

A Business Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Saucon Valley School District was held on Monday, August 16, 2021 in the High School Audion. Present were Directors Edward Andres, Susan Baxter, Cedric Dettmar, Bryan Eichfeld, Michael Karabin, Tracy Magnotta, Sandra Miller, Dr. Shamim Pakzad, and Shawn Welch. Also present were Dr. Craig Butler, Superintendent; David Bonenberger, Board Secretary and Stephen Kalis, District Solicitor.

- I. **Call to the Order** – 7:35 - *Susan Baxter, President, presiding*
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. **Recording of Attendance** – *David Bonenberger, Secretary*  
9-present, 0-absent
- IV. **Motion to Approve Agenda** – Director Miller, seconded by Director Welch moved to approve the Agenda. Vote: 9-yes, 0-no
- V. **Courtesy of the Floor to Visitors – Agenda Items Only**
  - M. Stickel – Asked about masking and quarantining.
  - L. Salmon – Suggested children under 12 mask because they can't get vaccinated and children over 12 ask for vaccine status.
  - L. Kasper – Informed the Board that PCR tests have been invalidated by the FDA & CDC and will no longer be used after December 31st, masking is ineffective and are investigational medical therapy and need informed consent, and masks cause exposure to Covid.
  - T. Smith – Commented Ms. Kasper should run for School Board.
  - R. Salmon – He is in favor of masking.
  - D. Carpenter – CDC has made recommendations and we are not medical experts.
  - M. Opthof – She fears for her grandchild who cannot yet be vaccinated.
  - L. Opthof – He hopes we follow the CDC guidance.
  - F. Novak – He agrees with Ms. Kasper, what she said was based on facts.
  - J. Schmell – 70% of the parents said they do not want their children masked, we should be following the majority not the minority.
  - J. Murphy – Students in K-6 should wear masks and 7-12 should be optional if vaccinated.
  - D. Cancelliere – He commented that the Delta variant is not real.
  - A. Ramsberger – She is not in favor of masking.
  - A. Wittchen – She is in favor of vaccinating and if COVID is not real where did the 660,000 dead people come from.
  - M. Morawski – My body my choice, we should not require students to mask, let parents make that decision.
  - E. Szydlow – Give a survey to the high school students to see what they choose.
  - J. Sanchez – The only way to keep people safe is to vaccinate and mask.
  - B. Patterson – Let the parents decide about masking, do not follow the CDC.
  - N. Spirk – Thanked the Board for what they did last year to keep the kids in school and would like them to follow Dr. Butler's recommendations.
  - A. Weber – Is vaccinated and wears masked to protect others.
  - M. Butterfield – Can the quarantine time be adjusted to wear masks if exposed?

- V. Opthof-Cordero – We should follow what the experts suggest so we are not left open to liability.
- J. Schuster – We do not have to follow the CDC, they are not a regulatory agency, she wants optional masking.
- H. Gress – Feels the students should have some say at the high school level.
- J. Banonis – Masks are not effective and that is why we are having this meeting, make decision on constituents wants.
- A. McFetridge – She agrees that this virus is not going away. Feels we need to find alternatives to boost children immune systems not suppressing them.
- A. Fleck – This is a serious virus but a mask is a simple way to help.
- H. Saltzer – Her special needs son could not wear the mask correctly and was kept from being in a classroom because of that so he learned nothing last year.
- J. Lentz – Asked about contact tracing in the cafeteria, vaccine clinics and testing. He agrees with universal masking.
- M. Salgado – Is concerned about changing CDC/DOH guidance and that lowering our quarantining thresholds could increase the spread throughout the District. If the Districts commits in the Health & Safety Plan to follow the CDC and DOH then we need to do just that. He supports universal masking.
- J. Broadhead – Thanked the Board for what they are doing. Last year you listen to the medical experts, we should not under react and regret our decisions.
- C. Beke – CDC guidance is really clear, we should use the example of other schools to show what could happen if we don't take the right next steps.
- B. Kazan – Thanked the Board for decisions they made and has confidence in what they decide.

Comments via District Website:

- L. DiRusso – Does not want to mask in school since the entire family is vaccinated.
- P. Laub – Supports optional masking for the upcoming school year.
- J. Edge – The CDC & DOH are saying to mask the students.
- A. Valencia – He feels it should be up to the parents to decide if they want their child to wear a mask.
- A. Edge – Is disheartened in regards to the lack of safety being provided for the students. She is in support of reinstating last year's Health & Safety Plan.
- S. Bowers – Hopes that the Board and Administration will reconsider the current mask optional guidelines and move to universal masking.
- A. Edge – Ignoring the CDC and AAP recommendations and ignoring universal masking children are not being provided with a safe educational environment.
- A. Douchette – Until kids can get vaccinated, it's up to us to keep them safe. Keep politics out of it and do the right thing.
- S. Maiers – Would like in person and online options, is scared with the rising cases.
- M. Porrata – Wants to know what the masking policy will be for recess.
- A. Mawson – She feels the current plan with optional masking is the right plan.
- A. Demko – Feels we should simply follow the guidance of the AAP & CDC on health measures.
- J. Lehr – He is in favor of making masks required for all students.
- S. Houck – Asked about masking in the Spanish Immersion class.
- S. Macenka – Is in favor of optional masking for students.
- P. Mascio – Urges the Board to adopt a mandatory masking policy in accordance with the CDC and AAP guidelines.

