

BOARD ACTION REPORT
Corporation Office
December 13, 2021
6:00 p.m.

Present at the meeting were: Mr. Blaydes, Mrs. Hess, Mr. Hutson, Mr. Kinkead, Mr. Mason, Mr. Monts, Mr. Spencer and Dr. Greiner.

-There was no student presentation.

-Approved revisions to the Agenda.

-2023-2024 school calendar.

Public Comments on Agenda Items Only

-None.

-Approved the following consent agenda items:

-Approved minutes of previous meetings.

-Approved claims 104990 through 105158 and pre-paids.

-Approved November payroll claims.

-Approved teacher contracts for the 2021-2022 school year.

-Approval given to Post for Preschool Director.

-Approved resignation of Margaret Savage, SLP – New Market – effective December 17, 2021.

-Donna Harrison – Medical Leave from January 18, 2022 through February 4, 2022 – Special Education Teacher – Southmont HS.

-Approved resignation of Nashoba Lackey – Technologist Specialist – New Market – effective November 26, 2021.

-Jessica Copeland – Building Technology Coordinator – New Market.

-Lana Gregg – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$600.00.

-LeeAnn Thompson – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$600.00.

-Tammy McGaughey – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$600.00.

-Kristin Paris – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$600.00.

-Taylor Myers – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$600.00.

-Julie Spencer – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$180.00.

-Erin Barry – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$180.00.

-Joni Long – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$240.00.

-Beth Binch – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$300.00.

-Casie Allen – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$360.00.

-Kelly Clifton – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$600.00.

-Danielle Coudret – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$480.00.

-Dana Hunt – 5th Quarter After School Remediation stipend - \$120.00.

-Brittany Carr – 8th grade Girls Basketball Coach – Volunteer.

-Kevin Miller – 6th grade Boys Basketball Coach – Volunteer.

-Jason Cottrell – JH Swimming/Diving Coach - \$1500.00.

-Morgan Ross – Varsity Assistant Girls Basketball Coach – rescind stipend \$2910.00.

-Morgan Ross – Varsity Assistant Girls Basketball Coach - \$2457.50.

-Jeff Cochran – JV Girls Basketball Coach – rescind stipend - \$2716.00.

-Jeff Cochran – JV Girls Basketball Coach - \$2573.00.

-Stephanie Kennedy – Freshman Girls Basketball Coach – rescind stipend \$1862.00.

-Stephanie Kennedy – Freshman Girls Basketball Coach - \$2457.50.

-Phil Keller – Varsity Assistant Swimming Coach - \$1134.00.

-Mercedes McCormick – Varsity Assistant Swimming Coach - \$1134.00.

