

COCALICO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Denver, PA

A special meeting of the Cocalico School Board was called to order on Monday, October 12, 2020 by the President, Rev. Kevin Eshleman, who welcomed all those in attendance.

Board Members Present

Richard Brenner	Lin Sensenig	Desiree Wagner
Pamela Blickle	Randall Renninger	Douglas Graybill
Juanita Fox	Brett Buckwalter	Rev. Kevin Eshleman

Administrators Present

Dr. Ella Musser	Dr. Stephen Melnyk	Dr. Beth Haldeman
Sherry Stull	Chris Irvine	Scott Bennetch
Bradley Kafferlin	Dr. Andrea Weaver	Samantha Bensing

Guests Present

Kurt Eckenroad	Dan Burton	Tonia Burton
Michelle Colon	Georgette Hackman	Joy Dickson
Tanya Burkholder	Melissa Wellman	Mark Miller
Tammy Miller	Becky Grimwood	Janie Good
Holly Hagy	Megan Renaud	Stephanie Eshleman
Casey Quinto	Greg Buck	Linford Hurst
Suelda Hurst	Ali Weber	Jeremiah Weber
Rebecca Yoder	Kristi Fisher	Joe Nash
Allan Yoder	Lonny LeVan	Scott Kimbel
Matt Krieder	Laura Musser	Jamie Leshner
Laura Sorrentino	Kristine Graybill	Tara Griest
Erin Kregar	Kelly Stoltzfus	

Rev. Eshleman announced that immediately prior to the public portion of the meeting, the Cocalico School Board met for an Executive Session to discuss confidential legal matters. He then commended the community for their interest in attending the meeting. Rev. Eshleman informed the public attendees that the regular board voting session is normally held on the fourth Monday of each month. He also explained the difference between Executive sessions, public work sessions, and regularly scheduled voting meetings, stressing that the Board members work together as a team. Rev. Eshleman continued by clarifying the protocol for public participation during the comments portion of the meeting.

Mr. Kurt Eckenroad, Director of Buildings and Grounds, provided an update on the status of the Adamstown Elementary Addition and Renovations construction project. He shared that the work was in the finishing stages and furniture was set to be moved in

later in the week. Mr. Eckenroad added that during construction, it was discovered an exterior 8x8 CMU band on the exterior of the original building had deteriorated and there was some block that looked as if it was ready to fall out of the wall. Emergency repairs were completed, however, Mr. Eckenroad stated that additional masonry work would need to be performed.

Mrs. Sherri Stull, Business Manager, reported that total projected costs for the Adamstown construction project and the related soft costs were expected to come in under what was originally budgeted. She shared that an additional water softener for the boilers needed to be added, but other than that, net changes orders were minimal for the project. As for the additional masonry work referenced by Mr. Eckenroad, Mrs. Stull said the District expects to receive bids for the project in December.

Mr. Eckenroad described the original timeline and scope of work slated for the Cocalico High School. He stated that those plans had included renovations to the main entrance, main office, music suite, auditorium, IT offices, and the Technology Education classrooms, as well as a partial roof replacement, interior LED lighting upgrade, kitchen equipment replacement, boilers replacement and HVAC unit upgrade. Mr. Eckenroad shared that due to the current pandemic which has adversely effected the availability of construction materials, the District is recommending the HS project be scaled down to just the partial roof replacement, HVAC unit upgrade, and interior LED lighting upgrade in the Central Office.

Mrs. Stull stated that the cost of the scaled down High School project is estimated at \$1,080,000 plus soft costs. She added that the negative impact of COVID-19 on the District's revenues for the 2020-2021 school year was also a concern taken into consideration in delaying the rest of the project. She also stressed that the District will continue to monitor the pandemic's effect.

Dr. Ella Musser, Superintendent, mentioned the many changes in management procedures related to the pandemic and explained that Administrative and Management planning for a large-scale renovation project at the High School could not feasibly take into account all additional unexpected changes that might potentially impact the details of project planning. She further cited space availability as a factor to postpone it, explaining the project would necessitate moving staff and students from certain locations during construction at a time when social distancing and additional space is more crucial than ever. In particular, the unknown factors related to the supply chain could necessitate a halt in the construction process, thereby leaving groups of people stranded for unforeseen amounts of time in relocated spaces that are needed for other purposes at this time. Dr. Musser reported that the District would re-assess the COVID-19 impact, and if feasible, would consider bidding the rest of the construction project in September 2021.

