

10/7/20 - Workshop Business Meeting

Present - Patrick D. McCabe, Roxanne Rebmann, James Grant, Phil Kenline, Robert Masse, Deborah Forrestel, Erik Polkowski, Heather Cayea, Jody Brege

Jim - 7pm. Call meeting to order. Pledge to the Flag. Hearing of Individuals and Delegations. Mrs. Rebmann, do we have anything?

Roxanne - No.

Jim - We're going to move into Committee Reports. The Rec Board, Ms. Forrestel?

Debbie - I haven't had a meeting or went to a meeting.

Jim - Ok. Delegate Assembly. I did attend a meeting last month and reported on it at our last meeting. Nothing new to report. Legislative, Mr. Polkowski?

Erik - Legislative met on 9/24/20. The majority of the meeting, there's probably 12-15 districts. They went around the room explaining what the current protocols were and how each school opened. They followed up with identifying that the ECASB website has been updated. One of the things they have on there is they break it down into other subcategories. One of them is legislative and under legislative they do have a thing in regards to advocacy. We'll post on there if there are any bills that are currently before either the state senate or assembly in regards to any actions related to schools. Likewise, anything that's Federal will be listed there as well so you can click into it and get a little bit more information. Also, pulled up information that you can put in your district. It will list all of the representatives that are a part of your district, which is good because that way we can resource it if you have parents that push for more advocacy in one shape or the other. All the contact information, the location of their district, so on and so forth, is all there for anybody to go through and take a look at. There's also the one other point on it was there's a link for advocacy concerns. If there's concerns that are brought up in the district or brought up by individuals and you'd like them to kind of push it towards the legislative team to address. Those would list as being potential concerns, I know we had last year parents of some of the mandated inoculation is a concern that was brought to the school board. Those sorts of things. There's now a place where you can highlight that and suggest that to the legislative team, and as the body meets those things can be researched and actions can be kind of put together as a cohesive unit as the ECASB. It gives a little bit of a highlight that can be addressed and researched to see where the standpoint might be. Other than that, following that they had just highlighted the meeting they were having the next day in regards to meeting, you were at the meeting.

Jim - It was Commissioner Rosa and there were about a dozen representatives from school boards across the state. The focus of the meeting was broadband internet access. Mr. McCabe had provided me with information about our district and I shared the concerns that we have with internet and broadband access, which really were echoed across all the regions. Everybody that talks, internet access, broadband's true speed of internet is an issue across the whole entire state. It was a good meeting to participate. They listened, took notes. I heard this morning that the state comptroller's office is now auditing New York's broadband plant. I don't know if it had anything to do with it, but she seemed interested and focused and said she took a lot of notes.

Erik - That was brought up because they did ask as they went around the room what the current situation was especially in regards to how everything applied. That's about it.

Jim - Budget and Finance, Mr. Kenline?

Phil - We have our first meeting tomorrow at Erie 1 BOCES at 6:30pm. Nothing right now.

Jim - Mr. McCabe, Superintendent's Report.

