

River Valley School District  
Thursday, September 9, 2021  
Regular Meeting  
Middle School Library  
7:00 p.m.

Present: Nelson, Jennings, Young, Minich, Maier, Cates, Iausly, Bettinger, Carstensen

Absent: N/A

Admin: Glasbrenner, Krey, Radtke, Peterson

Others: Matt Snow, Julie Limmex, Caressa Brandenburg, Dana Sanftleben, Lynn Erickson, Michelle Orcutt, Jenafer Humpries, Lynn White, Denise Melanowski, Nathan Royko Maurer, Amelia Royko Maurer, Dr. Masaru Furukawa, Tammy Hill, Dave Chapman, Jodi Feiner, Brander from Lone Rock, John Litviak, Grace Stanton, Becky Ellis, Amber Seffrood, Shawn Duren, Paula Wedige (Administrative Assistant)

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. Maier moved to proceed with the legal meeting. Iausly seconded. Motion carried.

#### Consideration & Action on Approval of Agenda

Young moved to approve the agenda. Carstensen seconded. Motion carried.

#### Public Comments

Jennings asked that all be respectful with no disruptions or the audience would be moved to the gym to view the meeting online. She noted each person that signed up to speak will have 3 minutes.

Matt Snow spoke on behalf of his wife, Jennifer, who is the middle school chorus teacher. Matt teaches high school band. Jennifer noted chorus poses a higher risk of COVID without masks since a person exhales more while singing, and she is in favor of wearing masks in choral classrooms. She noted long term damage from COVID is still being studied. While 6 feet of social distancing and face masks are recommended, she believes we need a high compliance of masks to be effective.

Caressa Brandenburg is an Arena parent with 3 kids in the district. She works for a school in the district. She heard that tonight the Board will be discussing potential changes to the Instructional Model voted on last month and that masking thresholds could be lowered. She feels the current Instructional Model is a really good compromise, although it was a concession for her. She feels that Board members are only listening to a small group of families and are not representing everyone in their area. She believes some will keep chipping away until masks are mandatory and she doesn't want to lower the current masking thresholds. She noted that administration lived through last year at schools and gave their recommendation last month. She asked the Board not to vote for any changes.

Dana Sanftleben is an Arena parent with 2 kids in the district. She believes that fear of death from COVID is being used by some as manipulation, but says there is a 99.5% survival rate. She stated that your fear is not our responsibility. She feels that masks don't belong on the faces of children. She asked the Board to vote no on masking changes and fear not.

Jenafer Humphries has 2 children in the district. Her daughter is a senior and has medical issues which make her severely immune compromised. Although her daughter is vaccinated, specialists don't believe the COVID vaccine is effective for her and she would most likely die if she gets COVID. She feels that her daughter has the right to a safe education. She asked the Board to think about these children in our community. Her 6<sup>th</sup> grade son was home last year for remote learning to protect his sister and was failing until he returned to school in person. She feels it is vital to have kids in the classroom. Not having a mask mandate makes her choose between her daughter's life and son's education success. She is sorry that masks are uncomfortable, but shoes and clothes are uncomfortable too. She feels that a mask mandate decision shouldn't be decided by parents and asked the Board to look to the experts.

Nathan Royko Maurer is an Arena parent with a high school daughter. He feels we could revise the Instructional Model to reduce the number of incidents that would trigger masking in the classroom, which would be better than the current Model. He urged the Board to make a new recommendation. He gave the analogy of lighting a fire in the woods, when warned by experts not to, just because you wanted to. He feels that not following recommendations on masks is similar to lighting fires day after day, adding that only you can prevent forest fires, says Smokey.

Dave Chapman is a Spring Green resident with kids in the middle school and elementary school and has coached youth soccer. He appreciates those serving on the Board. He is frustrated that a large group of parents have been overwhelming and have threatened funding, so many of the Board members have lost the capacity to listen. Many parents and teachers feel they are not being heard. Like last year, he assumed the district would continue to follow medical guidelines. He asked why the Board is letting yourself to be bullied into a new plan. He wants to just do what we did so well last year and wear masks. While testing is helpful, cases are showing up already in our schools. Without cohorts at the elementary level and separation, we can't control the spread of COVID, especially without masks. He thanked the Board for taking this job and wouldn't want to be in their shoes. He asked that they leave medical decisions to the medical board.

Jennings clarified to the audience that every person on the Board is listening, even though they may not agree with you.

Lynn Erickson has 3 children in the district and lives in the Franklin township. She reminded the Board of the dirty mask she displayed at last month's meeting and that her son wasn't supposed to wear a mask due to his special needs. Masks are not healthy. This topic is causing much division in schools, communities, and friendships. She believes that we shouldn't have a testing bias by saying if vaccinated, you don't need to test, and we shouldn't count every kid at home as COVID positive. She has heard the statement that those who aren't vaccinated don't deserve health care. Hate doesn't have a home here.

Grace Stanton has a daughter at the elementary school. She noted that the Delta variant is contagious and masking works. She asked the Board to look to experts in the medical community who suggest wearing masks, social distancing, and washing hands. She recognizes that contract tracing is difficult and said to just put on a mask.

