

HAMPTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
4591 SCHOOL DRIVE
ALLISON PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 15101
MARCH 29, 2021 MINUTES

The Hampton Township Board of School Directors met on Monday, March 29, 2021, in the Hampton Middle School Auditorium, 4589 School Drive, Allison Park, PA 15101. The Meeting was also livestreamed online.

Meeting

Attendance: Ms. Denise Balason, Mrs. Jill Hamlin, Ms. Joy Midgley, Mr. Greg Stein, Mr. Larry Vasko, Mrs. Trisha Webb, Mr. Bryant Wesley, Dr. Michael Loughead and Dr. Rebecca Cunningham, along with several District residents.

Attendance

Mr. Matt Jarrell was absent from the meeting. Mr. Robert Shages was absent at the time of roll call.

The meeting was called to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Wesley, President of the Board, served as Chairperson of the meeting. Dr. Rebecca Cunningham served as Recording Secretary.

Mr. Wesley opened the floor to Dr. Loughead for his presentation regarding the next steps of the Phased Reopening Plan.

Mr. Shages joined the meeting via teleconference.

Mr. Shages Joined
the Meeting

Dr. Loughead took the floor to discuss his presentation on the Phased Reopening Update. Dr. Loughead noted that the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) had released the current COVID-19 case data for the county late last week after the District had shared with the public the initial presentation planned for this evening. The latest ACHD report has a rise in positive COVID-19 cases which moved the county from the "Moderate" category back into the "Substantial" category. Dr. Loughead stated that with this new information, the District has had to amend tonight's presentation and the Reopening Plan for the secondary campuses.

Phased Reopening
Plan for Secondary
Campuses

Dr. Loughead provided an overview of his presentation. He stated he would like to cover the following areas:

- Historical Review of Secondary Instructional Models
- New CDC In-Person Instruction Update - March 19, 2021
- ACHD Transmission Update & Current Review of District Data
- Alternative 5-Day In-Person Proposal due to ACHD Data
- Health and Safety Plan Updates

Dr. Loughead reviewed the past year in regard to the District's Hybrid Models and return to in-person instruction. Dr. Loughead noted that in November the District had to sign an Attestation Agreement with Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to allow students to return to in-person instruction even while the county was categorized in the "Substantial" category. Dr. Loughead stated the Attestation provided guidelines and mandates for schools to adhere to in order to provide in-person instruction. Dr. Loughead stated that under these guidelines the elementary students were able to return to full in-

HAMPTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
4591 SCHOOL DRIVE
ALLISON PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 15101
MARCH 29, 2021 MINUTES

person instruction. Dr. Loughead noted that the secondary campuses could not accommodate the social distancing restrictions of the Attestation Agreement and continued to follow the Hybrid Schedule which was enhanced to provide more equitable time for in-person instruction between the student Pods.

Dr. Loughead stated that early in March the county data indicated a lower rate of virus spread. The lower rate of spread initiated an ease on some restrictions and guidelines and moved the county out of the "Substantial" category. Dr. Loughead stated that with the data released this past Friday which indicated a rise in positive COVID-19 cases the county was reverted back into the "Substantial" category. As such, the guidelines of the Attestation signed by the District with PDE would most like go back into effect. The guidelines of the Attestation along with the mandates for social distancing would impede upon moving the secondary campuses to full return to in-person instruction at this time.

Dr. Loughead noted that the CDC had updated their guidelines on March 19, 2021 reducing the need for social distancing from 6 feet to 3 feet among students. He noted that currently the recommendation to reduce social distancing to 3 feet would not be able to be facilitated due to the county's current high virus spread data. However, Dr. Loughead stated that the District did researched various ideas to help promote social distancing among the students at the secondary level in regard to the 3 foot guideline. He listed some of the proposed ideas including the utilization of tents for additional outdoor classrooms and eating spaces, moving gym classes outdoors, moving tables into the gymnasiums for provide additional lunch spacing.

Dr. Loughead stated that the current plan will be to continue to watch the ACHD county data. He noted that should the transmission rates decrease to below 100 cases/100,000 by April 9, 2021 then the District would host a Remote Learning Day to allow staff to set up classrooms for a full return to in-person instruction on April 12, 2021. Should the county transmission rates remain high, then the District will operate an Enhanced Hybrid Schedule the week of April 12, 2021. Dr. Loughead stated that data would be reviewed again the following Friday, April 16, 2021 with a possible return on Monday, April 19, 2021.

