



Board of School Directors Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Meeting Location: Souderton Area High School

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Thursday, August 12, 2021

Members present: Nicholas Braccio, Janet Flisak, Matt Holliday, Ken Keith, Thomas Kwiatkowski, Stephen Nelson, Donna Scheuren, Courtney Barbieri

Members absent: Bill Brong

Others present: Henry Franz, Frank Gallagher, Kevin Godshall (GKO Architects) Bill Hazel, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Brian Pawling and Megan Zweiback

1. Operations Committee

1.1 Health & Safety Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year

In the absence of Mr. Brong, Mr. Keith called the Operations Committee Meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

Mr. Keith announced that there were two topics on the agenda this evening; the Health & Safety Plan and a discussion of the proposed renovations at Indian Valley Middle School and Franconia Elementary School.

Mr. Keith stated that Committee Meetings typically do not have public comment, however time will be afforded at the end of the meeting. He stated that there would not be sign up sheets, nor a podium. Mr. Keith acknowledged that strong feelings may exist and asked for civility, by everyone.

Mr. Keith also noted that the Health & Safety Plan will be discussed tonight, with the goal to approve it on August 26. The Administration will give a presentation on the plan and the Board will have an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Keith also noted the fluid environment surrounding the pandemic indicating the need to remain flexible and patient.

Dr. Gallagher spoke about the challenges and successes of the past school year. He also reported a time line of the events as they occurred over the past year. Dr. Gallagher noted the most recent guidance from Montgomery County Department of Health on July 26, stating that students wearing masks to not need to quarantine when exposed, regardless of vaccine status.

Dr. Gallagher stated that guidance is continuing to change and citing a county-wide meeting scheduled for tomorrow and a regional meeting next week. Dr. Gallagher acknowledged receipt of the many emails that he had received, and stated his appreciation for the tone of the emails. He said that he will continue to read the emails and will always do what is best for the children in the school district.

Director of Pupil Services, Mrs. Zweiback reviewed the draft of the Health & Safety Plan that has been posted to the district website since July 12. A slide presentation of the plan was projected on the screens in the room.

Mrs. Zweiback reviewed the strategies, policies and procedures as they relate to masks and facial coverings, the modifications of facilities to allow for physical distancing, hand washing, respiratory etiquette, and the cleaning and maintenance of facilities, including ventilation.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Hey stated that the Montgomery County Department of Health has recently updated their guidance for contact tracing and quarantine protocols. Dr. Hey noted that this new guidance is a result of vaccinations and masking. Dr. Hey reviewed a slide that defined close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) and outlined guidelines for quarantined students and staff when they have been vaccinated and exposed versus unvaccinated and exposed.

Dr. Hey stated that this new guidance is a substantial change because it will allow students to remain in-person for instruction instead of having to quarantine at home. Dr. Gallagher stated that this information would be posted to the school district website tomorrow.

Mr. Braccio thanked the administration for the illustration and noted the continual change of guidance. Mrs. Flisak also thanked the Board for the most up to date information, noting the surge of COVID and the many governing bodies all providing direction. Mrs. Flisak also thanked the public for their emails expressing concerns. Mrs. Barbieri asked about the contact tracing protocols and the privacy component if parents do not wish to disclose whether their child has been vaccinated. Mrs. Zweiback said that parents may always opt for quarantine if they desired and that all school nurses have access to SIS - student information systems which includes state vaccinations records.

Mr. Holliday asked about creating specific quarantine protocols for vaccinated students, as well as health monitoring based on individual grade levels. Mr. Kwiatkowski asked about student transportation and Mrs. Zweiback said that students will need to be masked while using school transportation. Mrs. Scheuren asked if we were receiving any guidance from Bucks County, since some of our students reside in Bucks County. Dr. Gallagher acknowledged that guidelines and recommendations could differ between counties based upon infection rates and that all data is being monitored.

Mrs. Scheuren also acknowledged receipt of public emails and expressed desire to respond to the inquiries. Mrs. Scheuren also asked about how frequently the Board would be updated on guidance and Dr. Gallagher indicated that it could as frequent as every few days.

