

POTTSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Directors
Virtual Special Board Meeting
September 24, 2020
Academic Center/Zoom
7:00 p.m.

Present: Dr. Blankenhorn, Dr. Cardamone,
Mrs. Dewitt, Dr. DiCello, Mr. Moran,
Mr. Quandel, Mr. Shields, Mr. Urban,
Ms. Wytovich, Dr. Gerace, Acting
Superintendent; Mrs. Lombel,
Asst. Business Manager/Board
Secretary, Atty. Kevin Reid, Solicitor,
Corinne Mason, Interim Business Manager,
Mr. Rismiller, Mr. Mattea

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Noble Quandel.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, President Quandel welcomed everyone in attendance.

Mr. Quandel reminded the public that the public comment period is not a question and answer period, but rather the opportunity for the public to submit comments to the Board. Public comments will follow our public comment procedures which require members of the public to identify themselves by indicating name and address and we will read comments consistent with all aspects of our public comment policy. With our meetings now being conducted virtually until further notice, you can submit comments via the Q & A feature.

Mr. Quandel asked if there were any Public Comments. Dr. Gerace said there were no public comments this evening.

On the recommendation of the Pottsville Area School District's Leadership Team and the Pottsville Area Athletic Department and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the following adjustments to the original attached plan:

VARSIY FOOTBALL

- Each team member, band member, band front member and cheerleader will be permitted to purchase (4) advanced tickets. These tickets will be \$5 each and will have to be pre purchased in the athletic office at least (2) days prior to the event. Exact payment will be only accepted.
- No tickets will be sold at the gate and no passes (senior Citizen, Schuylkill League, District XI) will be accepted for admittance.

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

- Each player will be given permitted to purchase (4) advanced tickets. These tickets will be \$5 each and will have to be pre-purchased in the athletic office (2) days prior to the event. Exact payment will be only accepted.
- No tickets will be sold at the gate and no passes (senior Citizen, Schuylkill League, District XI) will be accepted for admittance.

Athletic Director Mr. Rismiller said his staff is “taking baby steps” with the first few home games and at this time there are no tickets available for the away team. Mr. Mattea said that the Veteran’s Memorial Stadium has a seating capacity of 5,000 seats and 840 tickets were given out. Mr. Mattea said that the capacity would be approximately 17%, lower than the 25% required. The east and west gates will be open and the visitors’ side will be available for additional seating. The Athletic Department feels comfortable with spreading out fans, allowing families to sit together and requiring face masks. Security will be walking around to make sure these rules are followed.

Motion carried.

Dr. Gerace and Mrs. Caitlin Mohl, Coordinator of the Pandemic Planning Team, presented a PowerPoint on the “Phased Full In-Person Instruction Plan” for the Pottsville Area School.

Important Considerations for full In-Person

- Full in-person instruction does not mean that all students must return in-person. Families will still have the option to participate in full remote (virtual) instruction.
- Two instructional models will be offered: full in-person or full remote.
- Full in-person return will decrease or eliminate the ability to facilitate social distancing within our school buildings and on school transportation.
- Decisions about full in-person instruction will be made based on the most recent data available.

Results: PASD Family Survey

- Considering Schuylkill County is still considered at a moderate transmission rate for COVID-19, what do you feel is the best instructional model for your children? Full In-Person – 69.1% Blended (current model) – 19.8% Full Remote (Virtual) – 11.2%. (886 responses)
- If PASD phases in to full in-person instruction, please indicate the instructional model you would choose for your child (ren).

Full In-Person Learning – 82.2% Full Remote (Virtual) Learning – 17.8% (886 responses)

- Please rate your comfort level for returning to full in-person instruction: 98 (11.1%); 80 (9%); 117(13.2%); 165 (18.6%); 426 (48.1%) (886 responses).

Requirements to Initiate Plan

- Maintain low moderate rate of transmission or decrease to low transmission rate designation.
 - Low range of moderate transmission: <30 new cases/100,000 in the last 7 days
 - Low rate of transmission: <10 new cases/100,000 in the last 7 days
- Maintain or decrease percent positivity rate
 - Percent positivity not to exceed 5%
- School community-specific student and/or staff cases do not exceed the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s recommendations for closure.
- Additional protective equipment is readily accessible, including teacher/staff desk shields and portable individual student shields.

