

WILLIAMS BAY SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Monday, December 3, 2020

Board Members Present: J. Lothian, K. Nelson, P. Peyer, D. Ripple, D. Woss

Absent: None

Administration Present: District Administrator Dr. W. White
MS/HS Principal B. Mansky
Elementary Principal A. Bond
Director of Special Education K. McOmber
Business Manager B. Prather

Guests: 7

I. CALL TO ORDER

President J. Lothian called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

II. COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scott Smith, a parent in the district, spoke to the Board about his hope that sports are still included and that the Board will allow students to still participate.

III. ACTION ITEMS

A. Discuss and Possibly Act Upon Extending Virtual Learning Past December 4, 2020

Dr. White presented information to the Board regarding COVID-19 rates in Walworth County. He shared that he believes that students should be back in-person on Monday. The number on priority is our students and we have not seen spread in any of the buildings.

D. Ripple asked if the District still has the plan to be in classrooms on December 7. He asked if the Athletic Department is operating under the sports protocol. Dr. White responded yes, and that sports are currently restricted to no fans but there is some latitude to make decisions under the approved plan.

D. Woss asked for clarification about if we are discussing virtual learning vs. remote learning or if there is an option to stay home. Dr. White shared that families can still choose for to stay home if necessary. She asked if students can go back and forth. Dr. White said that we have been accommodating to needs and issues that students have. Each student is worked with on a case by case basis. Dianna asked if staff can choose to be home. The staff can not choose to stay home.

D. Ripple asked what percentage of the student body is learning at home. Dr. White estimated around 8% are virtual at elementary, and 15% at the MS/HS. D. Ripple asked if most students are in classrooms, which Dr. White responded yes. He asked about the cleaning protocols. Dr. White shared the biopolarization system is in place. Ryan Quinn shared about the cleaning system as well as that he is seeing some impact on the filters.

K. Nelson shared that she read staff and family letters and she is in favor of coming back face to face for the youth. She thinks face to face is very important and saw it as a teacher and in her own grandchildren. The benefits are enormous to be in school. Dr. White shared that he has compassion for staff but his first duty is to advocate for kids.

P. Peyer asked about the mask wearing and how that is being managed. He asked if students are compliant or if there are any issues. Dr. White said that there is a lot of reminders. Patrick Peyer asked about social distancing from students. Dr. White shared that some classrooms are pretty tight and mentioned fourth grade is difficult.

J. Lothian shared that there have been increased cases month to month. He said that the admin has not given the Board any reason to believe that they can't go back into school safely. He shared that he is concerned about the stress on the staff. He would like the message to the staff to be that they are making a tough decision but they have taken all of their thoughts into consideration.

D. Ripple shared that he is supporting the recommendation of coming back on Monday. He has heard from members of the community that they are concerned about the stress on staff. He wants everything to be safe for staff and students. Dr. White shared that this isn't a permanent decision and that we can shut down whenever necessary.

J. Lothian shared that we should continue to look into providing additional staff time when necessary, to help with stress levels. Dr. White acknowledged this.

D. Woss shared that this is one of the toughest decisions she has had to make and she empathizes with the staff. She believes their role is to advocate for the students first. She believes we have done everything physically possible and hopes that we can get through the next few weeks. She is hoping we don't have a big influx right before Christmas. She doesn't want to send kids home sick. As long as we can keep our students healthy and our staff strengthened the best we can, she believes as a school we need to be open.

P. Peyer agrees. He shared that his own children wants to in school. He is concerned about staff and agrees it is stressful, but the most important thing is to be in school. He encourages staff to bring suggestions to the Board if they have any other safety measures in mind.

No action was taken.

VII. ADJOURN

At 7:20 pm., D. Ripple / D. Woss motion and second to adjourn the meeting, carried 5-0.