- Tricia Stanley – Varsity Assistant Swimming Coach - \$400.00.
- Scott Dove – Varsity Assistant Wrestling Coach – Volunteer.
- Alex Grino – Varsity Assistant Wrestling Coach – Volunteer.
- Bill Whalen – Freshman Boys Basketball Coach - \$1920.00.
- High School Wrestling overnight trips.
- Donations made to Southmont High School in the amount of \$900.00.
- Approved Southmont Parents for After Prom request to use Fieldhouse on Friday, May 13, 2022 through Sunday, May 15, 2022 to host After Prom.
- Approved Corporation Bus Driver proposal beginning with the January 3, 2022 payroll.
- Approved 2023-2024 school calendar.
- Approved Resolution to Transfer Cash Balances of %500,000 from Operations into the Rainy Day Fund. There was no discussion or questions.
- Approved the Insurance Policy Renewal. Dr. Greiner described that a small increase will occur this year (4%) compared to last year when there was no increase. We expect also to see an increase in cyber coverage. Workers compensation insurance decreased. Dr. Greiner recognized the work of Mr. Mason and Mr. Kinkead in reviewing the insurance costs. Mr. Spencer asked about the length of time with Astra (2 years); Mr. Spencer asked if Liberty Mutual has submitted a quote to review (no). Mr. Spencer stated he wonders if there will be fewer insurance companies interested in working with schools; Mr. Monts said he believes this will, indeed, be the case.
- Report from Superintendent:
 - Return to In-Person Instruction Plan – Dr. Greiner and Mrs. Roth reviewed the plan as required by federal guidelines for schools receiving ESSER funds as part of the pandemic relief package. Dr. Greiner discussed the current mask-optional policy for classroom and common spaces with masks being required by federal law on bus transportation and nurses using discretion in the clinic. Following the plan review, Dr. Greiner shared information and recommendations from Dr. Roberts regarding mitigation strategies. Dr. Robert’s recommendation are to 1) implement universal masking in all facilities and at all events, 2) reduce event attendance to 25% of capacity and 3) Mr. Spencer asked if the absence rate showed a trend according to student age; Dr. Greiner shared that the data is available to all board members to review more in depth and that elementary students have had a greater absence rate versus secondary student absence rates. After sharing Dr. Roberts’ recommendations and information about student absences due to Covid-19, Dr. Greiner encouraged the board to discuss the recommendations from Dr. Roberts with Dr. Douglas in attendance to answer questions. Mr. Monts invited Dr. Roberts to share useful information based on his professional expertise. Dr. Roberts shared information on the number of cases per week; our county is higher than the state average. Indiana is four times the rate of South Africa. There is concern with the current data spike with increase in cases. The vaccination rate locally is not where Dr. Douglas would like to see it. Dr. Douglas has pointed out that Southmont Schools has done well comparatively in the county. Dr. Douglas encouraged the schools to do *“anything and everything”* they can do with upcoming holiday gatherings coupled with the number of cases trending upward. Dr. Douglas shared that predications for an increase in positive cases after Thanksgiving gatherings came to reality. Mr. Monts said he was struck by the number of students in quarantine and stated he would support a recommendation from the administrative team to mask after Christmas break until two weeks after the county is no longer in red. Mrs. Hess asked for clarification on the recommendation to confirm that masking would continue until the county leaves red for two weeks. Mr. Mason asked for clarification on how quarantines would be reduced; if all are masked, quarantines would be eliminated. Band, choir and lunch would be the exception. Principals and cafeteria monitors would monitor the length of contact for lunch; administrators have considered how

the 15-minute time span could be strategically used. Mr. Kinkead state he is over the masking and over the quarantine and stated he respected all opinions and asked that others respect his opinion as well. Mrs. Hess stated that looking back at the data for quarantined students who later test positive, she believes that any spread is occurring outside of school. Mrs. Hess also stated that she relies on survey results from our own district families want to choose masking or non-masking for their children. Mrs. Hess stated that she's seen other districts that do not seem affected positively by masking. Mrs. Hess states our numbers are good. Mr. Hutson stated he would like to move away from the large quarantine absences; masks can reduce quarantine even though he personally does not like the masking. Mr. Spencer stated he believes that we should not ignore the health department recommendations as this could leave the district open to the liability for student injury; especially when the county is in the red. Mr. Mason asked if the State has changed its recommendations; Dr. Greiner stated that quarantine is still required by Indiana mandate. Mr. Mason stated he would support whatever is recommended by the state and IHSAA. Mr. Mason stated he personally does not have an issue with masking to keep kids in school for a few weeks. Mr. Blaydes stated that he does not like Covid-19 but does support a way to keep kids in school. Mr. Blaydes says he is not, however, in favor of masking. Mr. Monts and Mr. Blaydes clarified that masking on a case by case basis with individual choice does not eliminate the quarantine requirement; masking is universal "all or none". Mrs. Hess asked if it would be possible to limit masking for two weeks after the holiday break and decide to continue or not continue at the next board meeting. Mr. Blaydes and Mrs. Hess state that they want to look carefully at our local data as our students and schools are affected. Mr. Hutson stated that obviously quarantine numbers will decrease. Mr. Blaydes stated he agreed. Mr. Kinkead state he finds it unacceptable that students otherwise diagnosed could be quarantined nonetheless. Mr. Monts asked all to consider that our numbers are good so something is working correctly. Mr. Kinkead stated that he disagrees that a student otherwise diagnosed should still be quarantined. Mr. Monts reminded all that nurses are doing their job and following the rules of quarantine from the State. Mr. Monts asked Dr. Roberts if we would have adequate data for after the break to return to the table and discuss the date. Dr. Roberts shared that we cannot predict where the trends will go. Mr. Monts put forth a motion that we mask for two weeks after leaving red and review in February. Mr. Spencer seconded the motion and recommendation of the superintendent. Mr. Monts opened the discussion. Mr. Hutson clarified that we would mask for two weeks until "out of red" and Mr. Mason asked for the same clarification regarding the recommendation. Dr. Greiner clarified this is his recommendation. Mr. Mason asked about extracurricular attendance reduction as part of the recommendation; Dr. Greiner and Mr. Monts clarified that no part of the recommendation includes reducing extracurricular attendance as that is still a choice by those involved and those in attendance. Mrs. Hess state again that she hates having kids in masks and is bothered by the anxiety students may feel. Dr. Greiner reiterated that he has based his recommendation on the desire to reduce quarantine. Mrs. Hess states she appreciates the work of the superintendent but that it would not be appropriate to mask without reason. Mr. Spencer stated he believes a county in the red is a reason. Mr. Mason confirmed again that extracurricular activities would not be affected. Mr. Monts asked for a vote. Mr. Spencer requested a roll call vote. Mr. Monts announced that the motion carried 4-3. Masking will be universal in all Southmont Schools during the school day until the county is out of red for two weeks. The board will review this decision in February.

