

- CALL TO ORDER** At 6:40 p.m. the August 23, 2021, meeting of the Susquehanna Township Board of School Directors was called to order by President Jesse Rawls, Sr.
- SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT** Ms. Josie Byzek, Mr. John F. Dietrich, Dr. Michael Cohen, Dr. Diana Brown, Mr. Jesse Rawls, Sr., President
- SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS** Mr. Majid Ali, Mr. Scott W. Campbell, Ms. Julieann Newill
- ABSENT** NONE; 1 VACANCY
- DISTRICT OFFICE PRESENT** Mr. Oslwen Anderson, Jr., Mr. Justin Green, Mr. Mark Holman, Dr. Richard Kaskey, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Douglas L. Nyce, Ms. Ann-Marie Rathmell, Mr. Pat Raugh, Mr. Vince Champion, Esq., District Solicitor, Dr. Tamara Willis (via MS Teams)
- EXECUTIVE SESSION** The President announced that executive session was held immediately prior to the meeting to discuss litigation matters.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR AUGUST 23, 2021

- MOTION TO APPROVE** 2.A. Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Ms. Byzek, to approve the meeting agenda for August 23, 2021.
Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 0 absent, 1 vacancy
- 2.B. Board Member Comments
- Mr. Rawls** stated that he has received numerous phone calls from community members in regard to masking. Mr. Rawls spoke about the vaccine and the other institutions in the area that are requiring masking.

III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

- SPEAKER** **Jennifer Halfond** spoke in favor of universal masking regardless of vaccine status and referenced multiple medical organizations that recommend universal masking.
- SPEAKER** **Bryan Hendricks (online submission)** commented on the quarantine process for students on sports teams.
- SPEAKER** **Richard Houser** spoke in favor of masking.
- SPEAKER** **James Fuss (online submission)** would like masks mandated.
- SPEAKER** **Tia Whitaker** spoke in favor of masking.
- SPEAKER** **Lisa Flemming (online submission)** is disturbed by the motion to rescind the Health and Safety Plan. She has a daughter who has a pre-existing condition which puts her at a greater risk for COVID-19. She is in favor of universal masking.

- SPEAKER** Jonathan Hjelm spoke in favor of masking.
- SPEAKER** Helen Loux (online submission) is in favor of masking.
- SPEAKER** Hillary Holmes spoke in favor of masking and suggested that there may be a middle ground where masking is optional at the high school.
- SPEAKER** Courtney Colston (online submission) commented in favor of masking.
- SPEAKER** Kathryn Miller spoke in favor of masking and referenced CDC guidelines.
- SPEAKER** Keisha Starling (online submission) made the decision to return her student to in-person learning because masks were required. She asked the board to reinstate the mask mandate.
- SPEAKER** Jason Schwartz referenced the CDC and asked the board to reference the data supporting masking.
- SPEAKER** Thomas Borawski (online submission) commented in favor of masking.
- SPEAKER** Megan Seely felt comfortable returning her students to in-person learning and was proud of Susquehanna Township for requiring masks when other districts were not. She encouraged the board to follow the guidance of experts.
- SPEAKER** Kelly Light (online submission) commented in favor of masks until all children can be vaccinated.
- SPEAKER** Hannah Smeltz addressed the board with her thoughts masking. She feels that masking should be a parental decision, not mandated.
- SPEAKER** Stephen Webb (online submission) asked the board to implement a mandatory mask policy for all students, teachers, and staff for the 2021-22 school year.
- SPEAKER** Rachel Miller requested that the board return to their original decision of universal masking for all regardless of vaccination status.
- SPEAKER** Bill Thomas (online submission) is disappointed by decision by board to rescind the universal masking and asked the board to reinstate universal masking.
- SPEAKER** Maria Christini asked the board to reconsider their vote and reinstate mandatory masking so students can return to in person instruction.
- SPEAKER** Tammica Bryant (online submission) asked that the mask mandate be put in place to protect youth who are too young for vaccination.
- SPEAKER** Thomas Iwancio addressed the board in support of masking.
- SPEAKER** Jessica Yagel (online submission) questioned the board's decision to reverse the mask mandate.
- SPEAKER** Christine Waters addressed the board in support of masking and asked the board to not make decisions that jeopardize the health and safety of students. She has a petition with over 675 signatures in support of masking. Asked board to consult professional medical agencies.
- SPEAKER** Shatarupa Podder (online submission) feels masks should be mandated indoors.
- SPEAKER** Joseph Robinson Jr. asked the board to trust the professionals they have hired to make the best decisions for our school district and reinstate masking.
- SPEAKER** Lonnie Gurreri (online submission) commented in support of masking for all students.