Pat - Certainly. A number of things to share this evening. I will start with what has been certainly regarding a lot of our attention. It's just providing the board and the community with an update on some COVID-19 matters. As the board is aware, we have currently experienced two individuals who have tested positive. One two week ago, and the second one last week. Both of those instances were at the elementary level. I'm very pleased to report to the board this evening that there has not been any school-based transmission of the virus. Despite the fact that there were two positive cases, as a result of contact tracing and individuals getting rapid testing, there has been no transmission of the virus within the school district to date. I think that's a great indication that our proactive measures that we have in place are working to mitigate the spread, even in the event that a positive individual was present here on campus. I just want to commend our administrators, our school nurses, and really our entire staff for how quickly they responded in communication. I also would like to commend both the Genesee and the Erie County Department of Health. Their epidemiologist, I was on the phone with them on both occasions on Saturdays and Sundays for two consecutive weekends and calling me back right away, responding. They were terrific. As were our families. I understand when I send those letters out to the community how alarming they can be. It's still nonetheless our obligation to supply that information as quickly as possible. In both cases my voice messages went out to the community within hours of notification. Again, I understand that that can be alarming to some, but I do think it's our obligation to let people know right away. We have had some parents call and inquire. Again, we are obligated under HIPAA to significantly limit the information we can share, so as not to share personal identifiable information. For the most part folks have been understanding. Beyond the notifications, I think the board should know that we immediately employed, our campus is following the CDC guidelines for cleaning and all the safety protocols, but nonetheless in the event that we have an identified case we're taking extra precautions and extra measures to do additional cleaning in those areas that we're aware of. I mentioned our school nurse. She's communicating, doing daily follow-ups with families that were asked to quarantine their children as well as follow ups with staff that are under quarantine. I have also been talking to staff members personally on a daily basis that are under quarantine. It's an unfortunate thing, but the reality, I believe, it's going to happen. With increased testing, we're going to find more people testing positive. We're going to do our contact tracing and respond on a case by case basis. You may have seen yesterday the governor announced what he is calling The Cluster Action Initiative across the state. In other words, he is requiring the communities to closely monitor their infection rates, then setting thresholds for restricting movements within communities. If you haven't seen it, there's a colored chart. I didn't have the chance to insert it. Under the red and orange clusters, schools will go to a remote model. While it was not indicated in his report, it's my understanding that within that zip code you are greater than 3% infection rate over a 7-day rolling average. If you recall when we first got some information about the different levels of closure, if you will, in phase 1, 2, 3, 4, it was a 9% infection rate over a 7-day rolling average. Now it's dropped down to three. Obviously broadening the spectrum to make it more encompassing to limit movement within regions that have an infection rate. We really don't know exactly where we are in 14001. I guess we're green at this point, but we'll monitor it and we'll see. He is supposed to release additional data thresholds on Friday to clarify this information. I do think it's really important for the board to recognize that, as I said, with additional testing results in additional contact tracing, which results in additional quarantining of individuals, whether students or staff. The ramifications of that are significant for our ability to operate in a hybrid model. In other words, if through contact tracing more and more people are told to stay home for 14 days, particularly if those individuals are staff members, not just instructional, but our facilities, buildings and grounds, it makes it more and more challenging for us to maintain an instructional integrity with our hybrid model and keep our operations up and running. We'll just continue to monitor it as I've communicated to the staff. We'll use the database protocol, we'll work with our county departments to make informed decisions. In some ways the governor's cluster action initiative does give us a database model to rely on. Before it was up to the superintendent's to decide based on input from the county health department. A little bit of where we are and I think I just accentuate I'm just very proud of the response of everyone employed in what was an unfortunate situation. Just kind of transitioning on where we are, you know we're kind of at that 5 week point. We're continuing to evaluate our programming, looking for improvements. We did tell families that at the end of the first marking period, there would be an opportunity, those

