

The special meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on September 20, 2021, at the New Providence High School/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, by the Board President, Mrs. Misiukiewicz.

Present on roll call were Rebecca Coniglio, Bernadette Cuccaro, Amanda Marano, Mary Misiukiewicz, Jennifer Killea, Adam Smith and Joseph Walsh. Also present were Dr. David Miceli, Superintendent of Schools; Lauren Zirpoli, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services; James E. Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary; John Richter, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Supervision; twenty-nine (29) members of the public.

Mrs. Misiukiewicz led in the salute to the flag.

Mrs. Misiukiewicz read the following statement:

This is a special meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with PL 1975, Chapter 231.

Whenever the business of the Board requires it to convene to Closed Session, the session will begin no later than 9:30 p.m. At the conclusion of the need for Closed Session, the Board will reconvene to the public portion of the meeting. At that time, the Board will complete any other business that may be before it and the public will then be given an opportunity to be heard before the meeting is adjourned.

The following notice was posted on September 14, 2021:

The New Providence Board of Education will hold a **Special Meeting** on Monday, September 20, 2021 beginning at 7:00 p.m., in the New Providence

High/Middle School Media Center to discuss school matters related to the opening of schools.

The Board of Education will meet in-person and livestream the meeting. The link to the livestream will be posted on the Board Agenda. Members of the public must be present at the meeting to make comments. No action will take place at this meeting.

Mrs. Misiukiewicz welcomed everyone. Students are eight (8) school days into their new routines and are building new friendships, getting to know their teachers, adjusting to new classes, as well as participating in extra and co-curricular activities. The challenges of COVID have come with anxiety and stress on families because of the continuing uncertainty of the virus and the absence of vaccines for our younger students. Mrs. Misiukiewicz mentioned the morning's breaking news... the Headline was "Pfizer said its coronavirus vaccine is safe and effective in young children. With FDA authorization, millions of them may be immunized by Halloween".

At the August 26th meeting Dr. Miceli and his team walked through all the new protocols and policies that would be in place for the start of schools (these protocols were set forth with the guidance from the Road Forward issued by the Dept of Education) Mrs. Misiukiewicz reviewed the District protocols starting with:

- Executive Order #253 - all district employees must be vaccinated or they must submit to testing at least once a week. The testing on our unvaccinated staff began on September 13th and the community wide testing began this past Saturday, September 18th. This was set up as a courtesy to our students and families and our staff and their families through the District's vendor AMS.
- Executive Order #251- face coverings for all staff, students and visitors are mandatory when indoors on school premises except in certain circumstances as noted in the order.

- Physical distancing - while there is no requirement for physical distancing, the District strives to maintain as much distancing as practical in all circumstances.

- **Lunch**

This past Friday, Mrs. Misiukiewicz, toured all of the district buildings to specifically witness students and staff during the lunch periods. Mrs. Misiukiewicz highlighted the protocols at the elementary schools.

- On the first day of school, September 8th, at Salt Brook and AWR, the elementary students were assigned a seat in their respective cafeterias. On fair weather days, the students come into the cafeteria with their respective homeroom, where there are several hand sanitizer stations. If the students are buying lunch they get in line, get their food and the cafeteria employee punches in their code into the pinpad so the students do not have to touch the pin pad. Again on fair weather days the students have a choice to sit either in their assigned seats, which is, every other seat, diagonally across from another student and three (3) feet apart from their neighbor to either the right or left, or they can choose to sit outside. At Salt Brook, the space is directly outside the lunch room on the grass. Mrs. Drexinger purchased cushions for the students to sit on. At AWR, the outdoor space is the courtyard.
- Mrs. Misiukiewicz urged parents to have a discussion with their children about where they are sitting for lunch. Situations have occurred whereby parents called the school to ensure their student was eating outside but the student decided to eat inside. On fair weather days, recess is held outdoors and the mask is allowed to come off outdoors, if the students choose to do so. On inclement days all students will sit in their assigned seat. The students sit down, as soon as they start eating the mask comes off and as soon as they are finished the mask goes back on. Mrs. Misiukiewicz witnessed compliant students and if they forgot, the lunch aides reminded them. After indoor lunch, on inclement days, the students, with their masks on, are assigned to either go to the gymnasium, the library or assigned classroom for indoor recess. In addition, the District also set up the Lunch Protocol for all grades PreK - 6 whereby the parents may select to pick up their child for the duration of the lunch/recess.
- Grades 7-10 - parents may give consent for their children to leave school grounds.
- Grade 11-12 - students have an open lunch option with the consent of their parents/guardian.

