

SAULT STE. MARIE AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SAULT STE. MARIE, MICHIGAN 49783
SPECIAL MEETING, BOARD OF EDUCATION
Phone 906/635-6609

Minutes – Monday, October 18, 2021

81. **I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Smith called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Sault Area Middle School, 684 Marquette Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783 and via Zoom: <https://eupschools.zoom.us/j/2405014824> or Call in: +1 646-876-9923 Meeting ID: 240 501 4824

82. **A. ROLL CALL OF BOARD**

Board Members Present: Jay D. Wilson, Caitlin L. Galer, Christine M. Curtis, Daniel L. Smith, Raymond J. DeWitt, Lisa A. Young, Melissa S. Pingatore
Absent: None

83. **B. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

It was moved by Member DeWitt, supported by Member Galer, that the Board of Education move to adopt the agenda as revised.

Add: *III. CLOSED SESSION*, and move subsequent items down.

Yeas: Wilson, Galer, Curtis, Smith, DeWitt, Young, Pingatore
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion Carried.

84. **II. COMMUNICATIONS**

A. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

1. Pilot Program Test to Stay

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported she had been working on developing a solution since the end of September to keep healthy students in school and to support the Sault175 goal.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer acknowledged there has been a lag in communicating close contacts, lengthy amounts of time spent in isolation,

a cost for testing, loss of class time, and the need for additional testing sites.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported she had secured assistance with the National Guard to efficiently conduct COVID tests and vaccinations, secured over 2,000 COVID test kits, worked with the CCHD to discuss the possibility of HRA to conduct tests, sought Nurse Michaels to help with contact tracing, reviewed other K-12 programs in close county proximity, and reviewed the close contact process for prison employees.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the National Guard has been efficiently conducting tests from 7 to 10 a.m. in the administration parking lot on days when school is in session, and it only takes 15 minutes to get the results.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported on the steps the school takes when it is notified of a student who tests positive. She noted the process can be situational depending on if the notice comes first from the parent or the health department.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported on what parents can expect if their student receives a close contact letter from the school nurse. She indicated the letters have specific contact dates that are based on individual situations. She states the health department can only process close contact letters when they can.

Upon inquiry, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer indicated the date of contact can start the day the positive individual had symptoms or if the positive individual did not have symptoms, it could be two days before the positive test date. She further explained the complexity of additional close contact situations and if a student had been vaccinated or not.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the Sault Schools make up about 6% of Chippewa County and 44% of those 12 and older have received at least one vaccination.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer presented the School Quarantine Guidance by the MDHHS and confirmed the district had been following the Unvaccinated, 0-6 feet guideline.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the proposed Test to Stay Pilot Program would allow students who receive a close contact letter to stay in school as long as they are healthy, receive a daily negative test, and wear a disposable mask except while eating or drinking.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer indicated the impact of the program would be huge in keeping healthy students in school and learning. She further confirmed the pilot program would not qualify for community or home spread contacts.

Upon inquiry from Member Wilson, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported students who receive a negative test in the morning could ride the bus home or take the shuttle as usual.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer indicated she is working with the National Guard to see what the new procedure would look like.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported students in grades 9-12 who did not want to test could receive instruction at home on their school device and those in grades K-8 could be provided a loaner device from the district.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the National Guard has COVID vaccines available and have been issuing 1-3 per day.

Superintendent Kronemeyer indicated the Pilot Program would only apply to close contacts in the school system.

Upon inquiry from Member DeWitt, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer indicated she would need to get the paperwork from the attorney before the Test to Stay Pilot Program could start.

Upon inquiry from Member Curtis, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported she had asked the principals to report back on what is the best way for their building to know which students could be in their building. She reported Nurse Michaels was overwhelmed with the number of positive cases in the county.

Upon inquiry from Member Curtis, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer estimated the National Guard would probably be available through December if we can get the community slide down. She noted it is likely that there will be more positive test results with additional tests.

