

SYLVAN HEIGHTS SCIENCE CHARTER SCHOOL

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday August 11, 2020

**Call to Order**

The Special Board meeting was called to order by Dr. Kurtz at 5:35 pm and it was noted the meeting was being recorded. Attendance of the board members was taken.

**Attendance (all members were attending virtually):**

**School Board Members:** Dr. Laura Kurtz, Ed Jaroch, Andre Johnston, Margaret Burton Conners, Merita Merick, and Nancy Neusbaum were present. Elizabeth DuVall, Lyndsay Bryce, and Amechie Walker were absent. Dr. Leigh Dalton was present from Stock and Leader.

**Administration:** Susan Roth (Principal/ CAO), Jessica Nordai (Pupil Services Coordinator), Lori Lauver and (STEM Coordinator),

**School Staff:** Melena Overdorf, Specials Teacher/Safe Schools Coordinator; Marty Stevens, School Counselor, and Ashley Roufos-Abbey, teacher, were present from the staff

**Public Participants:** Ronnica Jackson, Lynette Wade, Charles Finley, Daryele Franklin-Matthews, Lanette Johnson, Felicia Grooms, Tamika Everett, Lydia Skulstad. There were also six callers that were not able to be identified.

**Approval of Agenda:**

It should be noted that public notice was given for this meeting in accordance with Act 84 of 1986. The preliminary agenda is submitted for Board approval.

Dr. Laura Kurtz made the motion to approve the agenda; the motion was seconded by Margaret Burton Conners. There being no discussion, the meeting continued.

Vote: 6-0

Result: Motion passed

**Reports/ Presentations:** School Health and Safety Plan/Reopening Plan- Options/presentation

Mrs. Nordai, Pupil Services Coordinator, presented information that had been provided to the public in the weeks following the last Board of Trustees meeting on July 20, 2020. Information included guidance regarding phased reopening provided to schools by the PA Department of Education on Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup> and information regarding the Phased Reopening Health and Safety Plan for Harrisburg School District which were made public last week and approved by the Receiver for Harrisburg during their Board Meeting on Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Based on the guidance provided by the PA Department of Education and announced Phased Reopening Health and Safety Plan for the Harrisburg School District as of this meeting, the recommendation from the Sylvan Heights Science Charter School Phased Reopening Health and Safety Planning Committee is to revise the plan previously adopted by the Board of Trustees on July 20, 2020. The revision would include a phased model of reopening which would begin with 100% virtual instruction for students with the first day of instruction on August 31<sup>st</sup>. Public health data and student data will be reviewed and presented at the Board meeting scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup>. When the level of COVID-19 infection falls within the recommended guidelines put forth by PA Department of Education and health officials, recommendations will be made to move to the first and second phases (hybrid models), and, eventually to an in-person instructional model. For the 2020-2021 school year, families have the option for their child to remain in remote learning or return to in-person learning as we move through the reopening phases. As per PA Department of Education regulations, all attendance policies will be in effect for the 2020-2021 school year.

Time was given for Board Members to ask questions. Note: Meg Burton Connors submitted her question through the “chat” feature later in the meeting as her microphone was not able to be heard at the time set aside.

### **Comment Period**

It was noted that that the Board of Trustees will be listening and taking notes during the comment period, but would not respond to any questions or comments. If the Administration is able to respond to answer a question, they may. However, if further action is needed from the Administration, they will follow up with you at a later date.

#### **A. Public Comments**

- a. Mr. Charles Finley- asked for clarification of the start date for students, the timeline for reassessing the situation, and the expectation for student uniforms during various phases of the reopening plan. *The first day of virtual instruction will be 8/31/20. We will monitor data during the first weeks of school and provide an update for discussion at the 9/21/20 Board of Trustees meeting. Recommending a minimum of two weeks’ notice be provided before transitioning to a different reopening phase. Uniforms will be required during in-person instruction as per the dress code. While uniforms are not required during virtual learning time, clothing must be school appropriate.*
- b. Ms. Lanette Wade- When will devices be ready for pick-up? *The week of August 24<sup>th</sup>; more information will be announced next week.*
- c. Ms. Daryele Franklin-Matthews- Expressed strong concern about students returning to in-person instruction at this time as her son has a respiratory condition. Questioned if students must return to in-person learning during this school year. *Pending Board approval, the revised Phased School Health and Safety Reopening Plan would allow the family to choose to have the student attend classes remotely by logging into the live sessions online and completing the assigned work.*