At the high/middle school, the students sit either in the cafeteria, in the courtyard, or the hallways or they can elect w/parent consent to leave campus. Mrs. Misiukiewicz witnessed many happy groups of students with their friends in the hallway.

Mrs. Misiukiewicz thanked Mr. McGeehan because he developed a sign in/sign out program for high/middle school students which enabled an orderly system to track students when they leave for lunch. The students simply swipe their QR code on the ipad before they leave the building so that the staff is fully aware of who is coming and going for lunch.

- The cleaning/disinfection regime is robust and similar to the 2020/2021 school year.
- At the August 26th meeting, Mr. Carangelo and Mrs. Zirpoli reviewed the flow charts for Symptomatic and Asymptomatic Staff and Students (the flowcharts are posted on our district website) The educational instruction during Covid absences was also reviewed at the August 26th meeting.

The purpose of tonight's meeting was to hear from our Finance Facility and Security committee; the committee is chaired by Mr Walsh, with Mr. Smith and Mrs. Killea as committee members. They held a committee meeting on Friday September 10th to discuss items that were raised in a petition received by the Board on September 4th. Mrs. Misiukiewicz said it is important to take this opportunity to indicate

that Board of Education meetings are an opportunity for the Board to conduct its official business in an open and transparent manner. The District committees, Curriculum/Instruction, Personnel/Communications, Finance/Facility/Security are the committees which are on all of the Board agendas every month. Due to the public interest as indicated by the petition - the Board has inserted this Special meeting so it can discuss the findings from the Facilities meeting held on September 10th.

The petition which was brought to the Board seeks the following: 1. All weather outdoor eating (purchase of tents for all buildings) 2. Removal of tables and grouped desks in favor of rows of desks with students not facing each other. 3. Increase the use of masks in all indoor spaces by adjusting or eliminating the weather dependent mask mandates. 4. Use of air purifying equipment for all instructional spaces.

Mr. Misiukiewicz called attention to the November 19, 2020 Board of Education meeting where Mr. Settembrino, the District's architect, as well as Mr. Ozer from Eden Engineers, discussed the long range facility plan. The professionals indicated that the classrooms and buildings were safe and the ventilation systems in all buildings meet code requirements. All exhaust fans run two hours before school begins, two hours after school and during the school day. All interior room units will run while pulling fresh air into the space. Spaces with windows will have the unit ventilators running, which will pull fresh air into the spaces, as well as have the windows open. Filters are checked/changed and the filters are sized, installed and replaced as per the manufacturer's recommendation. It should be noted, this District offered in person learning last year, with all the rooms in use, using the same ventilation system, and did not have a single school transmission.

The CDC has recommended bringing in as much outdoor air as possible and the District is doing that. The guidance indicated that even just cracking open a window or door increases outdoor airflow, which helps reduce the potential concentration of virus particles in the air.

As of the week ending September 17th, we have six Covid cases in the District - it was confirmed that these cases were not transmitted in school. Mrs. Misikukiewicz implored the school community to stay vigilant outside of the school setting. The District can not control what is happening outside of school. The actions of one individual can have grand implications for many in our school community. The Board and the administration has been steadfast since March of 2020 that our #1 value is the health and safety of our school community. The District remains committed to the educational experience and the well being of every student.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Miceli began by thanking everyone for all their hard work so far, especially the teachers for their effort with the opening of schools. They have remained steadfast and committed to the instruction of the District's students. He commended the administration and department heads in getting the schools fully staffed. He shared some data.

COVID Vaccinations::

The data was obtained from Megan Avallone at the Westfield Regional Health Department.

Demographic	Vaccination %
Staff	95%
12-17 year olds	70%
18-29 year olds	100%
30-49 year olds	93%
50-64 year olds	86%
65 and older	100%

The number of active cases in the Borough is twenty-six (26) as of September 19, 2021. In the District as of September 10, 2021, there were three (3) and as of September 17, 2021 there were six (6).

