

River Valley School District
Wednesday, July 22, 2020
Special Meeting
Middle School Library
7:00 pm

*(Used Social Distancing During COVID-19)
(Held as a Virtual Meeting During COVID-19)*

- This meeting was conducted as a virtual meeting due to an active emergency situation. The public was able to view this meeting live on our River Valley YouTube Channel.

- The District discouraged the public and/or media from attending the meeting in person at its noticed location due to concerns with health and safety. Anyone who attended the meeting in person was required to wear a mask and follow social distancing.

Present: Strozinsky, Nelson, Jennings, Young, Bettinger, Cates, Iausly, McGuire, Maier
Absent: N/A
Admin: Glasbrenner, Krey, Radtke, Blakley, Peterson, Kjos, Hegland
Others: Kelly Joles, Paula Wedige (Administrative Assistant), Judy Ettenhoff (Home News)

President Jennings opened the meeting. She noted that the meeting had been properly posted and notice had been provided to the appropriate media and each School Board Member. Iausly moved to proceed with the legal meeting. Maier seconded. Motion carried.

Jennings noted that much of this meeting will be informational and asked all to wait with questions until the end of the overview being provided tonight since many questions will likely be answered. Jennings invited anyone to contact her or Glasbrenner with questions that arise after this meeting.

Sauk County School Districts - Overview for 2020-21 School Year

Glasbrenner noted that a press release giving a unified statement regarding the beginning of the 2020-21 school year from the Sauk County Health Department and six Sauk County School Districts (River Valley, Sauk Prairie, Reedsburg, Baraboo, Weston, Wisconsin Dells) is being reviewed, but is not yet ready for distribution.

River Valley School District - Overview for 2020-21 School Year

There was a lengthy discussion related to plans for the upcoming school year: instructional models (in-person and virtual education options); operations (physical space, environment, facilities preparation, academic guidelines, and safety guidelines); and communications (with families, staff, Board, and community).

Glasbrenner and administration walked through an overview of slides posted on the district's website in the Board meeting packet. He noted that information is rapidly changing and to have patience as a plan for the coming school year is developed. Written guidelines for reopening schools will be shared by August 1.

Instructional Models: The Board will take action on this item later during this meeting. Noting that one size does not fit all, the administration is recommending two options—in person and virtual. Input from staff and parent steering committees has been helpful in guiding decisions. Glasbrenner noted that we have to be ready to move to a fully virtual platform at any time if the need arises.

Update from Principals: Peterson, Radtke, and Blakley each gave examples of the types of facilities revisions and social distancing needs that are being addressed in each of their respective buildings while also planning the delivery methods for in school and virtual instruction.

Weekly Instructional Schedule: There were several questions...How many school days per week? Should we consider a shortened school day? If in person, how many days per week? If students are not on site for one day a week, which day? A parent survey will be sent asking for preference of the weekly instructional schedule.

Special Education Services: When asked about instruction for special education students, Kjos noted that about 15 percent of students utilize special education services. She noted that we would make sure to provide the best support if the family chooses a virtual choice. For students who are medically fragile and unable to mask, we will put in safety measures as much as we can. IEP meetings will occur before the school year starts to see what is best for those students.

Communication To/From Staff: It was asked how we are addressing teacher concerns. It was noted that there has been an ongoing teacher steering committee and information is being shared by building administrators. When the written guidelines are more refined, they will be shared with staff for a preview. In addition, staff requests are being addressed as they arise and principals are trying to meet the needs of staff. It was noted that many staff want a mask requirement. Also suggested was a shortened day or 4 days per week and potential supervision at all times, like on buses, for younger children.

Weekly Staff Work Schedule and On Site: It was confirmed that all staff would be working 5 days per week, on site, even if it is decided that students are not on site 5 days per week. Staff will not be working from home, unless there is a special circumstance that arises.

Disinfecting Facilities: There was a concern from DASHIR custodial staff that a true deep cleaning by the custodial staff would take a week per building. It was noted that ongoing sanitizing and disinfecting will be needed and that a shortened school week would mean less people in the building in a week and allow more cleaning time.

Transportation: There is ongoing discussion with Lamers, St. Johns, and St. Lukes regarding safety of bus riders (capacity, loading, unloading, hand sanitizer, masks, etc.).