Amelia Royko Maurer feels that personal stories are driving policy decisions. She noted that there are people in the community you don't know but your choices impact all people. Her father couldn't have visitors last year and struggled to breath. Exhausted nurses served as

emotional support to him. He wasn't allowed to discuss heart surgery because there was no space for him. Our decisions impact others. If there are kids that can't wear masks, let's figure out solutions just for them. She lost 3 people in last year and 5 anti-masking talk show hosts are all dead. She asked the Board to listen to Dr. Furukawa.

John Litviak has a son in the district. He feels wearing a mask is a hazard and a manipulation technique and a conflict on people's rights. He feels that all illnesses are being blamed on COVID. He is willing to bet no shutdowns will occur. He feels there is a behind the scenes agenda with social distancing, masking, and vaccines and asked all to please wake up.

#### Update on School District Operations from Administration

Radtke stated that students are excited to be back at school and teachers are excited to see them in their classrooms. There is a new "Blackhawk period" being utilized at the middle school to provide intervention and support for students during that time. Peterson added that the first few days at the ELC were rough as a lot of daily routine items are being taught. The elementary school is settling in and the Before and After School Program enrollments are increasing. It was noted that this year each building has a "Blackhawk period" for kids to reach out to teachers.

#### Board Member WASB Member Recognition Program

The WASB awards points to Board members who participate in WASB and NSBA (National School Boards Association) professional development activities. Board members Sara Young and Kathy Jennings have reached Level 2 of the WASB Member Recognition Program.

#### Board Reminders, Announcements, and Training Opportunities

None.

#### Legislative Update

Glasbrenner noted he and Krey have been working on the 2021-22 budget, and they are still waiting on information pertaining to ESSER 3 funds.

#### Consent Agenda: - Checks, Invoices, Receipts – August 2021; Open Session Meeting Minutes – August 12, 2021, Regular Meeting

Cates moved to approve the consent agenda items as submitted. Maier seconded. Motion carried.

#### Consideration & Action on 2021-22 Madison Area Technical College Dual Credit Contract

No discussion. Contract not yet received. This item will be addressed at a future Board meeting.

#### Consideration & Action on Resolutions Accepting Resignations, if any

None.

#### Consideration & Action on Hirings, if any

None.

#### Consideration & Action on Policy Committee Recommendations

Jennings noted there are no recommended changes to Policy 728 Wearing Masks and Face Coverings. Masks are recommended on the district campus but federal guidelines mandate masks on public transportation, which include school buses. She noted that discussion of potential changes to the 2021-22 Instructional Model will be discussed later during this meeting.

As recommended by the Committee, Iausly moved to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the following policies: ~~346 Testing Programs of English Language Learner (ELL) Students;~~ 346-Rule 2 Testing of ~~English Language Learner (ELL)~~ Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Students; (NEW) 342.5 Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Program; 361 Selection of Instructional Materials; (NEW) 411.4 Foster Care Children; 751 Student Transportation Services; (NEW) 526.1 Employment References and Verification (Aiding and Abetting Sexual Abuse); and (NEW) 671.3 Employee Compensation - Unexpected or Extraordinary Circumstances. Cates seconded. Motion carried.

As recommended by the Committee, Cates moved to approve the 1<sup>st</sup> reading of the following policies: 752 District Vehicle Use; (NEW) 752.1 Exhibit Student Transportation Agreement (Alternative Transportation); 370 Co-Curricular Activity Program; 836 Exhibit Animals in the School Request Form;; 840 Gifts to the District; 352 Field Trips; 452.4 Administering Medication to Students; 452.4 Exhibit 3 Self-Administration of Medication on Overnight Field Trips – Health Care Provider and Parent Permission Form; 523 Exhibit Periods of Exclusion from School with Infectious Conditions; 172 Special Board Meetings; and 187 Public Participation at Board Meetings. Minich seconded. Motion carried with Bettinger opposed.

838 Naming District Facilities and 842 Grants to the District From Private or Public Sources were reviewed by the Committee with no recommended changes.

#### Consideration & Action on Modifying Instructional Model for the 2021-22 School Year

The Board took action on the Instructional Model at the August Board meeting. Masks are still recommended, per Policy 728 Wearing Masks and Face Coverings. Some want masking thresholds in the Instructional Model to be revisited, which was discussed at the September 7 Policy meeting. The Committee recommends to have the building masking thresholds changed to 4 cases at the high school, 4 cases at the middle school, 1 case per grade for Grades 5 and 6, and 1 case per classroom at Grades PreK-4, and to count a symptomatic person as a positive if they don't get tested. Jennings noted that if building level masking thresholds are being revisited, administration prefers to have numbers be 5 cases at the high school, 4 cases at the middle school, 3 cases at the elementary school, and 2 cases at the Early Learning Center.

The nursing staff would also like to see language in the Instructional Model that requires family members to quarantine if a household member tests positive.

Also suggested was to have a PreK-4 classroom mask for 10 days if there is one positive COVID case in a particular classroom. At Grades 5-6, a whole grade would mask for 10 days if there is a positive COVID case in that grade. It was noted that administration prefers to make Grades PreK-4 be the same as Grades 5-6 and to have a whole grade mask for 10 days when there is one positive COVID case in a particular grade for Grades PreK-6.