- d. Mrs. Lanette Johnson- Expressed support for a hybrid instructional model and encourages consideration of both hybrid and remote options for parent choice. She inquired about student/ teacher interaction during instructional times (e.g. watching videos of lessons versus live real-time interactions). *Live instruction will be provided during a set classroom schedule; for those students unable to join during the live instruction times during the day, videos of the lessons will be provided for review during asynchronous learning times.*
  - e. Ms. Felicia Grooms- As a parent working full time, what will happen if my child is unable to log in at the time for his instruction (clarification of attendance). *Student must complete his/ her work prior to the deadline for the assignment. As long as the work is completed and on time, the student will be given credit for attendance during that time period. Teachers will post videos of lessons following instruction for student and parent reference.*
  - f. Mr. Charles Finley- When will class rosters be sent out? *Class rosters will be announced prior to the first day of school; we anticipate the information will be available during pickup of student devices and school supplies for remote learning.* Mr. Finley expressed support for consideration of in-person instruction as his child has attended camp daily with health and safety precautions in place.
  - g. Tameka (Keon’s mom)- Is there any consideration for testing students for COVID-19 prior to students’ return to in-person learning? *Staff could not answer at this time.*
  - h. If the Harrisburg School district has determined that it is currently not safe to start their schools in-person/hybrid mode this fall, why does SHSCS feel it is safe? Usually SHSCS follows the district. *As noted, SHSCS presented the original plan in July prior to Harrisburg releasing their plan. The new plan would mirror Harrisburg’s intentions.*
  - i. What is your data threshold for reopening in person vs being remote? (ie. do you have a test positivity rate threshold that you are holding to for Dauphin County)? *Per the most recent guidance, SHSCS will be using incidence rate and percent positivity data to assist in making determinations moving forward.*
  - j. Why can't there be an option for families who want or need their child to be fully remote, whether they are extremely concerned about the level of community transmission or a student lives with a high risk individual? *This will be a possibility for the 2020/2021 school year.*
  - k. When the HBG district begins their hybrid plan, one group will attend in person Mon/Tues, while the other group will attend Th/Fri; and everyone is remote on Wed. This plan seems like it would allow for increased cleaning and time between groups to limit spread between them -- would SHSCS consider this schedule change to their hybrid plan? *Administration will take this under consideration.*
- B. Staff Comments
- a. Mrs. Overdorf: personally feels comfortable returning to school. School is purchasing items for students and will continue to prepare for a transition to a hybrid model.
- C. Additional Comments

- a. Laura Kurtz- What provisions are needed to prepare for transportation in transitioning to a hybrid model? *We must provide two weeks' notice to the transportation department. Each bus may transport a maximum of 24 students with one child per seat. The transportation department apologized for not having information available sooner.*
- b. Lanette Johnson- Would not be in favor of having her children tested prior to resuming in-person instruction.
- c. Margaret Burton Connors- Will we be allowing parents to switch from remote to hybrid during any time within the school year? *As the school transitions through the phases, parents will be able to choose whether or not their child will return to in-person instruction or participate in remote learning.*

**BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

By notice of the President, the following action items suggest a roll call vote. You will be recorded as voting in the affirmative for the motion unless you say “nay” or “I abstain.” Board Members are further advised that they must publicly announce and disclose the nature of any conflict of interest before the vote on the matter is taken.

Dr. Laura Kurtz made a motion to adopt the revisions to the Phased School Reopening Health and Safety Plan for Sylvan Heights Science Charter School, updated to reflect considerations relative to Harrisburg School District’s Phased School Reopening Health and Safety Plan and changes in reopening local guidelines for all instructional and non-instructional reopening activities. The motion was seconded by Merita Marek. There being no discussion, a roll-call vote was taken.

Laura Kurtz – yes

Ed Jaroch- yes

Elizabeth Duvall- absent

Andre Johnston- yes

Lyndsay Bryce- absent

Amechie Walker- absent

Margaret Burton Connors- yes

Nancy Neusbaum- yes

Merita Marek- yes

Result: 6-0; motion carried and the revised Phase School Reopening Health and Safety Plan for Sylvan Heights Science Charter School was approved.

Dr. Laura Kurtz thanked the public and staff for participating in the evening's Board Meeting and providing input on the Phased Reopening Health and Safety Plan. Above all else, we are worried about the health and safety of your children. The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 pm.