

Lehigh Area School District

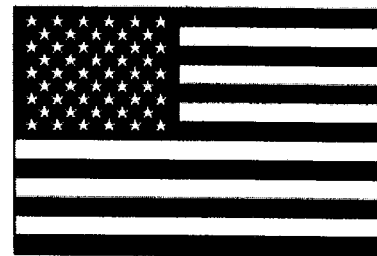
Lehigh, Pennsylvania

Special Board Meeting (Virtual)

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

6:00 PM

Minutes



Pledge of Allegiance

Call to Order - A virtual special board meeting of the Lehigh Area School Board was held in the Administration Building, Conference Room A, on the above date and called to order at 6:02 p.m. with Mr. Stern presiding over the meeting.

Roll Call

	Present	Absent
Ms. Joy Beers, Member	☐	X
Mr. Richard R. Beltz, Member	X	☐
Mr. David F. Bradley, Sr., Member (6:10 p.m.)	X	☐
Mr. Nathan Foeller, Treasurer	X	☐
Mr. Stephen Holland, Member	X	☐
Mrs. Gail Maholick, Member	X	☐
Mrs. Rita Spinelli, Vice President	X	☐
Mr. Wayne Wentz, Member	X	☐
Mr. Larry Stern, President	X	☐
Ms. Patricia Denicola, Business Administrator	X	☐
Mr. Jonathan Cleaver, Superintendent	X	☐
Attorney William Schwab, Solicitor (Atty. Eric Filer)	X	☐
Mrs. Melissa Wagner, Recording Secretary	X	☐

Mr. Stern asked Mr. Cleaver to ask each board member if they had any questions. Mr. Beltz asked for a recap of the Health & Safety Plan.

Mr. Cleaver recapped the Health & Safety Plan.

Public Comment on Agenda

1. **Sue Salerno** - Today is August 5th and this is our plan. Plan that is intended for parents to start scheduling childcare and things like that, but it can change at any time depending on what's happening in the world.

Mr. Cleaver explained that at any time, the Governor could decide that he is requiring to push us back or go to all virtual learning. At this point, this is the plan for reopening the schools.

2. **Brian Shaner** – Do we know what the first day of school is barring any pushback from the Governor?

Mr. Cleaver explained with the plan and revised calendar, September 8th.

We are relying on parents to self-screen children?

Mr. Cleaver explained that this plan is where the district is not screening every child. Teachers will be trained with viewing of symptoms and may refer a student to the nurse.

Unfortunately, we can't rely on parents.

3. **D'Ache Zelrick** – Are all of the class offerings at the high school still being offered? Drafting and wood shop? If band and chorus are not allowed because of aerosol concerns, then sports shouldn't be happening.

Mr. Cleaver explained that Lehigh Valley Health Network recommended no indoors chorus, woodwinds and brass instruments. Looking to meet with music department for other alternatives.

If band and choir do not take place, yet sports will, there will be more people upset.

4. **Janet Mertz** – My understanding is if you are not comfortable sending your child to school, you can opt for the online option. Is that directly classroom-oriented and have to be available between a certain time?

Mr. Cleaver explained the online options being offered.

5. **Fred Kemmerer** – The protocols that we have for the teachers, faculty, staff. Are there things in our policies covering the wearing of the masks if a teacher is walking around without a mask on?

Mr. Cleaver explained that any staff, visitor, etc., must wear a mask at all times unless 6 feet social distanced. The classrooms are set up with teachers being able to be socially distanced.

6. **Dave Krause** – Wanted to commend the administration and staff for putting this together. It's been a fluid situation and a monumental task for all the schools.
7. **Jason Roeder** – Thanked the team that put together the plan. Is there disciplinary actions for a student who blatantly refuses to wear a mask?

Mr. Cleaver explained if a student refuses to wear a mask without medical documentation, they will be referred to the office.

8. **Barbara Bowes** – Looking at the safety plan, I don't see any stakeholders represented. Looks like the guidelines of PDE were not represented.