- SPEAKER** **Nathan Lubold** stated that we all agree that we want to keep our children and families safe. He asked everyone in the room to put aside their personal political ideology and support masking so students can be in school and be safe.
- SPEAKER** **Clifton Edwards (online submission)** pointed out that the student population of our district is overwhelmingly comprised of students of color and the pandemic is disproportionately affecting people of color. Asked the board to reinstate masking
- SPEAKER** **Liz Bidgood Enders** talked about the recent rise of the Delta variant and asked the board to reinstate masking.
- SPEAKER** **Laura Horchler (online submission)** asked the board to reinstate masking.
- SPEAKER** **Jennifer Brown** supports masking being optional.
- SPEAKER** **Greg Feather (online submission)** commented that as Americans we do not have the freedoms to engage in dangerous activities that can harm someone else. We need to wear masks to protect others.
- SPEAKER** **Moritz Termin** addressed the board with her concerns about social distancing younger students and supports masking.
- SPEAKER** **Lars English (online submission)** is disheartened about the board's recent decision and asked the board to follow the CDC recommendation of universal masking.
- SPEAKER** **Terrance Hawkins** spoke in support of masking.
- SPEAKER** **Jennifer Stretch (online submission)** feels freedom of choice is a good thing and asked that the board consider students who got vaccinated so that they could do away with masks.
- SPEAKER** **Tanisha Hawkins** spoke in support of masking to keep children and teachers safe.
- SPEAKER** **Joyce Powers (online submission)** asked the board to make masks mandatory.
- SPEAKER** **Molly Sauder** supports evidence-based practice. As leaders of this community, asks the board to send our kids to school with masks to protect our most vulnerable.
- SPEAKER** **Nicole Schwartz (online submission)** supports universal mask mandate.
- SPEAKER** **Andrea Zart** feels that students should start school with masks. Perhaps the board could form a committee to evaluate voluntary masking options after 1st marking period.
- SPEAKER** **Tia Forlizzi (online submission)** feels masks should be optional to all and allows individuals to make the best decision for them.
- SPEAKER** **Tamara Woodson** spoke on behalf of teachers and students at Thomas Holtzman. She feels community and parents have spoken.
- SPEAKER** **Lars English (online submission)** asked the board to require masking.
- SPEAKER** **David Mabry** feels we should consider the best opportunity to keep students in school. Strong consideration should be given to masking for all.
- SPEAKER** **Anita Mareno (online submission)** commented in support of masking and feels parents should not have to quit their jobs to homeschool.
- SPEAKER** **Amanda Snyder (online submission)** is upset about the no mask mandate.
- SPEAKER** **Janna Mazon (online submission)** asked the board to reconsider the masking policy and make it mandatory.

- SPEAKER** **Kathy Dugan (online submission)** asked the board to support masking.
- SPEAKER** **Laura Borawski** spoke in support of masking.
- SPEAKER** **Ronald Baker (online submission)** commented in support of masking, the pandemic is not over.
- SPEAKER** **Steve Neidlinger** thanked everyone who came to speak. He referenced several scientific journals which support masking. Asked the board to enforce a mask mandate.
- SPEAKER** **Wendy Smith (online submission)** commented in support of optional masking.
- SPEAKER** **Patrice Fox Miller** asked the board to do the right thing and put politics aside and support masking.
- SPEAKER** **Alexis Campbell (online submission)** praised the district for how they handled the pandemic last school year and was shocked when the board decided to rescind the masking policy. She asked the board to reverse this decision.
- SPEAKER** **Keisha Starling** spoke on behalf of her husband and son and asked the board to keep universal masking.
- SPEAKER** **Joanna Stoms (online submission)** supports mandatory masks in our schools.
- SPEAKER** **Amy Caraciolo** spoke in support of mandatory masking. She wants all children to be able to return to in person learning and be safe in their learning environment.
- SPEAKER** **Ashley Thomas (online submission)** supports masking, so students do not have to return to ARA instruction.
- SPEAKER** **Tom Pyne** commented that he is pro mask and supports the mask mandate. He also stated that he feels attacks against board members are unfortunate.
- SPEAKER** **Justin Flemming (online submission)** praised the board and administration for their handling of the pandemic prior to the August 16, 2021, board vote. He is concerned that deleterious effects on children's mental health from the social isolation the pandemic has caused. He feels that by not mandating masking and decreasing the potential transmission of COVID-19 we are driving children back home and away from supports the school offers.
- SPEAKER** **Kimberly Early** questioned the board's decision to rescind the masking guidelines. She is in support of following the CDC's guidelines requiring masks. She also asked that school board meeting recordings be placed on the district website or YouTube channel.
- SPEAKER** **Abigail Ketchum (online submission)** commented in support of masking and is shocked of the decision to make masks optional.
- SPEAKER** **Tor Green** addressed the board in support of masking and questioned the decision to change 2 weeks prior to school starting.
- SPEAKER** **Erin Wang (online submission)** addressed the board with several questions concerning COVID-19. She would like to know about the district's mitigation strategies and testing and quarantine protocols now that we are not requiring masks.