It was noted that numbers used in the current Instructional Plan for when to mask are based on confirmed positive COVID cases. Iausly wants us to count a symptomatic person as a positive if they don't get tested. Jennings disagrees noting there are about 20 to 25 kids out at the high school each day, and if all of those kids are considered positive, they would be masking every day. Glasbrenner noted that a family might not share specific symptoms when calling in sick. Symptomatic persons must quarantine at home for 10 days.

It was noted that some families may not test due to no transportation to a test site. We will have the ability to test at school. Nursing staff feels that families will test since families want students to be in school. And to assume symptomatic persons are positive would be a large undertaking for nursing staff for contact tracing and notification. We would not have enough nursing staff. Young would like to see us hire more nursing staff. Nelson asked who will keep track of which kids had or didn't have a mask during a close contact. That data is not gathered. Minich added that if we believe most people will get tested, then why not just count those with symptoms as positive since that number would be small. Young said if we count symptomatic persons as being positive even if they don't test, that might be an incentive to get a test to show you are negative and, therefore, not add to the positive numbers used for the masking threshold.

Per Dr. Furukawa, by not counting symptomatic persons as positive when they don't test is creating a higher risk transmission scenario since no contract tracing to those persons and no mask mandate. He added that a vaccinated person in a positive household is not required to quarantine but should mask.

A few persons from the audience volunteered to help with testing. Another audience member objected to the offer. Jennings asked for no comments from the audience. Glasbrenner tried to summarize the common ideas from this discussion and wrote them on the whiteboard in the library for all to view.

Nelson moved to approve the following modifications to the Instructional Model for the 2021-22 School Year:

1. Building thresholds for when to mask would be an absolute number of confirmed positive COVID cases, which would then require masks for all students and staff in that building for 10 days—High School, 5 cases; Middle School, 4 cases; Elementary School, 3 cases; and ELC, 2 cases.
2. In grades PK-6<sup>th</sup>, when there is 1 confirmed positive COVID case in a particular grade, masks would be required for 10 days for all students and staff in that particular grade.
3. Quarantine measures for a confirmed positive COVID case in a household would be to require all exposed household members to quarantine at home for 10 days, with the exception of a vaccinated household member who can attend school, but must mask at school for 14 days. The vaccinated household member can test after day 3.

Iausly seconded. Iausly, Cates, Nelson, Minich, Carstensen, Young, and Jennings raised their hands in favor of the motion. Bettinger and Maier raised their hands against the motion. Motion carried.

Jennings moved to count only confirmed positive COVID cases when applying the Instructional Model thresholds. Maier seconded. Minich asked if we could allow the nursing staff to decide when to include symptomatic persons as positive cases, if necessary. Jennings noted that we would instead call a special Board meeting for the Board to take action on any change.

Bettinger, Maier, Cates, Minich, and Jennings raised their hands in favor of the motion. Iausly, Young, Carstensen, and Nelson raised their hands against the motion. Motion carried.

Jennings moved to make the changes to the Instructional Model effective Monday, September 13, 2021. Carstensen seconded.

Iausly, Cates, Nelson, Minich, Carstensen, Young, and Jennings raised their hands in favor of the motion. Bettinger and Maier raised their hands against the motion. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Curriculum and Instruction Committee Recommendations

Glasbrenner noted that the annual academic goal is that 100% of the River Valley School District educational staff will utilize research-based teaching strategies targeting all students, with special attention to students with socio-economic challenges, in order to improve proficiency in mathematics and/or literacy. The annual climate goal is that 100% of River Valley School District students will be able to share the name of a trusted adult from the River Valley School District using observational, staff and survey data. In addition, each building set an academic and climate goal related to district goals. All goals noted included how progress will be measured. Action on district goals will take place later during this meeting.

As recommended the Committee, Young moved to approve that Year 1 curriculum documentation for each course will be developed by PK-12 teaching staff as presented by the staff curriculum steering committee. Jennings seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on 2021-22 Annual District Goals

As recommended the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Young moved to approve the 2021-22 academic and climate goals. Minich seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Resolutions Accepting Gifts, if any

Carstensen moved to adopt the Resolutions Accepting Gifts of the following: \$1,000 to Fund 21 for school supplies for students in need from Robert Lang; \$500 to Fund 21 for school supplies for students in need from Jennifer Kraemer; \$100 to Fund 21 for school supplies for students in need from Robert and Janelle Elmer; \$100 to Fund 21 for students in need from Derrick and Janet Gee; \$3482.20 to the football team for football uniforms from the Athletic Booster Club; and \$750 to the swim team for municipal pool fee from the Athletic Booster Club. Maier seconded. Polled vote was 9-0 in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action to Adjourn to Closed Session Pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 19.85(1)(a) and 19.85(1)(f) for Update on 2020-21 Expulsions

Maier moved to adjourn to closed session at 9:12 p.m. Carstensen seconded. Polled vote was 9-0 in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Submitted by Paula Wedige for:

 Deborah Nelson, School District Clerk