

The Millville Area School Board held a special meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following Board members answered roll call: William Berger, Brynn Clark, Susan Farr, Michael Farrell, Greg Hemsarh, Heather Mausteller, Susan Myers, Deborah Price, and Jessica Whitmoyer.

Also present were Joe Rasmus, Dee Davis, and Hannah Sherwood.

GUEST RECOGNITION AND COMMENTS

No guest comments at this time.

FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION STARTING DECEMBER 14, 2020 VS FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION STARTING JANUARY 19, 2021

Mr. Rasmus:

- Advantages and disadvantages to extending on-line learning until January 19 or face-to-face instruction starting December 14. A decision has many variables and is not made hastily.
- Increased need to quarantine with student and staff travel during the holidays. Extending on-line learning two-weeks after the New Year holiday, until January 19, allows for a safer return.
- Best learning model is in school; however, it is difficult to manage the health and safety of students and staff.
- Currently, two teachers, one staff member, and one student are COVID positive with other teachers and staff quarantining.
- Full online learning is a challenge for students and family. The teachers are committed to student success.
- Millville Area is doing a remarkable job with the commitment of parents, students, staff, faculty, and administration.

Heather Mausteller:

- Has received emails and comments that students are not getting the same amount of education virtually.

Mr. Rasmus:

- Will meet with the administrative team to discuss the issue. State guidelines require the same standards and attendance requirements as in-school learning. Parents need to reach out with concerns. Teachers are available during the school day from 2:15 – 3:10 to meet student needs and address concerns.

Brynn Clark:

- Connectivity issues are a problem.

Mr. Rasmus:

- ATT and Verizon hotspots are available. Print materials are also available. Make us aware so we can address problems.
- The current situation is not ideal but consider teachers out due to mitigation and students sit in the cafeteria or auditorium.

Brynn Clark:

- Teachers have connectivity issues with the internet cutting out and sometimes teachers are muted and not aware. This is causing frustration and taking longer to instruct.

Mr. Rasmus:

- Welcomed further contact from Brynn so he can follow-up with principals and technology.
- Will not be perfect. Best environment is in the classroom with the teachers. We were successful until Thanksgiving. The hope is to get back to the classroom.

Greg Hemsarh:

- Parents are frustrated. Suggested postponing school three weeks and adding days to the end of the school year.

Mr. Rasmus:

- Mandatory for school to end before June 30 and meet the minimum 180 day requirement along with 990 secondary instructional hours and 900 elementary instructional hours. Adjusting the school calendar also opens up collective bargaining issues.

Susan Myers:

- Was afraid extending the school year would not sit well with families? Not being able to have plans last summer, some families may have made plans for this summer. It is also not effective for testing, military and early college entrance.

Mr. Rasmus:

- PSSA and Keystone exams will be taking place. However, Keystones are not a graduation mandate this year due to COVID.

Jessica Whitmoyer:

- Would be in favor of removing eight virtual days and extending the school year.

Greg Hemsarh:

- Looking at removing more than eight days, probably three-weeks. Eliminate the snow make-up days and move Act 80 days. Parents are already inconvenienced. It is a lose/lose all the way around.

Brynn Clark:

- It is a challenge to the household, jobs, education and homework. Suffering emotionally and academically. Don't take it lightly if you have no school age children.

Greg Hemsarh:

- Look at what other schools are doing. Why not have the high school online and the elementary in person.

Susan Myers:

- With the example of elementary in, most of the staff out in November was elementary. That would not help the staffing issues. High school teachers would have their own classes to teach and most are not certified to teach elementary.

Mr. Rasmus:

- To look at what other schools are doing, schools within fifteen miles have different situations and resources or don't have the same staffing issues with substitute coverage.

Michael Farrell:

- In favor of a mid-January return to in-person class.

Susan Myers:

- Dr. Levine and the Governor are looking at the next steps. With the holidays may come more lockdowns. Don't want us to come back, have teachers unavailable and need to shut down. That would cause parents to scramble.

Deborah Price:

- In agreement with Sue. Continuity with a two week schedule, then a break, and continue with the schedule.

Brynn Clark:

- Her children are counting down the days until they can come back to school. Don't worry about a change in the schedule.

Deborah Price:

- Online classes do work, as she observed from her grandchildren. Everyone is an individual; accept the differences.

William Berger:

- Concerned with the damage. Kids get behind and struggle online. There needs to be a balance.

Brynn Clark:

- Agrees with Bill. Planning for the potential impact rather than real issues.

Susan Farr:

- It is a parent challenge but safety is first. Working in the medical field, and having COVID, it is nasty. Doesn't want to see a child sick or take it home to grandparents. It is not worth a life...getting behind in school compared to the importance of a life.

Robin Andrews:

- Life skills students are high risk but attending school.

Mr. Rasmus:

- Individualized Education Plans are designed for special needs. Thirty-three students are attending brick and mortar. We have a 25% special education population with the majority online. It is difficult to replicate and modify some special education needs online. Parents were given the choice.

Mrs. Davis:

- This was parent choice. They had the option to decline with no force. This is an individual family decision.

MASD PHASED SCHOOL REOPENING HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

A motion by Michael Farrell and seconded by Susan Farr that the Millville Area School Board consider and approve the revisions to the MASD Phased School Reopening Health and Safety Plan to continue online classes from December 14, 2020 until January 19, 2021. The motion carried by roll call vote. 5 Yes; 4 No (William Berger, Brynn Clark, Greg Hemsarh, Heather Mausteller); 0 Absent

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE STIPEND

A motion by Deborah Price and seconded by Susan Farr that the Millville Area School Board consider and approve paying Noah Adams \$50 for each Board meeting that technology assistant services are rendered. The motion carried by roll call vote. 9 Yes; 0 No; 0 Absent

MILLVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Millville Area School Board Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2020

VARSITY BASKETBALL VIDEO RECORDING STIPEND

A motion by Jessica Whitmoyer and seconded by Heather Mausteller that the Millville Area School Board consider and approve paying Chelsea Rosenberger \$25 for each boys and girls varsity basketball game video recording. The motion carried by roll call vote. 9 Yes; 0 No; 0 Absent

RESCIND EARLY RETIREMENT INCENTIVE (ERI)

Mr. Rasmus met with the MEA last week. MEA requested splitting the ERI between a lump sum payment and a 403(b) account. After Mr. Rasmus spoke to Mr. Pratt, Mr. Pratt advised with a solicitor that was more adverse in that area, concluding that this would not be a permissible option. On earlier advice from Mr. Pratt, he was not aware of the tax law. Mr. Rasmus spoke to MEA representative, Carol Troisi, and MEA was agreeable to rescinding the motion of November 23, 2020 and creating a new motion.

A motion by Michael Farrell and seconded by Heather Mausteller that the Millville Area School Board consider and approve rescinding the Early Retirement Incentive approved at the November 23, 2020 meeting. The motion carried by roll call vote. 9 Yes; 0 No; 0 Absent

EARLY RETIREMENT INCENTIVE (ERI)

A motion by Susan Myers and seconded by Heather Mausteller that the Millville Area School Board consider and approve an Early Retirement Incentive to be offered to professional staff members who have been employed by MASD a minimum of ten (10) consecutive years that submit an irrevocable notice of retirement prior to 1/15/2021 and who retire at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Those employees will be afforded a \$25,000 monetary incentive to be placed into a 403(b) account. The motion carried by roll call vote. 9 Yes; 0 No; 0 Absent

ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Heather Mausteller and seconded by Greg Hemsarth to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Hannah Sherwood
Board Secretary