

INDIAN RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2022 - 4:00 P.M.
SUSSEX CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA

MINUTES

Call to Order

President Rodney Layfield called the Special Meeting of the Indian River School District Board of Education to order at 4:02 p.m.

Roll Call

Board Members present: Mr. Derek Cathell, Mr. Scott Collins, Mr. James Fritz, Dr. Donald Hattier, Mr. Rodney Layfield, Ms. Madeline Moses, Mr. Gerald Peden, Mrs. Connie Pryor, Dr. Heather Statler, Mrs. Leolga Wright.

Board Members Late: Mr. Scott Collins (4:03 p.m.), Mr. Derek Cathell (4:03 p.m.)

Executive Session

It was moved by Mrs. Pryor, seconded by Ms. Moses, to go into Executive Session at 4:02 p.m. for the purpose of discussing pending and potential litigation matters, pursuant to Del.C. §10004 (b) (c). The motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Mr. Jim Fritz left the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Reconvene

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Mr. Cathell, to reconvene in Regular Session at 4:57 p.m. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Approval of Agenda – February 11, 2022

It was moved by Dr. Hattier, seconded by Mr. Fritz, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comments

- Molli Carter spoke to the Board about violating the rights of Delaware students with the quarantine of students due to COVID exposure. The district has a legal obligation to educate students, the board need to stop placing fear ahead of the rights of students.
- Christina Tarabicos spoke on behalf of a parent of a 7th grader. The student has been quarantined twice due to COVID exposure. The student later missed additional days due to a scheduled surgery. The student has struggled due to not receiving missed school work.
- Andrea Caggiano spoke to the Board about the accuracy of negative vs. positive testing results. We are denying children education when they are quarantined. We need to honor the community demands to keep children in school.

- Kim Wills spoke to the Board about the health concerns of students wearing masks daily. Children get sick from other things besides COVID. Masks do not prevent COVID. We need to stop being afraid of COVID.
- Alex Spieler spoke to the Board about his concerns of medical discrimination of students whose parents do not choose to vaccinate their children with regards to quarantine. Parents have concerns over the long term effects of the vaccine. Students deserve to begin a “normal” learning environment in school.
- Jake Buchler spoke to the Board about mandates. We need to find a solution through compassion and education. We need to educate the public about the constitution and how we are not following the constitution. The Governor cannot make laws.

Public Comments

It was moved by Mr. Collins, seconded by Ms. Moses, to extend the allotted time for public comments. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

- Jennifer Hurd spoke to the Board about the need to stop wearing masks. Enough is enough, we do not have to wear masks in public areas, we need to do the same in schools.
- Crystal Shear spoke to the Board about ending the mask wearing in schools. Two years is long enough for students to wear masks in schools.
- Trevor Hurd spoke to the Board about concerns with the quarantine of students who have been exposed to COVID. He asked the Board if the reasoning for this is a fear of litigation, we need to stop living in fear.
- Natalie Hurd spoke to the Board about not wearing a mask in school. She (student at Sussex Central) has not been wearing a mask since December, she feels it should be optional to wear a mask in school.
- Ashley Elsmis spoke to the Board about her child being withdrawn and has trouble making friends because of the current school environment of mask mandates.

Superintendents Report

Dr. Owens shared with the Board the Test to Stay options with opportunities to address hardships. The district has been in contact with the Department of Education and the Department of Health to explore available options to keep students in school even after a potential exposure.

- Test to Stay
 - Test to Stay offered by Quidel, is an “add on” testing program to their testing surveillance program for asymptomatic students. In order for students to participate in Test to Stay, students must be enrolled in the weekly surveillance testing. Parents may opt in to this program at any time.
- Binex Rapid Testing
 - This option is intended to be supplemental to the Quidel program. Districts have a limited supply of Binax tests. Thus, this would be an option if Quidel is unavailable in the school or the parent indicates a hardship to get to a Quidel testing site.
- Home Test Kits
 - This is intended to be available if Quidel is not a viable option. The school would provide (5) days of approved home test kits for the families if needed. A ZOOM

meeting would be set up by the CDC assigned staff member and the family to observe the test administration and results. Results would be shared with the school principal and nurse and negative results would afford the opportunity for the student to attend school the next day and on succeeding days within the 5-day window.

Mrs. Leloga Wright left the meeting at 5:40 p.m. and returned at 5:45 p.m.

New Business

Test to Stay Options with Opportunities to Address Hardships

It was moved by Mr. Layfield, seconded by Dr. Hattier, to authorize the administration to move forward with Quidel and other reasonable testing options to ensure equitable opportunities to keep our students in school. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

DPH Guidance

It was moved by Mr. Layfield, seconded by Mrs. Wright, to continue following DPH guidance with regards to COVID - 19 and quarantine procedures as they have done until the updated guidance is provided. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Adjournment

President Layfield adjourned the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rodney M. Layfield
President
Board of Education
Indian River School District
RML/JFO: jmt

Jay F. Owens, Jr., Ed.D.
Secretary
Board of Education
Indian River School District