

August 20, 2021  
Franklin, Tennessee

The Franklin Special School District Board of Education met in a Special Called Meeting on Friday, August 20, 2021 at Freedom Middle School, 750 New Highway 96 West, Franklin. A link to the recording may be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-uST0qX8ac> .

The following members were present: Chair Robert Blair, Alicia Barker, Allena Bell, Robin Newman and Kevin Townsel. Tim Stillings joined by electronic attendance in accordance with Board Policy 1.400.

*Others present were:* Dr. David Snowden, Dr. David Esslinger, Susannah Gentry, Amy Fisher, Celby Glass, Lisa Chatman, Mark Anderson, Drew Bingham, Carol Riordan, principals, community and media.

### **I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00.

### **II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Freedom Middle Principal Dr. Charles Farmer welcomed those in attendance and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Robert Blair called for a moment of silence.

### **III. PUBLIC INPUT**

Chairman Blair expressed appreciation from the Board for the emails, texts and calls over the past month and week, showing passion but also showing compassion for the Board members and others. The FSSD COVID team, the Williamson County Health Department and other entities have provided research for the Board's consideration. Public input was limited to 15 residents at 1 minute per resident.

1. Brandi McCutchan, 503 Braylon Circle – Mother of FES and FIS students and substitute, thanked the Governor for his Executive Order allowing parents to opt out of their child's wearing a mask and giving parents the choice.
2. Allyson Duardo, 8<sup>th</sup> grade class representative at FMS – Spoke in favor students and staff wearing masks.
3. Courtenay Rogers, 200 Royal Oaks Boulevard, Apt. A1 – Mother of FMS 8<sup>th</sup> grader, spoke in favor of wearing masks, in addition to being vaccinated, and promoting responsible citizenship.
4. Amanda Bradley, 1421 Southampton Court – Mother of FMS 8<sup>th</sup> grader and business owner, spoke in favor of continuing the mitigation protocol in place last year and wearing masks.
5. Rodney Aslinger, 1418 Clairmonte Circle – Father of PGES 2<sup>nd</sup> grader, spoke in favor of wearing masks.
6. Lisa Casey, 1003 Del Rio Court – Physical Education teacher at PGES and mother of PGMS student, teaches 10 classes a day in a mask, spoke in favor of masks optional and would like more data on quarantining.
7. Deidra Brock, 1009 Lawnview Court – Math coach at PGES and mother of PGMS student, gave early statistics for positive cases in our district, spoke in favor of masks optional.
8. Katie Swafford, 111 Cambridge Place – Mother of three children in FSSD and substitute last

- year, spoke against masks for children.
9. Ce'cile Laine', 396 Forrest Park Circle – Mother of children at MES and FMS, spoke in favor of wearing masks.
  10. Eric McCann, 1011 Murfreesboro Road, Apt. F2 – Spoke against a mask mandate.
  11. Dominique Vansiatky, 353 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue North – Mother of 2<sup>nd</sup> grader at JES, spoke in favor of a temporary mask mandate.
  12. Lance Shelby, 1220 Carnton Lane – Father of FES and FIS students, family of two working parents, thanked the Board for having children back in schools last year, spoke for having the responsibility of keeping yourself/family safe and no mask mandate.
  13. Lee Flatt, 253 Circle View Drive – Father of 3-year old with services, spoke in favor of a mask mandate.
  14. Chris Boles, 1051 Huntsman Circle – Doctor of Chiropractic, gave statistics for remaining healthy.
  15. Mindy Spradlin, 1525 Cabot Drive – Mother of 4 children and wife of EMT, spoke against a mask mandate.

#### IV. APPROVAL OF BOARD AGENDA

Allena Bell made a **motion** to approve the Board Agenda as presented. Alicia Barker **seconded** the motion, which **carried 6-0**.

#### V. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

1. **Consideration of Temporary Mask Requirement inside all FSSD schools and buses for employees and students** – Dr. Snowden introduced the Business item to the Board. Paraphrasing his introduction: That no matter what position you have taken on masks, your opinions are valued. Our goal is to do everything that we can to defeat COVID, a virus that none of us wanted or expected.

When we presented the health guidelines in July, we had success in our summer programs without this specific protocol. We also wanted time to analyze school and district data as well as community data because last year our numbers were much lower for sickness than the community was experiencing.

Our first five days of the school year went well, but now there is a significant increase between the end of last week and this week. This is due to the more contagious nature of the variant or a combination? We believe that parents want their students to be in school and we want them to be in school.

Superintendents were notified that our district is responsible to notify parents and the Health Department of positive cases and close contacts. There is concern about keeping our schools open if there are many exclusions: last year a school closed primarily because there were not enough adults to provide appropriate supervision. We have (now) had a number of breakthrough cases with fully vaccinated employees who can also spread the virus to students and other employees. The State no longer allows the virtual teaching model, which was used last year during the time that our school(s) were closed, so that students could continue to learn.

Quoted: “We believe, at this point in time, the prudent decision is to recommend a temporary mask requirement inside all FSSD schools/buildings and buses effective Monday,

August 23<sup>rd</sup> for employees, students and visitors. If this requirement is approved, there will be a grace period allowed on Monday for students so parents can have sufficient time to complete an opt out form based upon Governor Lee’s Executive Order No. 84. We also recommend that the Temporary Mask Requirement expire at 11:59 p.m. on September 21<sup>st</sup>. The Board will have an opportunity at their Board meeting on September 20<sup>th</sup> to re-evaluate the temporary mask requirement if approved tonight. The COVID team is available tonight if there are any questions from the Board.”

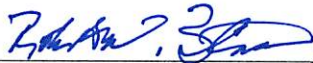

Kevin Townsel made a **motion** for FSSD to have a temporary mask requirement inside all FSSD schools, buildings and buses effective Monday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> for employees, students and visitors, with a grace period on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and to expire on Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:59, for re-evaluation of the mask requirement at the September 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. Tim Stillings **seconded** the motion. After discussion, the **motion carried 6-0**.

Discussion/statements before the vote included:

- Confirmation that quarantine was defined by the Health Department, not the schools. Schools will exclude until the WCHD investigates positive cases – a close contact wearing a mask will not have to be excluded.
- Request to evaluate the number of masks the district has available to be distributed.
- Request that the proper use of using the masks for younger children continues to be demonstrated in our schools.
- Request for weekly comparisons of the data to see if this makes a difference in our exclusions.
- Statement that wearing a mask is done for others in case the person gets the virus and is asymptomatic to avoid passing the virus to another, also that the fact that a masked child next to masked child does not have to be an exclusion if one has the virus.
- Statement that the emails and calls are acknowledged and that the Board is passionate for children and this is a necessary step.
- Statement that the Board understands how the public must feel and does not minimize the personal choice, asks that all be gracious.
- Statement that the COVID-19 protocols are on the website, and thanked the audience for their kindness.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Blair adjourned the meeting at 4:37 p.m.

		<u>9.20.21</u>
	Robert Blair, Chair	Date
<b>ATTEST:</b>		<u>9/20/21</u>
	Kevin Townsel, Secretary	Date