

Board of Education Special Meeting
July 27, 2020 6:00 PM
Deerfield Primary Library
In-Person Meeting &
By Live Viewing at BCS YouTube Page

Information concerning the Open Meeting Law, Chapter 84, Article 14 of Nebraska State Statutes, is posted in the meeting room and at a location accessible to members of the public.

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Kari Loseke, President, called the Board of Education Special meeting to order at 6:00pm.

2. Roll Call

Present Board Members: Steve Callaghan, Deb Parks, Brandi Petersen, Kari Loseke, Brittney Gunderson, Bob Schoby, Laura Ronning and Denise Ray.

3. Approval of Absent Board Members - None

4. Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Randall Gilson led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Business

5.1. Consideration of Communications

5.1.1. ACT Testing – No action taken.

5.2. Comments from the Public

Comments were heard by the following community members regarding concerns to the COVID-19 Back to School Reopening Plan and the possibility of mask requirements.

- Beth Ogle, Stefanie Osterhaus, Amy Hanson, Brooke Boswell, Tyler Hume, Andrea Sortino, Kristie Nichols and Tyler Larsen.

5.3. Return to School Resolution

The Return to School Resolution is to provide as much flexibility and delegation as possible to the administration to plan and respond to the fluid situation without needing a formal Board meeting to approve various items/changes. The wording in the presented resolution mirrors language from the “discretionary” function exemption of the Political Subdivision Tort Claims Act.

Motion Failed: I move to approve the Return to School Resolution as presented failed with a motion by Brittney Gunderson and a second by Laura Ronning.

Steve Callaghan	No
Brittney Gunderson	Yes
Kari Loseke	No
Deb Parks	No
Brandi Petersen	No
Denise Ray	No
Laura Ronning	Yes
Bob Schoby	No

Discussion: The presented resolution is very valid although very broad based and it leaves the board out of a lot of the decisions. The Board requested an amount not to exceed on budget expenditures be added to the resolution.

Motion Passed: I move to approve the Return to School Resolution as previously presented with additional language “Budget expenditures may not exceed \$50,000 without school board approval” passed with a motion by Brandi Petersen and a second by Deb Parks.

Steve Callaghan	Yes
Brittney Gunderson	Yes
Kari Loseke	Yes
Deb Parks	Yes
Brandi Petersen	Yes
Denise Ray	Yes
Laura Ronning	Yes
Bob Schoby	Yes

5.4. Presentation of COVID-19 Back to School Reopening Plan

On July 2nd, Dr. Gilson, asked for volunteers from staff, parents, and the community to participate on a Reopening Planning Team (RPT). The team gathered input and considered research results to assist in developing a reopening plan that would address reopening scenarios and contingencies to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all students and staff. Dr. Gilson divided that team into smaller Ad Hoc Committees to discuss in more depth topics related to around the reopening of school. Four (4) Ad Hoc Committee Chairs and/or a representative presented their findings and recommendations to the school board this evening. The topics addressed included 1) Facilities, Transportation and Extracurricular Activities; 2) Health and Food Services; 3) Academic Learning and School Operations; 4) Student and Staff Wellness.

Blair Community Schools has partnered Dr. Jeff Gold, Chancellor of UNMC, and Mr. John Spatz, Executive Director of the Nebraska School Boards Association, to bring a team of infectious disease and public health experts who have developed a set of guidelines for school districts that include strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 while the facilities continue to operate. Dr. Gold oversees one of the few and largest Biocontainment Units in the United States.

Blair Community Schools was the team’s first school visit. The team members have toured and worked with meat packing plants, nursing homes, and most recently the NBA, NFL, Major League Baseball, and the Big Ten Conference to provide their expertise and research to mediate the COVID-19 risk during reopening and operations.

On the same day of the visit, Thursday, July 23rd, experts at UNMC and Nebraska Medicine released recommended measures following an "exhaustive literature search to see what was out there in terms of best practices and industry-specific information," said Jocelyn Herstein, Ph.D., infectious disease expert for the Global Center for Health Security. Dr. John Lowe, Dr. Herstein and a team of experts toured Arbor Park Intermediate School and met with Blair administrators, a team of teachers, school board members, and others to provide technical assistance as part of new guidelines, titled "COVID-19 Back to School Playbook: Guiding Principles to Keep Students, Teachers, and Staff Safe in K-12 schools."