Lunch

Dr. Miceli continued to share some statistics on the number of students going out to lunch:

- Allen W. Roberts School: 2%
- Salt Brook School 1%
- Middle School 8 %
- High School 55%

Testing and Screening

Testing for staff occurs on Mondays and staff has already been tested twice. The District has the option to add Thursday, if necessary. Voluntary testing is also available on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. at Salt Brook School and Allen W. Roberts school for the community.

Masks

Masks are required as a result of the Executive Order. As the temperature gets cooler, the 75 degree threshold should not apply moving forward. The 75 degree threshold was a result of the information received from the Department of Health. The District follows the Department of Health recommendations on all health related matters.

Desks, Groups, Spacing

The District is trying to replicate as much of the normal classroom as possible, while spacing out students as much as practicable.

Lunch

Salt Brook School and Allen W. Roberts are spacing out as much as possible while indoors. Outdoor eating is available in the courtyard and the patio. High/middle school students have the option of an open campus, indoor eating, as well as courtyard eating options. Grades 7-12 have the opportunity to leave campus.

After School Activities and Athletics

After school activities and athletics are in full swing and appear to be going well.

Non-School Sponsored Activities Evenings and Weekends

Dr. Miceli reminded parents to be safe and mindful of their students' actions outside of school as they have ramifications on others.

Quarantine

New Providence's region is considered high risk. Therefore, the Department of Health recommends a fourteen day quarantine. The District has looked at alternatives but is not comfortable with making changes at this time. There are two options: ten (10) day quarantine without a test or a test on day five/six/seven and return after 8 days with a negative test result.

With regard to the instructional model, the District will continue to prioritize in-person instruction. If an entire class must quarantine, zoom will be offered. If 50% of the class must quarantine, zoom will be offered. At Salt Brook, Mrs. Drexinger is addressing the issues and getting the students as much instruction as possible so that they can come back successfully. The District will continue to evaluate this policy and pivot if necessary.

Finance, Facilities and Safety/Security Committee Report

Mr. Walsh stated that the Finance, Facilities and Safety/Security Committee, Ms. Killea, Mr. Smith and himself, as well as Mr. Testa and Dr. Miceli met on September 10, 2021. In cafeterias and other high risk areas like the nurse's office, the CDC recommends opening windows and using air filtration. The engineering team said air purification could not hurt and there are no other Districts in the surrounding area that are using air purifiers. The engineering firm revalidated our air circulation this past spring. It is difficult to measure the benefits of air purifiers and justify the costs. It is also difficult to determine if the air purifiers can stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The cost of the air purifier is approximately \$800.00 per unit. With one-hundred-sixty six (166) instructional spaces at \$800.00 per unit the cost would be \$132,800.00. There would be an annual maintenance component of approximately \$200.00 per unit. Air purifiers at Salt Brook School and Allen W. Roberts School would be approximately \$75,000.00 with \$200.00 per unit annual maintenance cost.

The committee also investigated the use of tents and heaters for lunch. Tents would be approximately \$20,000.00 to rent for three (3) months and if the District used tents for six (6) months the cost would equal \$40,000.00 for all the schools. The committee felt the benefits for the tents did not outweigh the costs and there were safety concerns such as heating, bad weather and storms.

Due to the number of students who are unvaccinated at Salt Brook School and Allen W. Roberts and the level of proposed risk, air purifiers were installed at both elementary schools' cafeterias and all the nurses offices. No measures were deemed necessary at the high/middle school because of the high number of vaccinated students. The total cost was \$13,125.00 for three (3) at Allen W. Roberts and two (2) at Salt Brook. The cost of the air purifiers was paid through ESSER grant funds.

Mrs. Coniglio asked if the \$200.00 was per unit or the total maintenance cost and it was an ongoing expense. Mr. Walsh said the \$200.00 is per unit and would cost \$1,000.00 per year. Mrs. Misiukiewicz asked about the heaters in the tents. Mr. Walsh referred the question to Mr. Testa. Mr. Testa stated that if heaters are used, the fire code official would need to be involved. At the annual walk through with the fire code official, the District showed the official the spaces that would be considered for heating. The fire code official informed the District that there would be fire code regulations that the schools would need to go through before heaters could be used. He also voiced concern about the safety of the tents with

possible snow and collapse. That is why the committee only looked at using the tents during the first three (3) months of the year and the last three (3) months of the year.