families who chose remote to perhaps return to a hybrid model. We're currently analyzing our capacity to do that. For example, say an elementary classroom had 8 children in it, but with 6 foot social distancing the capacity was 14 kids could fit in the room. We would know how many spaces we could expand and welcome kids back, which is of course what we want. So we're analyzing our A & B Cohorts. It looks like there's more room in our B Cohort in particular at the secondary level. We are limited as to how many kids we can bring back because of social distancing at this point. Frankly, with last week's news about a positive case, some people said I'm gonna stay home for a while longer. I shared with the board, kind of proudly, that we had this remote Wednesday and it went from 35 kids the first week up to 70 up to this past week and more and more families were looking to come in. To her credit, Mrs. Kos reached out to families to verify that they were coming in. Honestly, after the announcement a number of families said they would stay home this week. We're seeing people's response to those occasions when we get a positive result. I said to our admin team it's October, nine months to go. We're going to see these trends throughout the school year I believe. We had a bit of a delay on this for a variety of reasons, but we're looking at a new attendance taking procedure for all of our kids, only on those days they are working from home. These are the children in the hybrid model on their remote days and our fully remote. Became very challenging at the secondary level for teachers to keep up with attendance because kids were checking in at different times. This new measure not only is having the kids check in, it's also gathering and engaging their feelings about how they feel they're doing socially and emotionally, an opportunity to request for additional help or assistance, and a variety of variables that are impacting their ability to work from home. The hope is that kids will want to do this, they'll want to share more than just I'm here, but also check in so there can be follow up. That letter will go out to families beginning of next week. Just briefly on NYS assessments, there's been a lot of back and forth on assessments, 3-8 in particular. Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, has indicated that some assessments are required for the year, that there will be no relief. Waivers for states to request a waiver for this upcoming year, NYS said we are requiring all assessments to be in person. We understand that it may be very difficult for schools to do, in our current health conditions and our kids working remotely, so they have a juxtaposition of there's no waiver, you have to do it in person, but you may not have kids. NYS further responded that they will seek a waiver if the conditions within our communities are such that they cannot deliver the assessments in person. We have had a bit of tug of war between the federal and state departments of education. If waivers were granted, then it has a compounding effect of seeking a waiver for the APPR the professional reviews of teachers and principals. I share that with you because it's on the horizon and something that we obviously need to monitor. A closer to home is homecoming. October is typically our homecoming. Student council in the high school teacher and student leaders elected to move homecoming to correspond with the spring athletic season. Ideally, with a home football game. They are planning to move some of those events and planning for contingencies for many of the traditional homecoming events, like Powderpuff, and things like that in the spring. Nonetheless, they put out some nice emails to the general staff and students about events for the second two weeks in October. School spirit weeks, they're going to do a mural here in the cafeteria where kids are going to contribute things and kind of build the mural based on student pieces, I think the middle school is going to do the same. Lots of dress up days, virtually every day of the week. Hopefully, the kids find a way to make October fun for one another and our school. Those are just some of the things. The last thing I wanted to share with the board this evening, was to kind of get your perspective if you will, on reopening our board meetings to the public. You can see the physical layout here today. We took some steps to make sure that we are all at a minimum of six feet. Our current capacity, the way the desks and the barriers are situated kind of in the back there behind Tristan, which I think we said 43. We could make some arrangements for more should the board seek to do that. Mr. Grant and I kind of both did some research on what other school boards are doing. We were able to discover that of the 15 boards that responded, 11 of them are currently holding in-person, public attending meetings with a variety of restrictions and safeguards for the public. Four of the boards that responded are still virtual. I give you that for some kind of perspective. Some things that we would need to think about would be whether we are going to require health screenings, temperature checks, whether or not we would want to use this space or a different space, whether or not we would want to require a mask for everyone that isn't speaking, things of that nature. I kind of will turn it over, if you will, to hear some board input so Mrs. Rebmann and I can work on plans for October 21, 2020.

Jim - Thoughts, anyone?

Jody - We have campus on lockdown for any outside organizations or groups. I personally think we should just stick with the Zoom. If members of the board want to do it the other way, I'd be ok, but I'd require masks at all times. I have sat on field hockey fields, we're all wearing masks outside, the parents are all abiding by the six foot rule and wearing their masks. I think we would have to stick with that. To be consistent, I think we need to stick with the rules that we're doing in other spots on the campus. That's my thought.

Pat - I'd like to share one thing that I neglected to include as you respond, and that is that the governor's executive order allowing for boards to hold their meetings virtually, started on March 13, 2020 and has been updated every month since. Mrs. Rebmann and I have been trying to research whether it's been extended beyond October. We can't where it has been to date, we may be in a situation where we don't have the option of going virtual much longer.

Bob - Do we have any requests? We don't have any cards, we don't get any input from the public. Has there been any requests to open the meetings up?

Pat - Not that I'm aware of.

Bob - I don't see the point yet to open up.

Jim - Ok, the reason I brought it up at the last meeting, do we want to make sure since we're meeting in person, do we open it up to the public to give the public opportunity if someone wanted to speak, to speak. Since it's mixed and we do have the building closed to outside groups, as long as there's not a demand, I'm ok with continuing unless the board wants to open it up directly.

Debbie - Could we let the public know if they needed to speak, to let us know ahead of time?

Jody - Or make it where they have to sign up?

Roxanne - It went out in a press release at the top of every agenda when it's posted what email to send their concerns or whatever to.

Jody - Let's say we opened it up. Obviously we have a capacity limitation. Could it be something where they sign up to say that they're coming so that we would know. We would have the capacity limitation that we would need to have? I have to sign up to make reservations at a restaurant right now.

Roxanne - I don't know that we could limit, but it would help if we knew how many. We couldn't stop somebody at the door if they didn't sign up.

Bob - I just don't see the benefit. There's no outside people coming in, you'd have to have temperature checks, you'd have to have a mask. I would actually want to see who's here to judge taking temperatures, get a nurse in here. I don't see the benefits right now especially with zero demand to opening it up and like Jody said campus is closed to all outside activities right now.