The team walked the building and gave recommendations for students and staff to be safe in classrooms, hallways, lunch room areas, playgrounds, busses, commons areas, restrooms, during extra-curricular activities, the music room, gym, library, offices, etc. to evaluate space, existing procedures, and provided recommendations that have become part of the reopening plan being presented tonight.

Here are the team members supporting the Blair Community Schools Reopening Plan.

Dr. John Lowe, serves as the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health Security Training and Education, Director of Research for the Nebraska Biocontainment Unit and National Quarantine Unit, Executive Director of Training for the Global Center for Health Security at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Dr. Lowe

specializes in infection prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases and special pathogens including COVID-19, Ebola, Lassa fever and Influenza. He has peer reviewed papers in molecular virology, industrial hygiene and environmental exposure assessment, focusing on environmental microbiology and disrupting transmission of infectious diseases.

Dr. Lowe leads COVID-19 initiatives investigating COVID-19 transmission dynamics, improving prevention in healthcare, long term care, meat packing and other industries. He currently serves as primary investigator for national training centers, international biosurveillance networks and has helped to determine national guidelines, policies, procedures, and best practices to treat patients with SARS Coronavirus 2, Ebola virus disease and other highly infectious diseases. Specific areas of focus include patient transportation, waste handling/disposal, patient discharge, patient remains, PPE donning and doffing, decontamination, etc. Dr. Lowe holds leadership roles in several organizations and centers, such as the Nebraska Biocontainment Unit, the National Quarantine Unit, the National Ebola Training and Education Center, and the National Health Security Training Center. John is Co-PI of the Biosafety and Infectious Disease Training Initiative, a NIEHS funded consortium. Dr. Lowe has funded projects associated with addressing and disrupting the spread of highly infectious diseases through laboratory capacity building and clinical trials in West Africa as well as research initiatives with Department of Defense to optimize high-level isolation systems.

Dr. Jocelyn Herstein, MPH serves as the Program Coordinator for the Global Center for Health Security and Co-Course Director for the National Disaster Medical System's Isolation, Simulation and Quarantine Training at UNMC. Her areas of research include highly hazardous communicable diseases and infection control, with focus on U.S. national preparedness infrastructure, transportation of patients with highly hazardous communicable diseases, and training and education.

Jocelyn's research includes exposure assessment and developing and validating protocols for occupational health and safety in a high-level isolation setting. Jocelyn has been involved in the planning and evaluation of multiple international and national highly hazardous communicable disease transport and biocontainment patient care exercises, coordinated and trained ground transport teams on highly hazardous communicable disease transport, and co-led an initiative with the Department of Defense to optimize high-level isolation systems.

Michelle Schwedhelm, Executive Director of Emergency Management and Biopreparedness, Nebraska Medicine. Ms. Schwedhelm has served in leadership roles within Nebraska Medicine for 35 years. Her work experience has encompassed positions of increasing accountability and responsibility requiring exceptional strategic, communications, analytical, and team-building skills. She also possesses a thorough knowledge of clinical skills, human resources, risk management, as well as the regulatory, financial and contracting skills so critical to the success of large clinics. Ms. Schwedhelm has experience in emergency and trauma services; perioperative services; infection prevention; emergency preparedness; clinical operations; and program-specific roles in quality and start-up and turnaround projects.

Ms. Schwedhelm had overall accountability for Biocontainment Unit operations and logistics during the Ebola virus disease outbreak of 2014-15. She traveled on readiness site visits with the Centers for Disease Control in 2014 and 2015, and developed a two-day Ebola education training program held on the UNMC campus. She currently oversees numerous grants associated with infectious disease and is a program director and subject matter expert with the National Ebola Training and Education Center (NETEC). In addition, Ms. Schwedhelm has served as a subject matter expert in numerous site visits to regional Ebola treatment centers and to states to provide expertise and technical support.

Dr. Christopher Kratochvil from UNMC, Associate Vice Chancellor for Clinical Research Chief Medical Officer, UNeHealth; Dr. Kratochvil specializes in child-adolescent psychiatry. He is a Professor of psychiatry, with an adjunct appointment with the Department of Pediatrics and College of Public Health.

Dr. Kratochvil has an interest in clinical trials for children and adolescents, with a focus on ADHD and depression. Much of his research focuses on medications, and, in 2011, he co-edited the book Pediatric Psychopharmacology: Principles and Practice, 2nd Edition. He has also authored or co-authored over 100 articles in medical journals.

