

## SPRING LAKE BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING, JULY 19, 2021

The Spring Lake Board of Education held a Regular Meeting on Monday, July 19, 2021 in person at the SLIS/MS Media Center. Jennifer Nicles called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Board members present: Jennifer Nicles, Curt Theune, Katie Pigott, Kathy Breen, Bruce Callen, Paul Aldridge and Christopher (Chris) Beck. Absent: None

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Curt Theune moved, supported by Chris Beck, to approve the Minutes of the Budget Hearing and Regular Meeting of June 21, 2021, as presented.

Vote: Yes – Unanimous

### **ITEMS RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR PRINTED AGENDA**

Teacher resignation to be added to Consent Agenda – Item #2 – Resignation of Special Education teacher Leanne Derks.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Rob Davidson, 15524 Oak Ridge Dr, SL – provided his opinion on the COVID 19 vaccine and mask wearing. He urged the Board to keep an eye on local positivity rates and to look at the facts when making decisions about mask wearing in school buildings.

Jeff Deater, 331 South Lake, SL – commented he hoped that the Board would announce their plan regarding masks and vaccine policy at this meeting. He stated he looks forward to sending his children back to school but is waiting on the direction the district will take on mask wearing, testing and vaccine protocols.

Becky Deater, 331 South Lake, SL – stated she believes it is time to give parents the choice and trust them to make decisions for their children regarding mask wearing and COVID testing. She stated masks are ineffective, have a negative impact on the mental health of children, and cause added stress and pressure to athletes. She stated if masks or testing are required by the district, her children would will not return to SLPS.

Spring Lake Student – commented that summer has been mask free everywhere, and the district should not be requiring masks for everyone but the decision should be left up to the parents or individuals.

Katie Bowen, 15075 Boom Rd, SL – provided her concerns on mask wearing, COVID vaccination and curriculum taught by the district. She asked the Board to do their due diligence, look at both sides of the story, and respect one another's opinions and choices. She requested no more mask mandates, COVID testing or pressure to vaccinate children.

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Cadence Ziegenthaler, 15620 Willows Dr., SL – stated that kids are not at high risk from death or severe COVID complications, masks are not an effective personal protection device, cloth masks can be potentially dangerous, and masks become political symbols. She commented suicide and other mental health issues have sky rocketed over the pandemic, vaccines are not FDA approved and asked the Board to provide a written policy to prevent vaccine status discrimination and a policy against mask mandates.

Ross Ziegenthaler 15620 Willows Dr., encouraged the Board to be open minded, do their research and keep critical thinking hats on and put into place a written school policies which prohibits obstructing children’s breathing and medical segregation of unvaccinated children.

Jason Koert – 17855 168<sup>th</sup> Ave., SL – provided his observations regarding kids gathering during the summer without masks, their survival in spite of COVID, and kids being afraid they will be segregated from other kids if they do not get the COVID vaccine. He asked the Board to let parents decide what is right for their children regarding mask wearing and vaccines.

Emily Hildebrandt, 16897 Birchview Ct., SL – thanked the Board for listening to the parents and hearing their concerns. She asked them to take all of the comments into consideration and help get parent volunteers back into the schools.

Greg Stempky, 2921 Judson Rd, SL – remarked on mask studies that show they are not meant to stop viruses, the pressure on students from other students about getting the COVID vaccine, and student worries about not being able to participate in group events unless vaccinated. He asked the Board to make a decision based on the data and not political pressures.

Emily Underhill, Allendale – provided her support for the parents in attendance, stated she is speaking at multiple board meetings and ask the Board to stand up for the families in the district and change the narrative to allow parents to make the choice for their children.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Curt Theune moved, supported by Chris Beck, to approve the consent agenda as presented:

- Accounts Payable – Food Service, SLCFAC, General Fund, Student Activity, etc. – totaling \$549,707
- Payroll – totaling \$2,338,130

Vote: Yes – Unanimous

**ACTION ITEMS**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Curt Theune moved, supported by Paul Aldridge, to approve the consent agenda as presented:

- New Hires –
  - Connolly Jenkins.....English Teacher .....High School
  - Austin Way .....PE Teacher.....High School
  - Andrew Blain.....PE Teacher.....Middle School

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Rachel Cotton.....Math Teacher .....Middle School  
Bruce Gaultney.....Math Teacher .....Middle School  
Konnor French .....4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher.....Jeffers Elementary

- Resignation  
Leanne Derks, high school Special Education teacher, has provided a letter of resignation effective immediately. Ms. Derks will be missed by staff, students and parents.