Mr. Cleaver explained that everyone involved in the plan was from the educational setting. FAQ's were included from the community and parent surveys were included.

Non-employees should have been included.

Board members discussed the question.

9. **Diane Kaszytski** – In regards to handwashing and cleaning, will there be MSDS sheets available for the recommended products? Are there going to be frequent opportunities for basic soap and water handwashing as opposed to just hand sanitizer?

Mr. Cleaver explained that there will be handwashing breaks and access to sinks and soap.

Does the district have a plan for behavioral health supports specifically mental and emotional related to this pandemic?

Mr. Cleaver explained that we are working with Lehigh Valley Health Network for students, parents, and staff. In addition, we have two social workers and our school nurses have been meeting by county to develop plans.

What is the special education department looking at?

Mr. Cleaver explained that Mrs. Kistler is working with assistance from the Intermediate Unit to develop plans in preparation of bringing back our students. More of a case-to-case basis based on the individual students.

10. **Jessica Habas** – What safeguards will be in place for teachers and staff that will be in these rooms with 20-25 children who are going to be unmasked?

Mr. Cleaver explained that there will be teacher safe zones as part of the classroom. In addition, we are setting up protective plastic coverings if the teacher wishes additional separation. We are taking guidance directly from Lehigh Valley Health Networks, the CDC and the Department of Health.

11. **Autumn Abelovsky** – Looking at the additional FAQ's. Number 5 states that if a student in a class does test positive for Covid, do the rest of the students need to quarantine for the 14 days. The answer would be no. However, if you go to #10, if the child does test positive you would do the contact tracing. So there may be a possibility of a quarantine?

Mr. Cleaver explained that it will all be based upon the contact tracing that will be done by the local health officials.

Number #64 states that if a student is transitioned to remote learning due to an ailment, they would not be required to go LAVA. If a parent feels that they made the wrong decision in sending their child to school and does want to move them to LAVA, I see that in #65 you can transition your child to LAVA at any time. However, they are required to make up the missing curriculum. Will LAVA not be following the same curriculum?

Mr. Cleaver explained that LAVA will be based off the same curriculum however it may not be the same synchronous. Students move at their own pace.

12. Melissa Kuruts – More details in regards to transportation. Will it be available?

Mr. Cleaver explained that the district is working on developing a transportation plan. K-8 will be on the same schedule and on the same busses.

We would know bus numbers shortly?

Mr. Cleaver explained that as part of the plan we are working on it now.

Is there a number of students limited on the busses?

Mr. Cleaver explained that right now we are looking at two students per seat and they along with the bus driver will be required to wear masks.

13. Autumn Frey – Just wanted to let you know that there are two Autumn on this meeting and that no one confuses the two Autumns as I have not spoken yet.

Mr. Stern thanked everybody for participating in the meeting this evening.

Financial Matter

LASD Health MOTION by Mrs. Spinelli, **SECONDED** by Mr. Wentz to adopt the Lehigh Area & Safety Plan School District Health & Safety Plan and Reopening Schools Plan.

Reopening Plan

Board members discussed the motion.

Mr. Cleaver had a question sent to him for the meeting today and he missed it earlier. It was in regards to cleaning of the buildings in between sessions. Each building has a second shift custodial group that will also be cleaning the buildings throughout the day.

Mr. Stern allowed audience members to speak on the motion.

1. Brian Shaner – If we're allowing 48 students on a bus, how does that comply with the 25 maximum for an indoor event? Appreciates Mr. Bradley being very professional this evening.

Mr. Cleaver explained that the K-8 schedule is developing for transportation and the EC and MS will run on the same bus schedule. Siblings will be assigned to the same seat with younger children sitting in the front of the bus. Every student will be assigned a seat.

Mr. Bradley questioned the 25 maximum.

Mr. Cleaver explained it does not pertain to an educational setting/instruction as per PDE guidelines.

2. **Melinda Gordon** – I sent the question earlier about cleaning. If students are going to alternate A and B, they're not separated by a day, how's the school district plan to allow for additional cleaning? Any special type of cleaning and is it budgeted?