Mrs. Marano asked if air purifiers would be used in conjunction with an HVAC system if that was done further down the road or would it be wasted money. Mr. Testa explained that purchasing air purifiers does not help the District with regard to an HVAC system. They are two separate units and could still be used in the classrooms, but they do not help the District with moving to an updated HVAC system.

Mrs. Coniglio asked if the District was moving ahead with the purchases. Mr. Walsh said they were purchased and installed. Mr. Testa confirmed that the air purifiers were installed at Salt Brook and Allen W. Roberts cafeterias and would be installed shortly in the nurses offices.

Mrs. Misiukiewicz confirmed the District would not use tents and would continue with the existing lunch protocols with air purifiers in the high risk areas.

Opportunity for the Public to be Heard

Mrs. Misiukiewicz reviewed the policy for comments. She asked commenters to state their names, address of residence and said comments would be limited to two minutes. Commenters should not speak more than once until all commenters have been heard. All comments should be presented to the presiding officer. Officer has the right to terminate any questions or comments. Members of the public may be asked to leave the meeting if the rules of decorum are not followed.

Dr. Sue Wang, 19 Pine Way

Dr. Wang stated she has four children and is a physician and has worked with the CDC, St. Barnabas Medical Center, Rutgers and the World Health Organization. Dr. Wang said pediatric cases are on the rise and cases are at their highest levels and children make up one-third of the cases. Delta is more infectious, transmissible and can occur as break through cases in the vaccinated. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of New Providence's population is under 18 and twenty-two (22%) is under 14. That means one in five are too young to be vaccinated. Six kids per grade could be infected. New Providence is in a high risk area. The numbers of those infected is only going to go higher. Her son was one of the cases. He was unmasked briefly and the disruptions have been significant with the quarantine. She is grateful that he has been able to participate in school via zoom. Now is not the time to let our guard down and layered strategies of safety must be used.

Peter Springer, 109 Tall Oaks Drive

Mr. Springer said he has three children who are too young to be vaccinated. He advocated for a mandatory mask mandate and a permanent removal of the 75 degree temperature threshold. On September 8, 2021 he reached out to Meggan Avallone at the Westfield Regional Board of Health for clarification on how the 75 degree threshold was established. Ms. Avallone said it was up to the District to decide on the threshold. The District should consider the risks of not wearing a mask versus the risk of wearing a mask at a slightly higher temperature. He reiterated that he is not sure why 75 degrees is the threshold and not 80 degrees or 90 degrees.

Mrs. Coniglio asked Mr. Springer if he is getting the emails from the District indicating on which days masks would be optional. Mr. Springer replied yes but it does not mention how to wear a mask appropriately and the type of mask to wear. Mrs. Coniglio said the temperature mandate should not be an issue going forward since the rest of September will be cooler.

Glen Robertson, NPEA Representative, 35 Pioneer Drive

Mr. Robertson wanted to thank the Board. The last year was very difficult and the one consistent thing was that the Board and the Superintendent followed the guidance from the Westfield Board of Health. The Board does not have a background in public health and the teachers appreciated that the decisions being made are done by people who are qualified. With regard to lunches outside, Mr. Robertson pointed out that over the last ten years a big focus has been on the safety of our schools. He has seen the hiring of school resource officers, the installation of the security vestibule and participated in live fire exercises and lockdown drills. There has been a tremendous focus on keeping students safe and he is concerned that allowing students to eat lunch outside in a tent would not be keeping them safe.

Monica Macauley, 80 Inwood Road

Mrs. Macauley stated that she values security but does not feel outdoor lunch is any different than recess or physical education classes. She would like to see more use of the outdoor spaces at the high/middle school. She does not think tents are necessary. PE classes take place outside the secure perimeters. There are plenty of reasonable solutions to eat outside with tables or blankets. Governor Livingston has a QR code system which allows students to have lunch on the bleachers.