Heather - I think with the cleaning, not to overtax and burden our cleaning staff. That was one of our concerns that if they were asked to go through this and clean all the chair rails too, that would be cumbersome.

Bob - If there was demand, I'd say yes.

Jim - Alright.

Pat - So what I will do is I will first verify that it's permissible to remain in virtual format. If it is, we shall. If it is not, we will need to plan for those other contingencies. Fair enough?

Jim - Yes, absolutely.

Pat - That is the last of the questions. That's all I have for tonight.

Erik - Is the plan to continue virtual stream once we're reopened?

Pat - We are currently utilizing our Zoom meeting, which is a little bit different than live streaming where there's a YouTube or channel. I am looking into that to see if we can have a live streaming feature anyone can just kind of log in.

Jim - It's something that we talked about a year or two ago as far as best practices of recording or live streaming the meetings. It's something that it's worth looking into.

Pat - To that end, I don't think that it's a tremendous expense, but I want to make sure that we need to budget to get the right cameras, the right equipment, things of that nature.

Jim - Agreed. Moving on. Item #5 Personnel Instructional. Our recommendation is that the Akron Central School Board of Education upon the recommendation of Patrick D. McCabe, Superintendent of Schools, hereby approve the following instructional items, consent #5A-5E.

Phil - Moved.

Bob - Second.

Jim - Questions or comments on these items?

Jody - Mr. McCabe, for the technology resignation, it said you guys are looking for other certification options. What are we talking about?

Pat - We were looking at the credits middle school kids would possible need to earn or any other course offerings we could do. I directed Mr. Caprio and Mr. Dimitroff and Dr. Farrar to engage and to see what options are available. There aren't really any.

Jody - We don't have Home Ec. now, either.

Pat - Yeah, so we have a posting going out for a technology teacher to maintain our current programming.

Jody - Ok.

Pat - I don't know, is that posting out already?

Roxanne - It went today.

Pat - It went out today.

Jim - Anything else? If we could vote.

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Thank you. Item #6 Personnel Non-Instructional. Our recommended action is that the Akron Central School Board of Education upon the recommendation of Patrick D. McCabe, Superintendent of Schools, hereby approve the following non-instructional items, consent #6A-6F.

Erik - Moved.

Debbie - Second.

Jim - Any questions or comments on the non-instructional items?

Roxanne - Motion carries.

Jim - Item #7 District Items. Recommended action is that the Akron Central School Board of Education upon the recommendation of Patrick D. McCabe, Superintendent of Schools, hereby approve the following district items, consent #7A-7E.

Heather - Moved.

Jody - Second.

Jim - Questions or comments? I just want to confirm on the Main Street Solar, did they agree to our recommended modifications to the pilot?

Pat - Yes.

Jim - Ok. Anything else?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Thank you. Item #8 Special Education. Our recommendation is that the Akron Central School Board of Education approve the following classifications and placements as per the list received as recommended by the Committee on Preschool Special Education and the Committee on Special Education. These recommendations are for the least restrictive environment at this time.

Bob - Moved.

Debbie - Second.

Jim - Questions or comments on Special Education?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - Thank you. Item #9 School Board Correspondence. Tomorrow night as Mr. Kenline mentioned, is Budget and Finance Team at Erie 1 BOCES from 6:30-8:30pm. Thursday, October 15, 2020 is Legislative Team, Mr. Polkowski, at Erie 1 BOCES from 6:30-8:30pm. October 20-22, 2020 and October 27-29, 2020 is the NYSSBA Convention, which will be held virtually this year. See Mrs. Rebmann for registration. Item #10 Upcoming Dates. Wednesday, October 21, 2020 is our Board of Education Regular Business Meeting at 7pm here in the high school cafeteria. Item #11 Input from Individuals and Delegations on Non-Agenda Items. We have no guests, unless Tristan would like to add anything. Anything else from the board on board discussion? Things we haven't covered yet?

Erik - The only thing that was technically a large piece of correspondence is everybody gets a sign because October is School Board Appreciation Month. You get a sign and a stand.

Jim - Item #12 Executive Session. We do have a need to go into executive session to discuss a negotiation and an employment history of a particular person.

Phil - Moved.

Debbie - Second.

Jim - Questions or comments?

Roxanne - Motion carried.

Jim - We're in executive session at 7:31pm. We do not intend or plan to conduct business after we come out of executive session. Thank you everyone for attending tonight.