Mr. Cleaver explained that at the high school the students will be attending by alphabet every other day. There will be cleaning during the day with attention to doorknobs, light switches, high traffic and high touch areas. We are not permitting outside groups to come into the schools. Cleaning will begin as soon as students are dismissed. We have second shift custodial/maintenance assigned to all three buildings.

3. **Autumn Abelovsky** – Parents are making decisions to send their children to school based on transportation. My understanding is that even if transportation is provided, it will not be provided to the same demographics as last year and that certain areas will not be included. I think it needs to be mentioned.

Mr. Cleaver explained that as part of the plan that is being developed is to maximize our students being able to attend and take transportation. In the past, the district offered transportation within the 1.5 mile radius. The borough is 1.2 mile radius. Part of the plan is to not offer transportation in the 1.5 mile radius. These areas are considered non-reimbursable and do not qualify for state reimbursement.

In the past students on 6th-12th Street were not given transportation. 1st-6th Street, the Heights and Weissport was provided transportation. Those people may not get that this year.

Mr. Bradley questioned how Ms. Abelovsky was privy to the information and not the board members.

As a borough council member, last year we were already concerned with pedestrians and students safety in walking to and from school. Looking to do a revamp this summer and make them little more safe. When talking with Mr. Cleaver and the possibility of no transportation came up, then we really need to do something in the borough. Looking to do safe walking routes.

Mr. Cleaver stated that he's been in contact with Chief Biechy too.

Mr. Bradley stated that bussing is 70 times safer.

4. **Barbara Bowes** – It would've been helpful if what Autumn just mentioned as well as knowing that the elementary would be in with the middle school on the busses. I don't remember reading it anywhere. That would have been helpful to be discussed prior to this meeting because parents have to make these choices now. Transportation issues are a big part of it for parents.

Mr. Cleaver explained that there was a presentation that was forwarded to every parent within the district that explained the times and how bussing would work.

5. **Melissa Kuruts** – Was the change to the transportation in regards to trying to meet the guidelines for Covid? It seems as if two children per seat would be kind of what the norm

would have been. I'm concerned that we still don't have a plan for transportation and school is starting September 8th. How is the transportation different from last year to this year, putting Covid aside?

Mr. Cleaver explained that the transportation requirement would be to mask students, assigned seats, and bus driver wearing a mask. Transportation is not a requirement for a school district. It is not in the current budget.

6. **Chris Burkey** – I also have problem with bussing being removed from in-town especially for Kindergarten through 2nd grade and then so much money being spent on sports and football when there's already been numerous positive cases of Covid within other school districts during football practice.

Mr. Cleaver explained that as far as sporting events, we are taking guidance from PIAA and the CDC and Department of Health. The conference is meeting next week regarding options of moving forward.

How many participants are in this meeting?

Mr. Cleaver stated right now there are 99.

99 people out of 2400 students. You're telling me only 99 people care to hear what's going on and I have two people that tried to get into the meeting and it said it was overcapacity.

Mr. Bradley asked if his question was answered.

I'm not against sports but overall I believe the children's safety should come above everything else and if that means not having football or whatever and we can safely bus our kids, we need to look at that. Again, only 99 people out of all the parents in this district?

Mr. Bradley stated that the capacity is definitely a problem.

Mr. Stern stated that we understand everyone's concern around bussing. It is nothing that is not keeping everyone on this board up all night trying to figure out and trying to secure the funds in order to restore what we need to transporting our students safely. The main issue was to get this plan completed and the next step is to work to restore bussing in some capacity as best that we can. There are costs that are contractual. We thank everyone that came in and attempted to join tonight. Unfortunately, the licenses that were granted limit us at 100 participants plus the panelists. We appreciate everyone's concern; it does not fall on deaf ears. Safety is a priority. We are concerned about students' mental health.

