

The conversation will include the “Wednesday Plan.” Concerns were raised that there wasn’t social/emotional support for students. The “Wednesday Plan” will address this at the elementary and secondary levels. The District has made a commitment to work relentlessly to get class sizes below twenty and it is the belief this can be accomplished. The survey resulted in an even 50/50 parent choice. The District will continue to work with the health department, the State of Illinois and all their partners to ensure that daily meetings are focused on answering frequently asked questions for families and that the District has clear standards. The District is under the framework of the Winnebago County Health Department, Dr. Martel and their leadership, and the State of Illinois. Those are the groups deciding on the science whether it is okay to move forward with plans. Dr. Jarrett also spoke of having an Early Childhood remote learning option. This will be another choice for families. Dr. Jarrett reminded members that he had asked Mrs. Dettman to explain what the Wednesday intervention consists of as well as how the secondary schedule will appear.

B. Back to School Plan – Update

Mrs. Dettman presented the Back to School Plan to Board members beginning with the hybrid instructional model. Students will attend Monday and Thursday for in-person instruction consisting of 50 minute class periods. The is synchronous instruction which is students learning at the same time. Students will then participate in remote learning Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, for a minimum 5 hours of learning and a maximum of 50 minutes per class period. This will be asynchronous which means students learn at different times. Asynchronous instruction consists of digital tools; Google Tools, Padlet, Flipgrid, Screencastify, Newsela, Nearpod, OneTab, and Seesaw. The remote instructional model was reviewed. Students will participate Monday through Friday with Monday and Thursday asynchronous, a minimum of 5 hours of learning and maximum of 50 minutes per class period. Tuesday and Friday will be synchronous, 50 minute class periods on bells schedule. Wednesdays will be a mix of asynchronous and synchronous learning, a minimum of 5 hours of learning and maximum of 50 minutes per class period. Teacher will be teaching in-person two days a week. The bells schedule will run Monday and Thursday in the classroom, and with their remote students Tuesday and Friday. Wednesday instruction will be either in-person or remote intervention groups. These consist of literacy, numeracy, project-based support/work completion. Robust discussion continued after the presentation. Please click on the link to view the presentation [Back to School Plan - update.](#)

C. 2019-2020 School Quality Survey Results

Dr. Blaiklock presented the School Quality Survey results. The topics addressed are academic support, student support, school leadership, family involvement, safety and behavior, communications, and District initiative in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was kept open until the last day of school, June 3, 2020. Participation was greater this year than last year, with ninety percent of the responses in English and ten percent in Spanish. The overall school quality was compared between school levels, the highest excellent was in Early childhood, and lowest in high school. Academic support, student support, school leadership, family involvement, and safety and behavior had an increase. Each item was reviewed in detail. Highest and lowest ranking indicators were reviewed. The COVID-19 initiatives included device and connectivity, Chromebook delivery, Chromebooks, distance learning website, teacher lesson plans for students, school supplies, grab and go learning packets, and meal distribution. The school net promoter score increased one point from last school year to 24. More key insights were shared with members. To view the complete presentation, please click on this link [2019-2020 School Quality Survey.](#)

12. [Action Items](#)

A. United Way of Rock River Valley – Dr. Matthew Vosberg on behalf of Lincoln Middle School

Motion by Mr. Rollins seconded by Mr. Connor to **approve** item 12A, United Way of Rock River Valley

Approved: Unanimously

B. Resolution to Regulate Expense Reimbursements – Ms. Michelle R. Jahr, CPA, Chief Financial Officer

Motion by Mr. Connor seconded by Mr. Rollins to **approve** item 12B, Resolution to Regulate Expense Reimbursements

Approved: Unanimously

C. Digital Resource Management, Analytics, and Compliance – Jason Barthel, Chief Information Officer

Motion by Mr. Connor seconded by Mr. Rollins to **approve** item 12C, Digital Resource management, Analytics, and Compliance.

The staff was complimented for their work.

Approved: Unanimous

13. [Other Business/New Business/Agenda Recommendations](#)

[The Administration requests suspension of the rules so that restoration work can begin immediately.](#)

A. **Lewis Lemon Elementary School Fire Restoration – Michael Phillips, Executive Director of Facilities

Motion by Mr. Connor seconded by Mr. Seigel to **suspend the rules** to consider item 13A, Lewis Lemon Elementary School Fire Restoration

Approved: Unanimously

Motion by Mr. Connor seconded by Mr. Rollins to approve item 13A, Lewis Lemon Elementary School Fire Restoration.

The total cost of repairing the school is \$302,818.66 to clean the school and have it ready for the first day of school. Two of the perpetrators have been apprehended and are students in the District. The school team is following up with appropriate discipline for the students. The school was in process of getting painted and it was unfortunate this occurred.

Mr. Scrivano called for the vote.

Approved: Unanimously

The former vendor declared bankruptcy and the District needs a new Wellness vendor for the start of the 2020-2021 Fiscal year.

B. **Wellness Program Administrator – Assessment/Screenings

Motion by Mr. Connor seconded by Mr. Rollins to suspend the rules to consider item 13B, Wellness Program Administrator.

Approved: Unanimously

Motion by Mr. Connor seconded by Mr. Rollins to approve item 13B, Wellness Program Administrator.

The previous wellness provider filed for Chapter 7 Bankruptcy that left the District without a wellness provider. Due to the timing, this will be reduced to a self-assessment and the biometric screening. The provider will allow employees to pay a fee for a COVID-19 antibody test. The previous provider did not receive any payment from the District.

Mr. Scrivano called for the vote.

Approved: Unanimously

C. Formative – Benjamin Epperson, Executive Director of Curriculum

This replaces Performance Plus and is a multi-media digital assessment reporting tool. This allows District teacher to give formative assessments to students in real-time and provide feedback. It also provides accessibility of reports and data disaggregation for PLCs. This is accessible for hybrid and remote learning, in-person learners and remote learners using the same platform.

This will return for a vote at the August 25, 2020 meeting.

D. Q-Interactive/DALS – Mike Ryia, Director of Special Education

DALS (Digital Assessment Library for Schools) allows for unlimited access to all electronic online testing evaluation protocols for all related service providers. This allows assessments to be made using iPads on a one-on-one basis between students and clinicians. Updates will take place automatically. There will be two iPads per clinician; one for the student and one for the clinician.

This will return for a vote at the August 25, 2020 meeting.

E. Board Policy 7.30 Students; Residence; Student Assignment and Intra-District Transfer

Currently, Rockford Education Association (REA) members who are District residents may enroll their children at the school where they work. The District is asking the Board to allow the same privilege to administrators are District residents. Administration was asked to review the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) language to ensure the same language and limitations were the same in both.

This return for a vote at the August 25, 2020 meeting.

F. Board Member Action Steps

- Mr. Scrivano asked Board members if they have any detail questions on the Back to School plan to send those to Dr. Jarrett.
- Mr. Scrivano asked Legal to check policy 7.30 to ensure the language was the same as the MOU with the REA.

14. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Seigel seconded by Mr. Connor to adjourn.

Adjournment: 9:39 p.m.

Approved: 09/08/20

President: *Kenneth J. Scrivano /s/*

Secretary: *Jude B. Makulec /s/*