Operations and Facilities: Krey talked about safety updates to our facilities: Plexiglas barriers are being placed in offices and in each classroom; traffic flow signage, floor adhesives, and signage regarding social distancing, masks, and symptoms reminders will be added; only cups and water bottles will be used at touchless water fountains; hand sanitizer stations are being set up; current spaces are being reconfigured and furniture is being removed that can't be sanitized easily; and an isolation room for anyone with symptoms will be designated separate from the nurses office area for other needs. In addition, attention has been given to ventilation, cleaning and disinfecting, and the elimination of communal classroom supplies or sanitizing shared

objects. Resources such as sanitizer, masks/gaiters, face shields, HVAC filters, gloves, gowns, barriers, and sprays have been purchases. Glasbrenner noted that a cohort may remain in one classroom and the teachers would rotate.

Face Masks: The Board will take action on this item later during this meeting. The district has the right to set behavioral guidelines. It was suggested that there might be times when a person wants to isolate for a brief period, to remove the mask and take a break before returning to the classroom. There may be zones set up to go outside for breaks or could use the campus fitness trail. Face masks will be supplied on buses and in classrooms. Students might want to provide their own, but they must not be inappropriate. For families that choose not to wear masks, they would be then choosing the virtual learning option. It is important to support each other as families make decisions best for them.

Positive Cases: Dr. Furukawa, the district's medical advisor, would like us to be conservative in the event we have a positive case. If there were a positive case in a classroom, then the entire class/cohort would be virtual and be isolated for 14 days or until each person has two negative tests. If there were a positive case at the high school, we would need to use proximity reporting to determine contact. If the teacher must be home but kids can be at school, he/she should hopefully teach from home and another adult would supervise kids in person in the classroom.

Communication: Glasbrenner noted that staff and parent steering committees have been developing plans with administration, and information has been shared via email, phone, social media, website, and family management tool. Regular communication will be shared with staff, families, and communities about plans for the fall. Written guidelines for reopening schools will be shared by August 1.

The Board will assess the need to hold another special meeting prior the August 13 regular Board meeting.

A recorded question and answer session and ongoing updates of a compiled document on our website was suggested as a way to answer common questions for all. We would invite questions from staff, families, and community. An in person option was also suggested to be held in a gymnasium or on the football field.

Employee Sick Leave: Krey noted we are following Department of Labor guidelines. There has been no discussion about adding additional sick leave time. A reminder was just sent to staff today about employee rights under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).

Testing: It was noted that parents would need to follow health guidelines regarding when and when not to send kids to school. Unfortunately, testing seems to be slowing down in Sauk County, just as schools are preparing to open.

Extracurricular Activities: Hegland noted that the WIAA Board will be meeting on July 23 to take action on a plan for sports for the coming school year. River Valley has been providing strength and conditioning to students, using social distancing measures. Glasbrenner noted many district administrators have the opinion that there is a lack of WIAA leadership. If there is no clear guidance from WIAA, our conference will have to take action. We may have to look at other ways to offer fitness options to students.

Jennings noted that this was a good two-hour discussion and to contact Jennings or Glasbrenner if there are additional questions. A reminder that written guidelines for reopening schools will be shared by August 1.

Consideration & Action on Approval of Agenda

Cates moved to approve the agenda. Strozinsky seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on In-Person and Virtual Instructional Models for the 2020-21 School Year

Iausly moved to approve an in-person and virtual instructional model for the 2020-21 school year. Cates seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Mask Wearing Requirements for 2020-21 School Year

Cates moved to mandate masks and face coverings while on River Valley School District property. Strozinsky seconded. There was discussion about the need to provide a safe environment but there was concern that this language might be too restrictive and not allow for exceptions, such as eating, drinking, sensory issues, and health issues.

For the motion: Cates, Nelson, Strozinsky

Against the motion: Bettinger, Jennings, McGuire, Maier, Young, Iausly

Abstain: N/A

Absent: N/A

The vote was 3-6 in the affirmative. Motion failed.

Iausly moved to require masks to be worn for in-person school instruction based on district guidelines. Young seconded. The guidelines would speak specifically to exceptions, such as health conditions, eating, and drinking.

For the motion: Cates, Nelson, Bettinger, Jennings, Maier, Young, Iausly

Against the motion: McGuire, Strozinsky

Abstain: N/A

Absent: N/A

The vote was 7-2 in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Maier moved to adjourn at 9:20 pm. Iausly seconded. Motion carried.

Submitted by Paula Wedige for:

_____ Deborah Nelson, School District Clerk