Vote: Yes – Unanimous

OFFICIAL DEPOSITORY FOR SCHOOL FUNDS RESOLUTION

Curt Theune moved, supported by Chris Beck, to approve the Official Depository for School Funds Resolution for Fiscal Year 2021-22 as presented.

Vote: Yes – Unanimous

SL RECREATION COMMISSION 2021 BUDGET

Curt Theune moved, supported by Bruce Callen, to approve the 2021 district contribution to the SL Recreation Department of \$6,545.

Vote: Yes – Unanimous

NOVEMBER ELECTION RESOLUTION

Curt Theune moved, supported by Chris Beck, to approve the November 2, 2021 Election Resolution as presented.

This operating millage proposal will allow the school district to continue to levy the statutory rate of not to exceed 18 mills on non-homestead properties required for the school district to receive its full revenue per pupil foundation allowance. This millage will only be levied to the extent necessary to restore millage lost because of a reduction required by the “Headlee” amendment due to property values increasing at a rate faster than inflation.

Vote: Yes – Unanimous

DISTRICT PROVIDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Curt Theune moved, supported by Bruce Callen, to approve August 18, 2021, August 19, 2021, October 8, 2021 and January 21, 2022 scheduled PD days as student instructional time for the 2021-22 school year as presented.

Vote: Yes – Unanimous

**DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS**

- School offices will be open beginning August 3, 2021.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Erik Sievertsen – 16510 W Willow Dr., SL – commented that masks have no value in preventing the transmission of influenza, there are no studies that verify the utility of masks for COVID, and has data that he would be happy to share with the Board. He stated the choice to vaccinate should be on an individual basis, the risk of dying for school age children is very low with the risk of dying from suicide 30 times that of dying from COVID.

Sarah McKee, 569 Farr Rd, Norton Shores – asked that the Board take into account that the attendees at this meeting are without masks, and vaccine and testing status for attendees are unknown.

Kevin Priddy 15997 Vinecrest, SL – commented that death in children from COVID is a very small percentage, and there are many more risk factors around school campuses that are more likely to cause harm or death to children.

Amanda Semlow, 15550 144<sup>th</sup> Ave, SL – stated she chose private schooling for one of her children when she realized that students would be required to wear masks last year and will remove both children from SLPS if masks and testing are required for unvaccinated students. She encouraged the board to make a decision at this meeting as August is too late, and parents be allowed to make decisions based on their own personal beliefs.

Rua Hekhuis 15520 Leonard, SL – commented she agrees with everyone's earlier comments and is here in support of the parents as a taxpaying member of the community. She asked the board to listen to the parents and is against CRT and the 1619 Project being introduced into the district's curriculum.

Lisa Schmuker, 18393 Country Ave, – commented that her daughter is afraid to take off her mask even when it is not required, has heard stories of segregation and discrimination against the unvaccinated, and will homeschool her daughter if needed.

Nichole Wrona – 16524 Spring Tree Dr, SL – stated she feels the same as everyone else in the room and asked the Board to keep the focus on the children and what is in their best interests.

Ross Ziegenthaler – provided further comments on an article recently released from the American Academy of Pediatrics, noted conflicts of interest from that report and that the report provides no data source.

Jamie May, 216 Prospect St., SL – thanked the Board and expressed her appreciation that the Board kept students in school as much as possible last year, understands the Board has tough decisions to make and trusts Board will do what is best.

Amber Garcia, 16624 Spring Tree Dr., SL – echoed other comments from the evening and stated the time is now to give the parents the choice on what is best for their children.

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent Furton reported on the following:

- Legislative Update – The per pupil foundation allowance is \$8,700 for 21-22, which is an increase of \$589 per pupil, and there will be a return of the 90/10 computation, 90% from the current year and 10% from the spring 2021 audited pupil count.
- Personnel – 15 new staff members have been hired with just one position left to fill.
- COVID – While the passion and conviction presented by public comments tonight are appreciated and heard by the Board, the Board will review guidelines from the Ottawa County Health Department to assist in determining any COVID policies. These guidelines are expected within the next 2 weeks. While this may not be as timely as everyone would like, have the confidence in the Board to make the decisions based on all of the information. Plexiglas has been removed from the district, the district has not required COVID testing, with the exception of testing required MHSAA for athletes, and the district does not pressure for or require the COVID vaccine. The district has been as progressive as it can be and had more in-person learning days than any other school district in the county for the previous school year. Be patient and have trust in your Board.

**UPCOMING MEETING**

- Regular Board Meeting – August 16, 2021, 7:00 p.m., IS/MS Media Center

**ADJOURNMENT**

Curt Theune moved, supported by Bruce Callen, to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: Yes – Unanimous

Jennifer Nicles adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Board Secretary