Dr. Loughead concluded his presentation with updates for the Health and Safety Plan. He noted that the District is requesting to change the masking requirements to stipulate the kinds of masks worn and to exclude the use of gaiters, bandanas or vented masks to reflect new guidance from the CDC. Dr. Loughead stated that in addition to the mask stipulations the District would be reducing the social distancing guidelines from 6 feet to 3 feet in all students return to full-time in-person instruction at the secondary campuses.

Mrs. Hamlin thanked Dr. Loughead and District Administration for the hard work invested in the presentation this evening and keeping the Board and public updated with the ever changing scenarios surrounding the pandemic and schools. Dr. Loughead thanked the teachers for their efforts during this trying year and ever changing guidelines. Mrs. Hamlin stated that there have been several meetings regarding the opening of schools. She noted how difficult this decision is as there is no concrete right or wrong answer as there are families on both sides of this decision.

HAMPTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
4591 SCHOOL DRIVE
ALLISON PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 15101
MARCH 29, 2021 MINUTES

Mr. Wesley opened the floor for public comment prior to voting on the amended motion.

Public Comment

Mr. Brooks Brady, District student addressed the Board. Mr. Brady first thanked the Board for permitting classes and activities such Band, Fall Play and the Musical this year during this unprecedented year. Mr. Brady expressed concern over the comparison of the return from Winter Break when the High School was forced to close for two days due to the number of active cases, and how this would compare with a full return of all students directly following Spring Break.

Postpone or Delay
Return of In-person
Instruction

Dr. Loughead addressed Mr. Brady, stating the District is proposing the first opportunity for full return to in-person instruction a week after the return from Spring Break. He noted that this decision was made by the District taking into account the spikes following previous breaks. He noted there may be the additional pause waiting a second week should the numbers remain high.

Mr. Brady, asked what measures is the District taking to ensure extracurricular events will be permitted this year such as the Musical, Graduation and Prom. Mr. Brady noted how last year these events were stripped from the seniors and how upsetting that was for them.

Ensuring
Extracurricular
Events For Spring

Dr. Loughead stated that the District is working hard to operate as safely as possible. However, there is no certainty during these times and though it is hard to think about it is the real possibility that Spring extracurricular events may be required to be cancelled if the transmission levels are too high. Mrs. Hamlin stated that the Board is struggling with these decisions for these very reasons. Mrs. Midgley addressed Mr. Brady stating if he could remind his fellow students to follow proper mitigation strategies that this would aid in keeping numbers low as well.

Mr. Brady inquired what data is available to show that bringing all students back to full in-person instruction would help to keep cases numbers low within schools.

Full Return Data
For Positive Case
Transmission

Dr. Loughead stated that there is no guarantee. He noted what is available is the CDC and all the data gathered and shared by them to support moving forward in this manner as a true possibility. Dr. Loughead stated that we also have the ACHD who continues to reassure districts that their transmittal rates remain very low.

Ms. Melissa Bradfield, District parent inquired about options or provisions for students whom do not feel safe with a full return to in-person instruction other than Hampton Online Academy as HOA does not offer Advanced Placement Courses.

Options for
Students That Do
Not Feel Safe In A
Full Return

Dr. Loughead stated that the District would be offering either a full return to in-person instruction or the option of Hampton Online Academy at this time. He stated that the Health and Safety Plan have only offered these options throughout the year and have done so successfully. Dr. Loughead stated that at this time there is no option for "Flex"

HAMPTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
4591 SCHOOL DRIVE
ALLISON PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 15101
MARCH 29, 2021 MINUTES

instruction which offers classes virtually.

Ms. Ava Puccio, District parent addressed the Board stating that there are a lot of extracurricular activities before the end of the year. However, she stated there are a number of students who are struggling with the Hybrid Model and need the structure of a full return. She noted the educational success of all the Hampton students should be the focus of the Board at this time and not these other events. Ms. Puccio thanked the Board for purchasing the desk shields which she feels when utilized with the masking has added greatly to lowering transmission rates in the buildings.

Children Struggling
with Hybrid Need
the Return to Full
In-Person
Instruction

Mr. Keith Essig, District parent addressed the Board inquiring about the initial plans discussed earlier this year of phasing in the 6th and 9th grade students prior to the entire student body. He noted that this would allow these students in the transition year the time needed in the classroom before moving on to the other grade levels.

Phasing in the 6th &
9th Grade Students
Initially

Dr. Loughead addressed Mr. Essig stating that at this time bringing back any students could potentially lead to additional positive cases and quarantines under current conditions. Dr. Loughead stated reviewing the weekly data if the case numbers are at a low rating then in would be beneficial to bring back all the students in a safe manner to provide the opportunity of full in-person instruction in lieu of a phased approach.

