



**Minutes School Board Meeting
Greene County Schools
WMHS Performing Arts Center
7/29/2020**

NOTE: Due to COVID-19 and state guidelines limiting the number of attendees, this meeting was livestreamed. The link was published on the Greene County Public Schools website and made available on the division's Facebook page.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Sharon Mack, Chairperson; Mr. Todd Sansom, Vice-Chairperson; Mr. Jason Tooley, Member; Ms. Leah Paladino, Member; Mr. Jason Collier, Member; Andrea Whitmarsh, Superintendent; Ms. Rhonda Houchens, Clerk.

MEMBERS ABSENT: N/A

BOARD OF SUPERVISOR(S) PRESENT: Steve Bowman, Liaison

Ms. Sharon Mack called the Greene County School Board meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Dr. Whitmarsh introduced information item #11-904, a Return to Learn Update from division leaders. She outlined the plans that were approved during the last school board meeting on July 8th. She explained that the plans have always been designed to evolve and adapt since the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is changing daily. Mr. Bryan Huber shared more details on the planning efforts that have been underway since the board approved the Option 1 reopening plan on July 8th (15 days ago). He also outlined some considerations that will impact planning moving forward, emphasizing that enrolment numbers are needed from student registration. During the presentation Dr. Whitmarsh explained the financial implications of not having accurate registration numbers. The presentation also included results from a survey that was sent out to staff. The survey was designed to gauge staff members' thoughts on the current reopening plans and help division leaders continue planning.

Ms. Mack opened the floor for public comment on the Return to Learn agenda item.

John Trainum, a father of a rising 5th grade student, was the first attendee to address the board. He expressed his support of keeping in-person learning as an option for students and asked for the board to consider getting students back into school as quickly as possible.

Susan Brooking, a mother of two students, expressed her support of keeping in-person learning as an option and even expanding fully in-person to grades 6-12. She asked if more in-person options could be available for students with an IEP or 504 plan and explained she was looking forward to more guidance on that.

Samantha Braden, a student, expressed her support for in-person learning. She explained that she missed being around her peers and more involved instruction from teachers.

Casey Costanzo, a mother of two students, expressed her support of in-person learning. She explained that her children are better suited for instruction in a classroom and not "behind a screen." She outlined various statistics that supports her opinion on having students in school, rather than fully virtual.

P.J. Gilbert, owner of Piper Ivy Preschool, outlined how she has been able to keep her school open during the COVID-19. She briefed board members on the various measures her school has implemented in order to safely remain open. She expressed her support for in-person learning for all students in the division.

Ms. Rebekah Corcoran, a parent and participant on the task forces for Return to Learn planning, expressed her concern over considerations for teachers within the division. She expressed that several teachers have reached out to her directly about their reservations moving into the new school year. She recommended releasing an anonymous survey to staff.

Ms. Mack asked if surveys to staff could be anonymous moving forward, so everyone would be encouraged to submit a response.

Ms. Mack asked if a face covering protocol could be added as an agenda item for the board's next meeting date, making mask enforcement stricter.

Dr. Whitmarsh asked for additional direction from the board as division leaders continue planning for the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Leah Paladino stated she would like to move forward with the proposed plan, meaning option 1 that was approved during the board's meeting July 8th. That sentiment was echoed by Mr. Jason Collier. Ms. Mack stated she is not in favor of changing the direction of reopening plans and would like to continue supporting adaptable planning efforts that are being generated with continual advisement.

Mr. Huber presented information/action item #11-905, a new school year calendar for the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Mack says she would be in favor of forming a calendar committee that would be tasked with monitoring and communicating school year calendar changes. Mr. Samson noted he does not want to set a precedent that the plan is going to change frequently.

Ms. Karen Braden, a mother of a student in the division, expressed her support for getting students back into school as quickly as possible.

Samantha Braden, a student, echoed her comments from earlier in the meeting. She explained she would like to get back to engaged learning as quickly as possible.

Mr. Collier moved to accept the amended calendar as presented, with the new school year start date of September 8th, Ms. Paladino seconded the motion. All ayes from school board members, motion carries.

Dr. Whitmarsh asked for more direction on the contents of future surveys that are released to staff members. Ms. Mack said offering surveys that allow anonymous responses may be beneficial. Additionally, she asked that a question regarding masks be included in the new

survey. She asked if there could be some input from Ms. Rebekah Corcoran, as she was a member of the task forces that helped with the initial planning for Return to Learn planning.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Rhonda Houchens

Rhonda Houchens, Clerk



Sharon Mack, Board Chair