Terra Uhing, Executive Director Three Rivers Health Department.

Lindsey Cork, Assistant Director of Three Rivers Health Department.

John Spatz, Executive Director of Nebraska Association of School Boards.

Dr. Gilson is aware that the plan being presented tonight is different than the draft plan he presented earlier this month. Dr. Gilson thought physical and social distancing would be enough, but he was wrong. After the specialists walked the schools and sat in the classrooms that had been set-up for socially distancing, they informed it would be safe for a very limited time but once that time was up, it was not safe unless the kids wore masks.

Board members stated none of us have ever lived through a pandemic. We have to listen to the health officials in front of us and the ones who have to ability to shut us down. The kids need to be back in school and if the answer is masks, that is what we are willing to do. We are underestimating the children thinking they can't adjust to wearing masks. It will take some teaching and a lot of re-teaching but the parents in our community are good people and they want to do what is best for everybody in our community. There are times when we have to make a sacrifice for the good of others.

As COVID-19 ever changes, the goal of the administrators and school board is to be 100% in school but our students and staff have to be remote ready at all times. The plan does include three (3) options for students to learn; in-person, remote and virtually through Acellus Academy. The remote learning would have students sign on to each teacher's Zoom and join the classes live with those students who are physical present in the classroom during the school day. Acellus Academy is an online school with more flexibility however, the courses would not be taught by Blair Community School teachers.

The complete Blair Community Schools Back to School Reopening Plan can be located on the Blair Community Schools website, www.blairschools.org.

Motion Passed (As Amended): I move to approve the Blair Community Schools COVID-19 Back to School Reopening Plan as presented passed with a motion by Brittney Gunderson and a second by Laura Ronning.

Steve Callaghan	Yes
Brittney Gunderson	Yes
Kari Loseke	Yes
Deb Parks	No
Brandi Petersen	Yes
Denise Ray	Yes
Laura Ronning	Yes
Bob Schoby	Yes

6.0. 2020-21 School Handbooks

The Board expects students to comply with such amendments, updates, revisions and any other directives from District administrators and staff. The school board was asked to approve the 2020-21 Student/Parent Handbooks, which will be in place along with the Blair Community Schools Back to School Reopening Plan. The Provisions of the Return to School Resolution delegates the authority including delegation of

Student Handbook Provisions to the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee with consultation with other administrators and the Reopening Planning Team including Ad Hoc groups, public health officials and medical experts the authority to amend, update, or otherwise revise student handbooks for the 2020-2021 school year, so long as such amendments, updates, or revisions relate to the COVID-19 pandemic. Such amendments, updates, or revisions shall have the effect of rules and standards validly established pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-257, 79-259, 79-261, 79-262 and 79-264. Further, any such amendments, updates, or revisions (including a possible mask requirement) shall comply with Nebraska law, including Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-734 and 79-2,127, et seq.

Motion Passed: I move to approve the change to the 2020-21 Student/Parent Handbooks under the labeled section “Textbooks”, lost or damaged textbooks will be replaced at cost instead of at a depreciation value passed with a motion by Steve Callaghan and a second by Bob Schoby.

Steve Callaghan	Yes
Brittney Gunderson	Yes
Kari Loseke	Yes
Deb Parks	Yes
Brandi Petersen	Yes
Denise Ray	Yes
Laura Ronning	Yes
Bob Schoby	Yes

Motion Passed: I move to approve the 2020-21 Student/Parent Handbooks as presented passed with a motion by Steve Callaghan and a second by Bob Schoby.

Steve Callaghan	Yes
Brittney Gunderson	Yes
Kari Loseke	Yes
Deb Parks	Yes
Brandi Petersen	Yes
Denise Ray	Yes
Laura Ronning	Yes
Bob Schoby	Yes

6. Adjournment

Motion Passed: Motion to adjourn meeting at 9:46pm passed with a motion by Laura Ronning and a second by Brittney Gunderson.

Steve Callaghan	Yes
Brittney Gunderson	Yes
Kari Loseke	Yes
Deb Parks	Yes
Brandi Petersen	Yes
Denise Ray	Yes
Laura Ronning	Yes
Bob Schoby	Yes

Angie Conety
Board Secretary

Randall Gilson, Ed.D.
Superintendent