-Report from Director of Business – Mrs. Kristin Charles

-Mrs. Charles shared that she is working on preparing budgets for principals and directors to

share these in June. She shared that our budget had been approved at the State level.

-Reports from Directors and Principals:

-Mr. Mike Tricker (Director of Operations) – Cyber security companies have tightened requirements to be eligible for insurance, and as such, the district technology department will be moving to a 2-Factor authentication process. This move should also help further protect our network systems.

-Mrs. Anna Roth (Director of Curriculum) – The district received a preschool grant for \$211,000 and is back on the table for a \$100,000 grant. The Community Foundation will provide a \$50,000 grant to support early learning. We will post a director of position to help lead current and future preschool and early learning programs and decisions.

-Mr. Eric W. Brewer (Director of Transportation & WES Principal): No updates were shared this week.

-Mrs. Sonna Schafer (Principal – Ladoga Elementary): No updates were shared.

Public Comments on All Items

-Mrs. McCormick expressed thanks for “any policy that would result in fewer students being quarantined”. Mrs. McCormick state that she wants to see kids in school getting their education and that virtual or following along from home is just not as effective for students to be successful. She is concerned about learning loss for all students.

-Mr. Cating expressed thanks for being invited to return to express his appreciation for and share his memories of Mr. Coudret as a teacher, colleague and coach. Mr. Cating relayed that he believes it would be great if the district were to recognize Mr. Coudret in some way as we have recognized Mr. Tandy as well. Mr. Monts expressed appreciation of Mr. Cating taking the time to share his ideas and experiences. Mr. Monts asked all to consider the work of the homecoming committee and the work of others involved. Mr. Monts asked all board members and the administration to consider what might be appropriate. Mr. Monts thanked Mr. Cating.

-Mrs. Woods stated that the quarantine issue is a terrible policy issue at the state level. She states that most quarantined students are “just at home screwing around”. Mrs. Woods states that she believes that masking is arbitrary. Mrs. Woods stated she is not falling for this “two weeks out of red thing”. Mrs. Woods stats that the variant seems to be nothing more than a cold. Mrs. Woods states that what is different is that families simply are not testing their kids because families have silently agreed to not test so that others are not quarantined. She reiterated that the State policy is a horrible policy. Mr. Woods state she is sick of the cycle and that she believes it is illogical. Mrs. Woods tells her kids to stay away from people who are sick and that she does not believe a mask will solve the problem. Mr. Monts thanked Mrs. Woods for her comments and invited other comments. There were no additional public comments.

-Adjourned.