Ted Van Buskirk, 47 Tall Oaks Drive

He has two children, one in sixth grade and one in tenth grade and both are vaccinated. His wife had a kidney transplant and is immune compromised. He would like to see the District move away from the 75 degree threshold and align with other districts that do not have a temperature threshold to protect the students or community at large. He believes the 75 degree threshold is arbitrary and does not make sense. If other districts can make masks mandatory, New Providence should be able to make them mandatory.

Todd Salamon, 15 Delwick Road

Mr. Salamon has a fifth grader who is not eligible for vaccination and he is concerned about the unvaccinated population in the school. He would like the district to use more risk mitigation measures like weekly screenings. Saturday morning is a good start but he would like the District to be more proactive and do screenings during school one time per week. He inquired about whether or not the school has applied for funding at state and federal levels. Dr. Miceli responded that the District was not eligible for the third round of funding. AMS will provide testing at no cost. Mr. Salamon asked if it could expand into the school day. Dr. Miceli said before the District increases the capacity for screening, it will first monitor the situation to see if the risk goes up. The initial framework is there and if there is a mandate to test students, the District will be in a good position to do so. Mr. Salamon asked if the number of cases increased could testing be initiated. Dr. Miceli reiterated that if a mandate comes down for testing the District has established a framework that can handle that.

Dave Gagliardotto, 284 Livingston Ave

Mr. Gagliardotto has three boys, one of whom was part of the sixth grade group that had to quarantine. His son was only one of a few kids in his class that had to quarantine and he was not given the option of zoom. He has only had about twenty minutes of instruction and is worried his son will fall behind. He would like to have the zoom option even if his son just listens and does not interact.

Molly Springer, 109 Tall Oaks Drive

Mrs. Springer said the District is creating an inequitable lunch scenario at the elementary level. The children are too young to be vaccinated and too young to leave on their own for lunch. The only parents who can pick up their children for lunch are those with financial means or flexible jobs. For parents with multiple children it is unrealistic to think they can go back and forth for each lunch period. The District must provide equitable lunch for all students. Outdoor tents should be used all year. Parents should be allowed to pick up their children in bad weather and more frequently than every marking period. She wanted to know when the District could have the HVAC systems fully operational. Mr. Testa explained the bond referendum process would be in year one and if passed, bids with specifications and contract awards would be in year two. It would take multiple summers to complete because the work cannot be done during the school year. All our current systems are working and pulling fresh air according to the requirements.

Trinh Tran, 190 Woodbine Circle

Mrs. Tran has a sixth grader who had to quarantine. Her child has struggled with quarantine and it has been hard to isolate him. The kids were initially optimistic about returning to school but three days in and he is now home. He did not receive any zoom support which was very difficult and she feels he was unfairly forced into quarantine and was not allowed to zoom.

Amy Mascarina, 29 Whitewood Drive

Mrs. Mascarina stated that the delta variant was not as widespread last year which means we are not in a normal year. The Road Forward Plan is different from the State plan. The State plan said to maintain physical distance by implementing the following strategies such as structural intervention by facing desks in the same direction and avoiding groupings. Space should be maximized by using common areas such as cafeterias, hallways and auditoriums. She is concerned that since the District is in a high risk area, it should be looking at other preventative measures such as screening. She asked why the District is not following the direction of the State. Dr. Miceli responded that the District is trying to the best extent possible to physically distance. If children are wearing a mask it does not matter which way they face. At the end of last year, everything was put back in the rooms so the District could go back to its instructional model. The concept of rows was eliminated about ten years ago. Last year, the staff did not have all their resources available because much of their furniture and other devices were stored in the gyms to accommodate for physical distancing. It was difficult for the staff to follow the educational models because they could not use those resources. There have been many conversations across the State about not wearing masks as a result of all educators being vaccinated. Up until August 6, 2021 there was no mask mandate. It is the goal of the District to find the balance between the best educational experience with the rules that are approved.

Kieran Kern, 71 Charnwood Road

Mrs. Kern has compromised lungs. She noted that the Board of Education Members have barriers between each other and are distanced. Dr. Miceli explained that the custodians set up the meeting as they always have and it was a miscommunication about the set up. The Board is aware that the Department of Health has said they are not effective. Mrs. Kern asked Dr. Miceli to think about removing materials from the classroom to allow for more socially distanced seats. Dr. Miceli said the health and safety of the students has always been the District's number one concern.

Ms. Anat Nandini, 30 Deerfield Road

Ms. Nandini thanked the teachers. She stated that the majority of middle and high schoolers are vaccinated but the elementary school students are not vaccinated. She works for a pharmaceutical company and is a vaccinated adult. She is an onsite essential worker but getting vaccinated does not mean one can't get COVID. She is tested daily for COVID. She is apprehensive about sending her unvaccinated children to school. She would like to see the District make sure all students can eat lunch outside all year, air purifiers in every classroom, a mask mandate regardless of the temperature and stated the lunch pick up option is not realistic. If money is an issue, she would like to do a fundraiser for air purifiers and outdoor tents. She asked how it is determined where COVID contact happened. Dr. Miceli said the Department of Health and the Borough nurse make the determination of contact tracing. Mr. Walsh said for safety reasons, tents are not being considered.

Dr. Greg Schivley, 15 Badgley Drive

Mr. Schivley said he has his PhD in civil and environmental engineering. With the current pediatric cases resulting in 1 in 33 children being hospitalized, he is concerned that his children who are not old enough to be vaccinated might end up in the hospital if they contact COVID. Dr. Schivley is part of the 1% picking up children for lunch. It is not easy and wishes it was weather dependent, that his son could stay at school during nice days and go home during inclement weather. He is happy to hear the District has installed air purifiers. Based on his research of HEPA filters, \$13,000 for five units seems expensive and the units better have a high rate of clean air. Mr. Testa reported that the exchange rate is four air changes per hour. The vendor spec'd out the units after reviewing the capacity of the cafeterias. The District did its research and wanted to purchase high quality purifiers that would provide a high rate of exchange. Mr. Schivley continued that the best way to prevent COVID is with a layered approach which includes vaccination for those eligible, screenings, masks and physical distancing. He also said it was important to monitor CO2 rates. HVAC filters should also be checked. He is glad to see there is a lot of air filtration and would like the District to consider adding them to music rooms and gyms.

Mr. Ryan McDonald, 22 Hedden Place

Mr. McDonald said the 75 degree mandate is a disgrace. The first criteria when evaluating the number of people in a room is physical distance. Air filtration should be the next criteria. The District needs to do more than just the bare minimum and he is asking the District to do more than the CDC recommends. The District should use the parent body to help. He asked for outdoor lunches year round, more air circulation and mask mandate.

Mr. Anthony Gagliolo, 22 Hedden Place

Mr. Gagliolo thanked the District for a well thought out plan for a successful return to school. He appreciated the flexibility of having the mask mandate lifted when the temperature is above 75 degrees. It allows children who do not want to wear a mask during warm temperatures to be comfortable while allowing other students to wear masks if they want to. Mr. Gagliolo expressed concern over the number of children under the age of 17 who have passed away during COVID. The mental health and stress level of the children should be considered. He does not want one parent's concern to outweigh another parent's concern. There are many viewpoints with regard to wearing masks and he asked that all parents respect that and make the decision based on what is best for their individual children.

Mr. Justin McLean, 46 Clinton Avenue

Mr. McLean said he was thankful for the thought and care that were put into the protocols and that the Board has the best interest of the children in mind. However, zoom should be used when students have to quarantine. The District has the technology and it worked last year. He believes that it is a missed opportunity not to use it. Mr. McLean also said that he would like students to face forward instead of facing each other. He also does not agree with the 75 degree threshold and there should be no problem wearing masks when the temperature is above 75 degrees. He also said he would be willing to do fundraising for safety equipment and tents. If the District needs him to reach out to the community, let him know. Forty-thousand dollars for tents should not even be in the discussion. In the grand scheme of the budget, forty thousand dollars is not that much. The District is not taking the COVID seriously if it is concerned about money. Delta is very different and the District must take measures now.

Mrs. Misiukiewicz said the entire Board has children and they all care and the number one priority is the health and safety of the students. If the District needs to pivot, they will. They continually monitor and want to get back to normal but know the District has to be mindful.