Dr. Musser spoke about the various external sources providing guidance to Districts concerning the current pandemic, and how this information along with responses to the District's surveys factored into the decision to bring elementary students onsite while providing hybrid instruction to secondary students. She cautioned, however, that

the information is constantly being updated. Dr. Musser also shared information on the teaching models currently employed by the other Lancaster County districts and also commented on the various virtual tools and training provided to Cocalico's teaching staff.

Dr. Musser thanked families and staff for following good practices that allowed the District to complete seven weeks of school without a single case of COVID-19, although she did share that a case had just been reported that day. She explained that the individual was exposed outside the District, with no close contacts in the building, and immediately quarantined.

Dr. Stephen Melnyk, Assistant to the Superintendent for Education Administration, provided enrollment updates. He reported that 160 elementary students and 294 secondary students are currently enrolled in the District's virtual Cocalico Connections program. Dr. Melnyk also shared that another 107 students living within our District attend a charter/cyber charter school. Dr. Musser added that District teachers are able to provide the supports to those students enrolled in the District's virtual program.

Dr. Beth Haldeman, Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, provided information on various academic supports available for students during the pandemic. At the elementary level, she spoke of the DIBELS Math program, the reading specialists assigned to Cocalico Connections, identification of at-risk students, tutoring offered before and after school, and communication with parents regarding their students' progress in Cocalico Connections. At the middle school level, Dr. Haldeman listed after-school tutoring, continuation of teams, Student Assistance Program (SAP), and school counselors as supports. At the high school level, she identified Multi-Team Student Support (MTSS), STRIVE (for at-risk students), literacy enrichment, SAP, and after-school tutoring.

Mr. Brad Kafferlin, Technology Director, described how the Technology Department prepared for online learning. He stated that services with Lancaster-Lebanon IU13 were upgraded, core switches updated, another 620 wireless iPads purchased, internet speed increased, web filter updated, and additional Building Technology Coordinators (BTCs) placed in the schools. The main responsibility of the BTCs is to provide support for faculty in their building.

Dr. Musser commented that the students have been following safety protocols and there have been few discipline issues. She also indicated that personnel from Wellspan and Lancaster General Hospital have applauded Cocalico School District for its safety record exhibited thus far. Dr. Musser shared that she has heard from families in which students are struggling with virtual learning, but has also heard from families in which students are doing well. She explained some possible next steps for the district with regard to student supports.

Rev. Eshleman stated that the District is looking for the best solution for its students and that the Board members, administration and staff would work together to formulate next steps. He emphasized that the District could create another survey for

parents and guardians, with one to be submitted for each student. Dr. Musser added that the survey could be made available in one to two days, and after submittal, the Board would review the results. The District would take this feedback as a consideration when planning next steps for educational improvements.

During the General Comments portion of the meeting, several parents addressed the Board regarding their students' difficulties with the hybrid instruction model. Concerns that were shared included (1) students struggling academically, even those who have done well in the traditional setting, (2) confusion over the different directives offered by various outside sources, (3) lasting effects of lost in-person instruction, (4) students so frustrated they want to quit school, (5) use of backpacks in lieu of lockers and potential safety issues, (6) senior students missing out on traditional school social events and relationships, (7) parents having to come home and teach students after working all day, (8) students feeling they are left to self-teach, and (9) a desire for the Cocalico School District to take leadership of the current learning environment. Those parents who spoke to the Board included Melissa Wellman, Joe Nash, Jeremiah Weber, Kelly Stoltzfus, Tonia Burton, Dan Burton, Janie Good, Jamie Leshner, and Suelda Hurst.

There being no more business to conduct, Rev. Eshleman thanked everyone for attending, and the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Lin Sensenig and a second by Mr. Brett Buckwalter, with all Board members voting yes.

Sherry L. Stull
Secretary