9:05 p.m. the board recessed for 5 minutes

9:11 p.m. the board returned to the room

SPEAKER

Jody Wray (online submission) commented in support of masking and the myths surrounding masking.

SPEAKER

Virginia Stone (online submission) stated that she feels masking is the responsible option to curtail the spread of COVID-19.

SPEAKER

Arian Brown (online submission) feels masks should be required.

SPEAKER

Jessica Luce (online submission) feels we should follow the recommendation of doctors and the CDC.

SPEAKER

Nicole Sprucebank (online submission) asked the board to rescind the decision and make masks required.

SPEAKER

Ricci Doctrow (online submission) asked the board to mandate that all personnel and students must wear masks while participating in any school district program.

SPEAKER

Jennifer Kirsch (online submission) asked the board to follow the guidelines recommended by scientific, medical and professional organizations and reinstate masking.

SPEAKER

Amanda Caraballo (online submission) feels unvaccinated persons should wear masks and vaccinated persons should show proof of vaccination.

SPEAKER

Evans Evans (online submission) commented that masking is required by medical professionals and causes no harm.

SPEAKER

Alex Sharf (online submission) asked the board to reinstate the approved safety plan to include masking.

SPEAKER

Cordelia Pettis (online submission) asked the board to make masks mandatory.

SPEAKER

Stephanie Teitelbaum (online submission) thanked the board for their service to the community and asked them to follow science and support masking.

SPEAKER

Sara Thuma (online submission) would like the board to reinstate masking mandate.

SPEAKER

April Faulkner (online submission) asked the board to reinstate mandatory masking.

SPEAKER

Miranda Heck Benfer (online submission) commented in support of masking and relayed that they will be pulling their children from the district.

SPEAKER

Douglas Vaughn (online submission) asked the board to have a mask mandate to protect everyone as much as possible.

SPEAKER

Beryl Kerr (online submission) asked the board to reinstate mandatory masking.

SPEAKER

Jessica Sweeney hopes the board will change its mind and reinstate masking.

SPEAKER

James Tomkins (online submission) asked the board to vote yes to require masks in school.

SPEAKER

Julie Pitassi (online submission) voiced their support of masking in schools.

SPEAKER

Kristen Iwancio (online submission) commented on the pandemic and shared a statement from her 5th grader in support of masking.

SPEAKER

Rosetta Welsh (online submission) supports masks being optional.

SPEAKER

Laura Holubec (online submission) feels we must trust public health professionals and evidence that masks reduce transmissibility.

- SPEAKER** Steven Loux (online submission) asked about liability if masks are optional.
- SPEAKER** Jennifer Todd (online submission) urged the board to consider mandatory masks in primary, elementary, and middle schools where students are not eligible for the vaccine.
- SPEAKER** Pamela Spencer (online submission) asked the board to reinstate mandatory masking.
- SPEAKER** Jessica Connor (online submission) commented in support of masking.
- SPEAKER** Patricia Taylor (online submission) asked the board to please reinstate masking as recommended by the CDC.
- SPEAKER** Robert Campbell (online submission) commented in support of masking.
- SPEAKER** Pinar Ramsey (online submission) asked the board to please follow the science and recommendation of doctors and reverse their decision on masking.
- SPEAKER** Melinda Ramberger (online submission) supports masking but feels it is a personal decision.
- SPEAKER** Damon Fister (online submission) reminded everyone of the precautions we take every day to protect ourselves and asked the board to uphold the masking guidance.
- SPEAKER** Randall Miller (online submission) supports masking and asked the board to restore the previous Health and Safety Plan requiring masking.
- SPEAKER** Rachel Smithers (online submission) asked the board to require masks to minimize the number of disruptions to in person learning.
- SPEAKER** Michelle Hicks (online submission) is disappointed in the board's decision to go against the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).
- SPEAKER** Rachel Jenkins (online submission) asked the board to be proactive verses reactive in its decision.
- SPEAKER** Justina Adams (online submission) believes school district should be following health recommendations set by CDC and asked the board to reconsider its decision.
- SPEAKER** Arlene Hall (online submission) commented in support of masking.
- SPEAKER** Ann Green (online submission) asked the board to please make masks mandatory for all students and staff.
- SPEAKER** Lori Weitzman (online submission) feels students should be wearing masks while in school.
- SPEAKER** John Coles (online submission) is in support of reinstating mandatory masking in all STSD buildings.
- SPEAKER** Jennifer Mills (online submission) feels masks must be mandated to protect our children, teachers, and families.
- SPEAKER** Asia Schroeder (online submission) commented in support of masking.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

SPEAKER Ms. Byzek said she is strongly in support of following CDC guidelines.