Mr. Essig inquired if the weekly data presented by the county for the transmittal rates was an actual count of positive cases or if the data includes the presumptive positive cases as well.

Transmittal Rates
From the County

Dr. Loughead stated that the District is provided with the weekly report by the state. He indicated that the county provides the state weekly with the data. Dr. Loughead stated he was not certain and would not want to misspeak but would look into finding the correct answer.

Mr. Craig Kaforey, District parent addressed the Board. Mr. Kaforey stated that it is his belief that the vast majority of parents and students at the secondary level would like to see a full return to in-person instruction. He noted that with the return there may be additional risks for quarantines but life is full of risks and the optimal goal as parents and as educators is seeking the best education for the children. His concern moving forward is the sense of negativity surrounding the return to full in-person instruction. Mr. Kaforey indicated that the Board and Administration should focus more on the positive aspects of returning to school full time than the negative aspects such as possible quarantines. Mr. Kaforey noted that many schools across the state both public and private are open to full instruction currently and are doing well.

Negativity
Surrounding Return
to Full In-Person
Instruction

Ms. Margie Conley, District parent addressed the Board. Ms. Conley stated that there is a focus on the disruptions and issues associated with quarantines should the students all return to the classrooms. However, she would argue that the Hybrid Schedule is already very disruptive. She noted that over the next few weeks out of a possible 13 school days her child would only be in the classroom 5 days and remote 7 days. She stated she would prefer the students return to the classroom, and would risk the need for temporary

Hybrid Program -
Disruptive

HAMPTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
4591 SCHOOL DRIVE
ALLISON PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 15101
MARCH 29, 2021 MINUTES

quarantines should there be the need. Mrs. Conley stated the students are basically quarantining already by following the Hybrid Schedule as the remote learning keeps them from the building multiple days a week to learn behind a computer. She stated it is time to choose life and return the students to the classroom.

Ms. Heather Paxton, District employee addressed the Board regarding a different schedule to provide continuity in the classroom as well as a way to reset the COVID case count per building each week. Ms. Paxton suggested that Fridays remain a Remote Learning Day weekly. She stated that the Remote Learning Day on Friday would aid in resetting the rolling 14 day count for active cases per building causing less shut downs for quarantine.

Fridays – Remote Learning Days, Reset Case Counts

Mr. Shawn McLean, District parent addressed the Board pushing for a return to the classroom. Mr. McLean stated that many students are struggling this year with the Hybrid Schedule and would benefit greatly by returning to the classroom fulltime. Mr. McLean noted that sports are continuing and that student athletes are far closer than the 6 foot social distancing requirement in competition. In addition, student athletes do not have the added protection of masks and desk shields that would be in place in the classroom. He stated the students should return to the classroom.

Students Struggle with Hybrid Schedule – Push to Return to Classroom

Mr. Brock Brady, District student again addressed the Board. Mr. Brady stated that the Hybrid Schedule has affected people differently and for him it has not been easy but academically his grades are currently A's and B's. He wanted to note that not everyone is failing courses at this time. Mr. Brady stated that the other word used this evening was "risk." He stated the "risk" of returning to the classroom is not worth it as millions have died from this pandemic, and while kids are less likely to be affected many of his friends do have immunocompromised family members. Mr. Brady stated in his opinion it was not worth the risk of returning to the classroom.

Continue with Hybrid Schedule – Not Worth the Risk Involved

Mr. Wesley addressed the public and stated that this is a forum to address the Board directly. He noted that this was not the arena for debates between the public. He reminded the public to address only the Board and only when they have the floor.

Reminder of Protocol for Public Comment

The following information was presented and/or action taken on items submitted by Mrs. Hamlin of the Educational Programs Committee.

Educational Programs

Upon motion by Mr. Stein, seconded by Mrs. Hamlin and carried unanimously by voice vote, the Board approved the Proposed Amended Reopening Plan as presented on March 29, 2021.

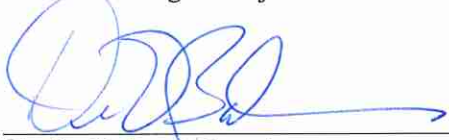
Amended Reopening Plan Approval

Upon motion by Mrs. Hamlin, seconded by Mr. Stein and carried unanimously by voice vote, the Board approved the Proposed Amended Health and Safety Plan.

Amended Health and Safety Plan Approval

HAMPTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
4591 SCHOOL DRIVE
ALLISON PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 15101
MARCH 29, 2021 MINUTES

Upon motion by Mr. Stein, seconded by Mr. Shages and carried unanimously by voice vote the meeting was adjourned.



Denise Balason, Secretary