Mr. Keith opened the floor for public comments and asked for a three-minute limit. He also encouraged questions to be phoned to administration or emailed to the Board.

Several residents identified themselves as parents and expressed the value in having choice whether masking will be required for students. Several residents spoke to the validity of the information that was being given to the public regarding COVID and expressed the detrimental aspects of mask wearing.

One resident spoke out that masking does not work and that COVID is a hoax. She stated that no one should be responsible for anyone else's health. She also stated that the PCR tests are invalid.

A resident of Harleysville acknowledged the changing guidelines as science upholds and gathers data. The resident also stated that we are not independent, but more likely interconnected as a community. He expressed concerns for his six-year-old student who cannot get a vaccine and asked the Board to keep these students in mind as they make their decision for masking.

A woman who identified herself as a grandmother asked the Board to keep individual choice for families as it related to masking. A gentleman spoke about national, state and county guidance as it relates to the common sense of community and questioned the selfish behavior of others.

A parent of three students asked for an earlier decision on masking, rather than waiting until August 26.

A gentleman expressed concern about masking and noted that without fit testing, they are pointless.

A parent of three students thanked the Board for its boldness in holding in-person instruction and said that children have the best outcome from COVID and the lowest transmission rates. He asked the Board to be bold once again, and keep masking optional. He also stated that five days prior to the start of school is not enough time.

Mr. Keith thanked everyone for their comments.

Dr. Gallagher stated that the district would do their best to get information out to the community as soon as possible.

1.2 Architect Services for IVMS and Franconia ES Renovations

In the absence of Mr. Brong; Operations Committee Chairman, Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Pawling stated that the information being presented tonight was a recap of the recommendations from last year.

Mr. Pawling reminded the Board that the original recommendations for these projects are a result of the Feasibility Study that was performed in September 2020 and presented in detail at the May 2021 Operations Committee Meeting held at Indian Valley Middle School. Mr. Pawling noted that these projects had been designated priority as part of the capital improvement projects.

This evening the administration is seeking Board review of the project to address specifics that will allow architect firm GKO, to begin the design phase of the project. Mr. Pawling reviewed the projects in details citing the goals at each of the schools.

The Indian Valley Middle School project includes:

- Replace modular classrooms with permanent construction
- Renovate portions of the existing building to find additional classroom space
- Accessibility; access to Gym, Gym to Locker Rms, Auditorium, Toilet Rooms.
- Reconfigure Band and Orchestra spaces to better accommodate those groups.
- Create Choral Music Room
- Improve Cafeteria to comfortably accommodate one grade of students
- Additional Small Group Instruction space
- Improve visibility across building – eliminate offset corridors
- Improve overall condition of building components - floor, wall & ceiling finishes throughout, 1964 toilet rooms, casework, windows & operable partitions, mechanical, electrical & plumbing systems including adding 2 HVAC pipes in the 1964 section.

The Franconia Elementary School project includes:

- Improve condition of building components - floor, wall, ceiling & toilet rooms, 1941 & 1957 casework finishes throughout, windows, slate roof, mechanical, electrical & plumbing systems
- Accessibility - 1941 & '57 toilet rooms and Stage access
- Enlarge one Gifted and one Multi-Tiered Support System Room

Mr. Pawling stated that the scope of work can still be discussed before the final approval. Mr. Pawling reviewed the timeline noting the aggressive schedule which will allow for flexibility in the event of unforeseen delays at the back end of the Land Development project. The timeline has a bid receipt date of February 2022, allowing for review and contract award in time for Summer construction.

Mr. Nelson asked about input from the various stakeholders on each of the projects and Mr. Pawling responded that the Operations Committee had met with stakeholders at each of the schools. Board members had several specific questions on each of the projects and requested clarification on the scope of work prior to their approval and Mr. Pawling acknowledged their request.

Mr. Keith adjourned the Operations Committee Meeting at 8:26 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Pawling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian R. Pawling
Board Secretary / Director of Business Affairs