N. Godusky – The CDC’s current recommendation for elementary schools is full masking since those children cannot be vaccinated. I request you follow the CDC.

A. Kichline – Your job is to protect our children, universal masking is the best way of doing that.

V. Thompson – If the CDC and AAP recommend masks, we should follow that.

M. Hartman – Is in favor of optional masking not a masking mandate.

J. Geyer – CDC guidelines are just that, guidelines. They are not law or enforceable. Your decisions & actions must be to the benefit of the district and community, not open the district to additional litigation.

A. Meilinger – Governor Wolf has left the choice to implement masking up to the district. He would like the district to leave the individual risk assessment of our children up to the parent.

L. Holzbaur – Is suggesting we implement a tiered plan.

K. Zappe – Asked about Encore classes and masking at recess.

K. Emeigh – Thanked the Board for their hard work. No matter what the outcome, respect the rights of parents to do is what’s best for their children.

K. McGill – Thanked the teachers, staff and Board for making 20-21 school year a success. Feels strongly masks should be worn by all for the 21-22 school year to not do that could put us all at risk for a detrimental year.

9:35 – Meeting was paused for a five minute break.

9:40 – Meeting resumed.

#### **A. Education**

A. Discussion of Health and Safety Plan

1. Approve the revised Health and Safety Plan with Masking Requirement Option \_\_\_\_\_.

Director Pakzad left the meeting at 11:15 PM.

Director Andres, seconded by Director Eichfeld moved to approve Option 1 of the Health and Safety Plan. Vote: 3-yes (Andres, Eichfeld, Welch), 5-no, 1-absent (Pakzad)

Director Welch, seconded by Director Andres moved to approve Option 2 of the Health and Safety Plan. Vote: 0-yes, 8-no, 1-absent (Pakzad)

Director Miller, seconded by Director Magnotta moved to approve Option 5 of the Health and Safety Plan. Vote: 4-yes (Miller, Magnotta, Dettmar, Karabin), 4-no, 1-absent (Pakzad)

Director Welch, seconded by Director Andres moved to approve Option 3 of the Health and Safety Plan including all of the amendments. Vote: 5-yes, 3-no (Dettmar, Magnotta, Miler), 1-absent (Pakzad)

Director Karabin rescinded his yes vote and voted no.

Vote: 4-yes, 4-no, 1-absent (Pakzad)

Director Miller, seconded by Director Dettmar moved to approve Option 4 of the Health and Safety Plan. Vote: 1-yes (Miller), 7-no, 1-absent (Pakzad)

Director Welch, seconded by Director Dettmar moved to approve Option 5 of the Health and Safety Plan. Vote: 5-yes, 3-no (Andres, Baxter, Eichfeld), 1-absent (Pakzad)

Director Andres, seconded by Director Eichfeld moved to add the following amendments to section E of the Health and Safety Plan.

**Amendment to replace second bullet point of Section e. with following 2 bullet points.**

“In the event of a positive or probable COVID case, the District will initiate contact tracing/quarantine procedures for any prolonged (greater than 15 cumulative minutes in a 24 hour period) encroachment of the social distancing standard set forth in subsection b. above.”

“The return to school protocols shall, consistent with past practices, continue to rely upon medical advice and clinical observations (timing of exposure, onset, duration and cessation of symptoms, if any, and any positive or negative COVID test, et al.).”

Vote: 2-yes (Andres, Eichfeld), 7-no

Director Andres, seconded by Director Karabin moved to add the following amendments to section j. and k. of the Health and Safety Plan.

**Amendment to add new subsection j.:**

“The District shall not discriminate against any staff member or student based on COVID-19 vaccination status. Disparate treatment in any manner or form is expressly prohibited.”

**Amendment to add new subsection k. (or other appropriate letter).**

“The District shall not discriminate against any staff member or student based on the masking decision of such person. Disparate treatment in any manner or form is expressly prohibited.”

Vote: 1-yes (Andres), 8-no

Director Pakzad returned at 12:10AM

Director Andres, seconded by Director Karabin moved to add the following amendment to subparagraph I. of the Health and Safety Plan.

**Amendment to add subparagraph I. (or other appropriate letter).**

“No staff member or student shall be asked or compelled to disclose their COVID-19 vaccination status except to medical professionals. This provision is not intended to prohibit student-to-student conversations to violate the 1st Amendment.”

Vote: 9-yes, 0-no

Director Welch made a motion to revisit this in September. No second.

**VII. Board Comments**

**VIII. Announcements**

**Future Meetings ~**

- August 24, 2021 – 7 pm – Business Meeting – High School Audion
- September 14, 2021 – 7 pm – Business Meeting – High School Audion
- September 28, 2021 – 7 pm – Business Meeting – High School Audion

**IX. Motion to Adjourn Meeting**

Director Welch, seconded by Director Dettmar moved to adjourn the meeting.  
Vote: 9-yes, 0-no 12:41 AM

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary President