

**Work Session Meeting
August 31, 2020**

Opening

Call to Order

At 6:19 p.m. School Board Vice President Jessica Marelli called the August 31, 2020, Caesar Rodney School District Work Session Meeting to order. President Michael Marasco had technical difficulties.

Roll Call

Members present in addition to Vice President Marelli were President, Mr. Michael Marasco, Board Members Mr. Dave Failing, Dr. Joyce Denman, Mr. P. Scott Wilson and Executive Secretary Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald. President Marasco took over running the meeting after roll call.

Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Marelli made a motion to adopt the August 31, 2020 agenda and the addendum as presented. Mr. Failing seconded the motion and after roll call, the motion carried 5-0. (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, Wilson, and Denman).

Update on School Re-Opening

President Marasco thanked all attendees for joining the meeting this evening.

Dr. Fitzgerald assured the Board that the administration is working on the concerns brought to the Board's attention. President Marasco shared a concern regarding staff bringing in their children to the classrooms while doing hybrid/remote learning. He stated in private industry, they are doing everything to keep staff employed and he agrees we are trying to the same.

Mr. Wilson wanted to know what we exactly are we planning to do for these teachers. He asked what is the rationale and what were the pros and cons of having their children with them in the buildings.

Dr. Fitzgerald stated the first 6 weeks are optional of working from home or the classroom. He mentioned the Boys and Girls Club option. He continued to state we are working on a resolution. We can only have 7-12 students in one classroom. While we are in a remote setting, teachers do have the option to work from home. Mr. Wilson asked what is the option after the 6 weeks is up. Dr. Fitzgerald stated the Boys and Girls Club is still an option for staff. President Marelli stated she feels we will be hearing more from staff members who are also teachers. Dr. Fitzgerald continued to state we understand the concern, but we are not allowed to open fully at this time. Hopefully, this will change very soon. The problem at some schools is the youth center houses their boys and girls club. It is open to base personnel as a priority. Staff at W.Reilly Brown are asked to attend the Boys & Girls Club at their closest facility. We are working on providing transportation options. Mr. Wilson stated we need to quickly come out with a definitive plan. Dr. Fitzgerald stated plans are constantly changing. Dr. Denman stated the 1st-period planning was a concern. She asked for the cons of having their children in the rooms with them. Dr. Fitzgerald explained there are liability issues. We need to consider the best interest of the entire district as we move forward. We will do everything we legally can do to support our staff. We do represent the community and we need to provide a safe environment for all. Mr. Marasco stated our principals know to be flexible now and are doing a very good job. Dr. Fitzgerald stated remote learning is for the first 6-weeks and we will be bringing in small groups of students as soon as we can. That is the main goal. He also shared we have just completed meaningful professional development with all staff.

Mr. Failing thanked everyone for their comments. He stated we will look at all obstacles. He shared we have a great group of people that are paying close attention to those issues. He is confident with how we will continue to support our teachers.

Mrs. Tara Faircloth shared an update on the recent professional development. She stated we had a lot of time for collaborations and planning. Time was spent on building relationships with students. Science experiments were explored using their document cameras remotely and some Bluetooth capabilities. She stated we are in a good place right now. Ms. Marelli shared she has heard from several teachers regarding having student

cameras turned on during instruction. Mrs. Faircloth stated the expectation is that the student's cameras should stay on. Teachers will work with families and students who do not want their cameras turned on to find a workable solution.

Ms. Marelli has also heard concerns about taking attendance. Dr. Fitzgerald stated all 19 school districts have requested that the Attorney General draft an attendance policy throughout the state so it is consistent.

President Marasco thanked Mrs. Faircloth for their work her department is doing. Mrs. Faircloth continued to state they are working on an easy document to help families with clarity on instruction. Dr. Denman saw a video on how to turn an old phone into a document camera. And shared that was an innovative idea. President Marelli asked about the paraprofessionals and what they are doing at this time. Mrs. Faircloth stated they are doing the same professional development as the teachers. They are working together and supporting each other.

Dr. Denman asked about staff planning time. Mrs. Faircloth stated teachers still have the typical planning, but they also have office hours with additional blocks of time for collaboration, etc. Teachers are being very creative with their planning and scheduling. Mr. Marasco asked about the need for additional staff because of the technology needed now. Dr. Fitzgerald stated we have to see how many units we earn and if we can use those units to hire more staff. He mentioned using substitute support. We will continue to monitor this as we move forward. Dr. Noel stated we are hiring one sub per building for the entire year to be there all of the time. Ms. Marelli asked how we will transform our typical first day of school into a zoom first day of school. Dr. Fitzgerald stated we will be available to provide support as it is needed throughout the district. Dr. Denman asked if there would be a schedule for administrators to connect to classes via zoom. Mrs. Faircloth stated administrators can attend any zoom sessions without entering passwords.

President Marasco shared that he toured several buildings recently to see what the hybrid/remote learning plan will look like. Dr. Fitzgerald stated we knew this would be challenging with the required cleaning and timing for that cleaning, etc. With no personnel in the buildings, we can do this. Certain schools have classes with 7 or 8 students where others could have up to 12 in a classroom. We understand the limits and we certainly understand the frustrations. He reminded the Board of the continued changes in the restrictions from the Governor. He is appreciative of the fact that the custodial staff are working hard to make it work. He invited the other Board members to also take a tour to see what this will look like. He shared that our goal is to have everyone back in school, but we must take the small steps and do them correctly to make sure that happens. Mr. Marasco stated it was an eye-opener to see how it will work. He was impressed with how we are following the restrictions.

Ms. Marelli shared she was given a suggestion to have a possible drill. This could be done by having some staff act as students going through some of the problems that may come up. Mrs. Faircloth shared we have something in the works for something similar. She mentioned even the staff and administrators can have technical issues so we need to be aware of that. It is not at all perfect. Mr. Failing asked about providing support for the working parents who are not tech-savvy. Ms. Faircloth stated we now have two tech hotlines for support. Teachers also have additional office hours for families.

Dr. Denman asked about engaging the hybrid students vs. remote students. The principals are working on determining balance in their staff classrooms. All students will have five days of instruction. Mr. Marasco asked about the immersion program. Mrs. Faircloth shared that she has reviewed the surveys and data. We are looking at the results and we will work with principals on providing the immersion program. It is definitely on the radar.

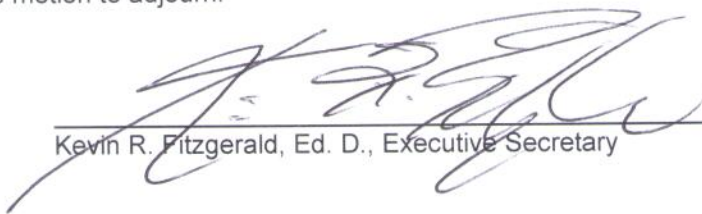
Mr. Failing thanked the principals and staff and he knows there is a lot of work to do. He stated we know we can't deliver the education we are used to but we will do our best. He stated we shouldn't let the negativity drag them down. He stated we are confident that we will get through this. Mr. Marasco echoed Mr. Failing's statement. He is impressed with how our team is working together.

Executive Session

At 7:12 p.m. Ms. Marelli made a motion to go into Executive Session. The purpose of which is to discuss real estate acquisition as afforded by 29 Del. C. Sect. 10004(b)(2) without returning to open session. Dr. Denman seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0. (Marasco, Marelli, Failing, Wilson, and Denman)

Adjournment

At 7:55 p.m. President Marasco made the motion to adjourn.



Kevin R. Fitzgerald, Ed. D., Executive Secretary Date

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