Roll Call Vote:

	Yes	No	Absent	Abstention
Ms. Joy Beers, Member	☐	☐	X	☐
Mr. Richard R. Beltz, Member	☐	X	☐	☐
Mr. David F. Bradley, Sr., Member	☐	☐	☐	X
Mr. Nathan Foeller, Treasurer	X	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Stephen Holland, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Mrs. Gail Maholick, Member	☐	X	☐	☐
Mrs. Rita Spinelli, Vice President	X	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Wayne Wentz, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Larry Stern, President	X	☐	☐	☐

VOTE: YES - 5 NO - 2 ABSENT - 1 ABSTENTIONS - 1

Motion carried.

Miscellaneous

Resolution #20/21-#01 MOTION by Mrs. Spinelli, SECONDED by Mr. Foeller to approve the adoption of Resolution #20/21-#01, COVID-19 Global Pandemic, as part of the Lehigh Area School District Health & Safety Plan.

Board members discussed the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

	Yes	No	Absent	Abstention
Mr. Richard R. Beltz, Member	☐	X	☐	☐
Mr. David F. Bradley, Sr., Member	☐	☐	☐	X
Mr. Nathan Foeller, Treasurer	X	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Stephen Holland, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Mrs. Gail Maholick, Member	☐	X	☐	☐
Mrs. Rita Spinelli, Vice President	X	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Wayne Wentz, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Joy Beers, Member	☐	☐	X	☐
Mr. Larry Stern, President	X	☐	☐	☐

VOTE: YES - 5 NO - 2 ABSENT - 1 ABSTENTIONS - 1

Motion carried.

Revised MOTION by Mrs. Spinelli, SECONDED by Mr. Wentz to approve the revised **2020-**
2020-2021 **2021** School Calendar for the Lehigh Area School District as part of the
Calendar Reopening Schools Plan.

1. **John Slaby** – A teacher in another school. My son goes to the school. My biggest responsibility to him is to keep him safe. That should always be the number one responsibility of the Lehigh Area School District. The plan that's put forth for transportation does not provide for safety. 48 students to a bus is not practicing social distancing. It is conducive to spread the virus. It is not safe by any standards. The board cannot meet in person because it's not safe but you can put 48 kids on an enclosed space.

Board members discussed the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

	Yes	No	Absent	Abstention
Mr. David F. Bradley, Sr., Member	☐	☐	☐	X
Mr. Nathan Foeller, Treasurer	X	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Stephen Holland, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Mrs. Gail Maholick, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Mrs. Rita Spinelli, Vice President	X	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Wayne Wentz, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Joy Beers, Member	☐	☐	X	☐
Mr. Richard R. Beltz, Member	☐	X	☐	☐
Mr. Larry Stern, President	X	☐	☐	☐

VOTE: YES - 6 NO - 1 ABSENT - 1 ABSTENTIONS - 1

Motion carried.

Courtesy of the floor / Public Comment

1. **Barbara Bowes** – The lack of transportation is not because of the virus and you know it. It's because we had almost no fund balance because people did not do their due diligence and make sure all the expenditures stayed within budget. It complicated things but it's not because of the virus. PDE has said it's okay to put 2 kids per seat on a bus without social distancing. If we can only have 20 kids to bus, there will be no transportation because we simply cannot afford it.

Adjournment

Next regular scheduled meeting is on Monday, August 10, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

MOTION by Mrs. Spinelli, SECONDED by Mr. Wentz to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Roll Call Vote:

	Yes	No	Absent	Abstention
Mr. Nathan Foeller, Treasurer	X	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Stephen Holland, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Mrs. Gail Maholick, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Mrs. Rita Spinelli, Vice President	X	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Wayne Wentz, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Joy Beers, Member	☐	☐	X	☐
Mr. Richard R. Beltz, Member	X	☐	☐	☐
Mr. David F. Bradley, Sr., Member	☐	X	☐	☐
Mr. Larry Stern, President	X	☐	☐	☐

VOTE: YES - 7 NO - 1 ABSENT - 1 ABSTENTIONS - _____

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia J. Denicola

Patricia J. Denicola
Board Secretary

(Minutes of August 5, 2020, includes Pages 1 through 9.)