Overview of Plan

- Phased introduction of in-person instruction over 6 weeks.
- Full in-person instruction will be 4 days/week.
- Wednesday will remain full remote for all students.
- Daily and weekly monitoring of transmission rate and percent positivity.
- Full in-person instruction will remain in effect, unless:
 - Transmission rates exceed 30 cases/100,000 or percent positivity increases in excess of 5%.
 - School – or district – specific cases meet or exceed recommendations for closure.
 - Other operational components prohibit the ability to safely and effectively provide in-person instruction.
- Increases in transmission rate or positivity rates or positive cases within our schools may result in a rapid shift to full remote instruction for all students.
- If the schools shift to full remote instruction due to COVID-19 transmission rates or percent positivity:
 - Schools will remain in full remote instruction until the rates drop within the outlined parameters.
 - Transmission rates and percent positivity must remain below the threshold for 2 consecutive weeks in order to return to full in-person instruction.

- Weeks 1-3 of phased in-person include planning, communication, and data analysis/monitoring.
- Weeks 3-6 phase students into full in-person by building.

Tentative Schedule for Phased in-Person

- Week 1: September 21-September 25, 2020 (current week)
 - Data evaluation, Pandemic Planning meeting, Special Board meeting
- Week 2: September 28 – October 2, 2020
 - Data evaluation, supply distribution, building-level faculty/staff meetings
- Week 3: October 5 – October 9, 2020
 - Data evaluation, supply distribution, finalize procedures, update transportation
- Week 4: October 12 – October 16, 2020
 - PAHS and DHHL – continue to follow current blended model
 - JSC – students return in person Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (remote Wednesday)
- Week 5: October 19 – October 23, 2020
 - PAHS and DHHL – continue to follow current blended model
 - JSC – in-person Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (remote Wednesday)
- Week 6: October 26 – October 30, 2020
 - PAHS, DHHL, and JSC – in-person Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (remote Wednesday)

Dr. Gerace thanked the members of the Pandemic Planning Team for their extremely hard work. Dr. Gerace also thanked Mrs. Mohl for her hard work, time and effort.

Mr. Moran asked, would the district pull back if there is a 5% increase in COVID cases? Dr. Gerace said there would be an average of 7 days with remote instruction if the numbers increase.

Dr. Cardamone asked about the reason for DHHL continuing on the current blended model for Week 5. Dr. Gerace received guidelines from St. Luke's. With this controlled methodical way, the district can trace if there is an outbreak.

Mrs. Dewitt asked why the two week difference between JSC and PAHS along with DHHL. Dr. Gerace said this will give the children in the elementary center more time to become acclimated to the in-person routine.

Dr. Blankenhorn asked if the district is capable of achieving the social distancing and what are the protocols in place for cleaning and cleanliness. Dr. Gerace said the district

purchased three (3) sprayers which has a special solution; every classroom has cleaners and paper towels and high touch surfaces are taken care of everyday. Dr. Gerace said every employee is offered face shields; teachers have desk shields. Dr. Gerace also noted that portable desk shields will be available for students.

Dr. Gerace noted that social distancing will be difficult on school buses or in the buildings. The district is taking every strategy in the cafeterias (children have to remove masks when eating) and encouraging parents to drive children to school if at all possible.

Mrs. Dewitt stated that some classes may be easier than others due to class sizes. Dr. Gerace agreed.

Dr. Blankenhorn asked if there are standard operating practices. Mrs. Mohl said there are procedures in place and custodians have assignments and check lists.

Mr. Moran asked that going into flu season and if you're not feeling well, can you lock in remotely and get credit for the day. Dr. Gerace said yes, you can check in remotely.

Dr. Gerace said it is a quick turnaround to shift from in-person to virtual but to change from remote learning to instructional learning takes about two weeks.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent and the Pandemic Planning Team, and on motion of Dr. Cardamone, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the transition to full in-person instruction as outlined in the update to the School Reopening Health and Safety Plan. Motion carried.

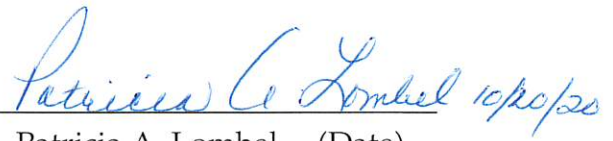
On the recommendation of the Transportation and Finance Committees and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved a two year lease agreement between Santander Bank, N.A. and Pottsville Area School District. Initial payment of \$283,000.00 due October 25, 2020. Motion carried.

Under New Business:

On the recommendation of Mr. Quandel and on motion of Ms. Wytovich, seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved to change Board meeting times to the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. beginning in November. Motion carried.

An Executive Session was held from 6:30 p.m. to 6:55 p.m. for personnel matters.

There being no further new business, on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Mr. Urban, the meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Handwritten signature of Patricia A. Lombel in blue ink, including the date 10/20/20.

Patricia A. Lombel (Date)

Board Secretary