FOR THE RECORD Mr. Dietrich: *Contrary to what is being promoted on social media, this board is not at odds with this administration. We have spent the last few days in*

collaboration developing the inclusive tiered masking option on the agenda this evening. There was no wrongdoing on my or anyone’s part regarding the action to rescind and change to the optional mask policy during the August 16th meeting. I provided notice to the board and administration within a day or two following the August 2nd meeting that I and other members would like to revisit the Health and Safety Plan. Due to a misunderstanding, we chose to add this item to the agenda via a motion during the meeting rather than as an item on the agenda prior to the meeting. Both methods of adding an item to the agenda are proper and all members were aware and were briefed on the matter. However, I do want to apologize to the public for not following up to be sure this matter would be posted to the agenda well in advance of the August 16th meeting and subsequently appears we made a last-minute change.

IV. OTHER

MOTION TO APPROVE

4.A. Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Ms. Byzek, to approve Item 4.A.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye: Mr. Ali, Dr. Cohen, Mr. Dietrich, Ms. Newill, Dr. Brown, Ms. Byzek, Mr. Rawls
Nay: Mr. Campbell
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Motion passed 7-1, 0 abstentions, 0 absent, 1 vacancy

4.A. Rescind item 11.G. from the August 16, 2021, board meeting taking action to amend the District's Health and Safety Plan to reflect: “masks are to be worn by students and staff on a voluntary basis or if mandated by the governor, PDE, CDC or State department of health, however students and staff will be required to wear a mask during any school related transportation event such as field trips, transportation to or from school, or other extra-curricular events.” (Health and Safety Plan attached to BoardDocs)

MOTION TO APPROVE

4.B. Moved by Dr Cohen, seconded by Ms. Byzek, to approve Item 4.B.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye: Mr. Ali, Ms. Byzek, Dr. Brown, Mr. Rawls
Nay: Mr. Campbell, Dr. Cohen, Mr. Dietrich, Ms. Newill
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Motion failed 4-4, 0 abstentions, 0 absent, 1 vacancy

4.B. Reinstate the District's Health and Safety Plan that was approved on August 2, 2021, as item 11.D. (Health and Safety Plan attached to BoardDocs)

**MOTION TO APPROVE
ROLL CALL VOTE:**

4.C. Moved by Ms. Byzek, seconded by Dr. Cohen, to approve Item 4.C.

Aye:	Mr. Ali, Dr. Cohen, Mr. Dietrich, Ms. Newill, Dr. Brown, Ms. Byzek, Mr. Rawls
Nay:	Mr. Campbell
Abstain:	None
Absent:	None

Motion passed 7-1, 0 abstentions, 0 absent, 1 vacancy

4.C. Approve the District's Health and Safety Plan with the following modification to Item 3.a of the current Health and Safety Plan.

The District will implement universal masking for all teachers, staff, students and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status, when the levels of community transmission¹ are substantial or high.

Face covering exemptions for Students:

- Eating or drinking
- Face covering break
- Outdoor activities
- When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition
- Medical or mental condition or disability documented in accordance with a 504 Plan or IEP that precludes wearing a face covering

Face covering exemptions for Staff:

- Eating or drinking
- Face covering break
- Outdoor activities
- When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition
- Medical or mental condition or disability documented in accordance ADA that precludes wearing a face covering
- Alone in a vehicle or private office

1. Levels of community transmission defined as total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days (low, 0-9; moderate 10-49; substantial, 50-99, high, ≥ 100) and percentage of positive tests in the past 7 days (low, $< 5\%$; moderate, 5-7.9%; substantial, 8-9.9%; high, $\geq 10\%$.)

(Health and Safety Plan Guidance and Template attached to BoardDocs)

V. NEW BUSINESS

None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN

6.A. Moved by Ms. Byzek, seconded by Mr. Dietrich, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion passed: 8-0, 0 abstentions, 0 absent, 1 vacancy

Meeting adjourned at 10:48 p.m.



Julieann Newill
Board Secretary

