

Special Board Meeting Pana High School Library President Dr. Bill Beyers Presiding

The Board of Education of Pana Community Unit School District #8 of the Counties of Christian, Shelby and Montgomery, Illinois met in Emergency Session on Thursday, November 5, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the High School Library at 201 W. 8th St, Pana, IL.

Meeting called to Order/Roll Call

President B. Beyers called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. The following board members were present: Anderson, M. Beyers, Kirkbride. Deere, Dorn, Moon.

Meeting Call to
Order/Roll call

Visitors

Teachers: Jared Wolf, Lori Pieper, Daphne Rodman

Principals: Cheri Wysong - Washington, Kelly Millburg - Lincoln (Remote), Casey Adam - High School (Remote), Juletta Ellis - Jr High (Remote)

Staff: Paul Donahue, Bridgett Heinrich, Amanda Skinner, Cheryl Foster, Melinda Sarver, Tammy Deere, Sandy Pauley

Media: Tom Latonis, Susan McGrath

Public: Katie Sinclair - Parent

Changes to Transition (Back to School) Plan due to COVID19

The Emergency session was scheduled to discuss the need for changes to the Transition (Back to School) Plan. Principals, teachers, staff, and public that were present (in person and remote) were given the opportunity to discuss why or why they do not see a need to close schools to slow the spread.

C. Wysong discussed that while the children and staff were doing a fantastic job wearing masks, washing hands and social distancing, a need is present to close for a short period of time to slow the spread.

K Millburg discussed the shortage of staff being a great concern. She also discussed that she was in agreement with C Wysong stating that everyone is doing a great job but agrees that going remote would be preferred as this would give greater consistency to all students.

J Ellis agreed with what was said so far and added that she was very concerned over the health (mental and physical) of the students and staff. She stated that the teachers were very overwhelmed. She also stated that she had been following the ChrisMont postings. She said we, as a district, have had the most notices shared. J Ellis was also able to give a perspective as a parent. She stated that knowing what to expect made it much easier for them to adapt. She acknowledges, as a parent, it is not very convenient.

C Adam stated that the High School numbers are the highest in the district, information from ChrisMont/IDPH/Hospitals is very concerning. She believes that in person is the best for all students but at this time Remote is the better option, in her opinion, to slow the spread. C Adam also gave a personal perspective, as they are remote learning. She stated that it would be a good idea to give the community an idea of the expectations we have as a district, should we go remote. It is a definite struggle, as a principal, to help her building not being able to physically be there.

Katie Sinclair, parent to Washington and Lincoln students, gave her thoughts. She feels that if we go remote the students will not be getting the education that they should have. They don't get the structure they need in a home setting that she knows they would get in person. She, as a parent, can't stay home. She pleads that the district stay In-School.

Nurses, T Deere and S Pauley, discussed what they go through when a positive or suspected positive come to their attention. The time it takes to identify all individuals that need to quarantine once they have a positive case. The additional time it takes to contact each person. They also stated that, sometimes it takes a long time to get in touch with the Health Department as they are overwhelmed as well. T Deere also brought to the board's attention, there were students that were positive or quarantined playing basketball at Washington School. She stated that students shouldn't be allowed to go to any school property when positive or quarantined. She also stated that she believes letters of expectation should be made that outline this.

Teachers, Jared Wolf, Daphne Rodman, and Lori Pieper, were each given the chance to speak. They thought the fact we have made it this far is fantastic. They also feel that In Person instruction would always be the best way. They did state that all were feeling the stress of teaching a lesson more than once, trying to be available to all their students, as well as the stress of being exposed or exposing someone else to the virus. The shortage of staff adds more stress trying to help with not only their class but someone else's. They think that quarantining for 2 weeks would not stop the virus but would slow the spread. If we do quarantine, parents need to be educated on what needs to be done when they are home and that everyone needs to stay home.

Each board member was given the opportunity to speak and ask questions. It was discussed on just closing the High School for 2 weeks, to resume on November 30th, to allow the superintendent and the administration to make the decision to close a grade level at a time if needed, to make adjustments to the Transition (Back to School) Plan, and to allow the principals to allow remote learners to come back to in-person instruction or in-person to remote.

A motion was made by Anderson and seconded by Kirkbride to approve the closing of the High School for 2 weeks, to allow the superintendent and the administration to make the decisions to close grade levels due to COVID19 or staffing, to make adjustments to the Transition (Back to School) Plan, and to allow principals to allow the return of remote learners to in person instruction or In person learners to remote instruction.

ROLL CALL: Anderson, B. Beyers, M Beyers, Deere, Dorn, Kirkbride, Moon. All aye, motion carried.

Roll Call

Adjournment

A motion was made by Dorn and seconded by Moon to adjourn the emergency board meeting of November 5, 2020 at 9:15 p.m. All aye, motion carried.

Adjournment

Secretary

President