Upon further inquiry, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer stated it would have to be confirmed that a student had an antibody before being dismissed from quarantine.

Upon inquiry from Member Galer, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported she was looking into providing a better shelter with heat for the National Guard for when the elements change. She reported they daily set up and take down a temporary shelter to block them from the wind.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer indicated she had spoken to the National Guard about starting to test at 6:30 due to the anticipated increase and she expected an answer tomorrow

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer indicated a staff survey on the Test to Stay revealed very positive comments even though some requested a mask mandate, the goal is to give parents a choice.

Upon inquiry from Member DeWitt, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer indicated she believed some students who had not been tested could spread the disease if they were asymptomatic, but the district would be contacted quicker if they were tested on site as the parents let the district know as soon as they are notified.

Upon inquiry from Member Wilson, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the district uses seating charts to determine which students need a close contact letter from Nurse Michaels. She confirmed the letter states the Chippewa County Health Department will contact them, but it doesn't always happen because they do not have enough help to get the letters out.

Member Wilson sought confirmation that the pilot program would allow kids to get back in school even if didn't get a letter from the health department.

Upon inquiry from President Smith, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer confirmed the district was now including contact dates in its letter because a student had stayed home for 14 days and never received a response from the health department so she hopes the Test to Stay Program would help rectify the timeliness as best as possible.

Upon inquiry of someone producing a negative PCR test to return to school, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer stated they are hard to get and costly.

Member Young thanked Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer for answering a lot of questions.

Member DeWitt confirmed the Test to Stay would afford a couple of options for students and staff to be safe.

President Smith reported the Superintendent had ran the Pilot Program by him a couple weeks ago but the health department did not approve it so the district had to work through the legal (our local health department doesn't have an order to modify the order) department.

Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported the Health Department was over worked and under an immense amount of stress. She stated the Pilot Program would not supplant what the department does, just supplement it.

85. **B. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

President Smith opened the meeting for public comment.

Per inquiry from a parent, Superintendent Scott-Kronemeyer reported student athletes who receive a negative test on Friday, could play on Friday, and if they receive a negative test on Saturday, they could play on Saturday.

Upon inquiry from Mr. Walther, President Smith indicated he was not able to give a specific percentage, but the number of positive COVID cases traced back to school transmission was low last year.

President Smith stated everyone had more than enough in dealing with COVID, and it seems like a catch 22. When you try to make a move, half of the people don't like it, but if you don't make a move, people say you aren't doing anything. He reiterated his comment from the previous meeting that people need to go up the hierarchy to the state or federal level if they don't like the rules the district has to follow.

Mr. Walther cautioned the Board for taking action on health care issues.

President Smith asked for a motion to go into closed session.

86. **III. CLOSED SESSION**

A. MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION M.O.M.A. §15.268, 8(h)

It was moved by Member Young, supported by Member DeWitt, that the Board of Education move into closed session in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act §15.268, 8(h), to consider security planning.

The Board went into closed session at 6:11 p.m.

The Board reconvened in open session at 6:47 p.m.

87. **IV. ACTION ITEMS AND BOARD REPORTS**

- A.** It was moved by Member DeWitt, supported by Member Curtis, that the Board approve the resolution for the Test to Stay Pilot Program and to reevaluate it at the November meeting.

After discussion, the Board agreed to amend the motion.

It was moved by Member DeWitt, supported by Member Curtis, that the Board approve the resolution for the Test to Stay Pilot Program and afford the same procedures and process to staff, and reevaluate it at the November meeting.

Yeas: Wilson, Galer, Curtis, Smith, DeWitt, Young

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstain: Pingatore

Motion Carried.

88. *VIII. ADJOURNMENT*

There being no further business to come before the Board at 6:51 p.m., it was moved by Member DeWitt, supported by Member Young, that the meeting be adjourned.

Yeas: Wilson, Galer, Curtis, Smith, DeWitt, Pingatore, Young

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried.

Daniel L. Smith, President

Lisa A. Young, Board Secretary

Judy L. Sirk, Recording Secretary