Mr. McLean said he feels everyone is getting too lackadaisical. For example, the guidance says that plexiglass is not useful but the Board is separated by plexiglass. Dr. Miceli again stated that it was a miscommunication with the custodians who set up the plexiglass. Mr. Mclean said the District needs to be serious.

Mrs. Smith said he takes umbrage that the Board has not taken the Delta variant seriously. New Providence was the first school in the State to close. The District did not wait for Trenton to issue a directive, all other districts followed New Providence. The District monitors the status of the pandemic on a daily basis. Dr. Miceli is on the phone with the Department of Health constantly, probably more than any other administrator. People in the room tonight do not constitute the majority of how everyone feels. The District is trying to educate the kids in the best way possible. A healthy double vaccinated adult is more likely to end up in the hospital than any child under 18. The number of children who have died from COVID is much less than the number of children who have died from self inflicted wounds. There are a number of factors which the District must look at but you cannot say the District is not taking COVID seriously.

Mr. Allen Swanson, 47 Overhill Road

The claim that the 5-11 year old population would be vaccinated by Halloween was made by Pfizer. Data has not been released to the government yet. It is important to not to believe this population will be vaccinated by Halloween.

Ms. Cindy Depalo, 11 Salem Road

Mrs. DePalo said her son is in the 6th grade which had a number of students quarantined and she was surprised that she was not contacted. She feels the District needs to be more transparent. She questioned why her best friend's son was sent home but her son was not. Kids talk a lot and that is how parents find out. More transparency would allay concerns. It would have been nice if the District let the parents know air purifiers were installed. Dr. Miceli said the District is being as transparent as possible. There is no requirement to have the dashboard or the letters. It was a conscious decision to notify parents. The notifications contain the maximum amount of information that the DOH will allow. Mrs. Cuccaro stated that when contact tracers call, parents sometimes don't tell everyone with whom their

children were in contact. The public health nurse will notify the parents if their children were exposed outside of school.

Mrs. Stacey Gunderman, 19 Salem Road

Mrs. Gunderman said she is one of the names associated with the petition and is thankful for everyone who spoke this evening. She also wants a normal classroom, every parent here wants a normal classroom but it is impossible for a normal classroom during COVID. Seven children have died in New Jersey from COVID and that is seven families that were broken. One life is too many. The District needs to do more. The District did not get to be an award winning District by doing what is required but by doing more. The District needs to rise up and implement these recommendations.

Mr. Steven Kaplan, 851 Springfield

Mr. Kaplan said testing should be done on vaccinated as well unvaccinated staff and students because vaccinated people can carry the virus. He also said that zoom classes should be an option even though it may be harder for the teachers but it would be worth it for the students.

Closed Session

Mrs. Misiukiewicz moved to adopt the following resolution

This body shall on September 20, 2021 in the New Providence High/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, discuss in closed session, pursuant to Section 7 of the Open Meetings Act, specific matters which may be generally described as follows:

- Student matters
- Personnel matters

The minutes of the discussion in closed session of the aforementioned matters may be disclosed to the public after final determination of action has been reached.

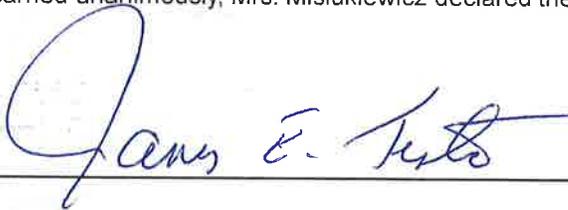
On a motion by Mr. Walsh, seconded by Mrs. Coniglio and carried unanimously, the Board returned to public session at 10:15 p.m.

Return to Public Session

The Board reconvened to a public session at 10:15 p.m. Mrs. Misiukiewicz called the Board to order. Members present were Mrs. Coniglio, Mrs. Cuccaro, Mrs. Killea, Mrs. Marano, and Mr. Walsh.

Adjournment

There being no other business before the Board, on a motion by Mr. Walsh, seconded by Mrs. Coniglio, and carried unanimously, Mrs. Misiukiewicz declared the meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.



James E. Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
9/20/21 Board Meeting

