

COCALICO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Denver, PA

A special meeting of the Cocalico School Board was called to order on Monday, November 9, 2020 by the Vice President, Mr. Douglas Graybill, who welcomed all those in attendance. A moment of silence was held, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Members Present

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

Administrators Present

Dr. Ella Musser	Dr. Stephen Melnyk	Dr. Beth Haldeman
Sherri Stull	Chris Irvine	Scott Bennetch
Bradley Kafferlin	Dr. Andrea Weaver	Samantha Bensing
Andrew Price	Anthony DiMatteo	Mary Rinehart

Guests Present

Nicole Cradic	Sean Post	Brooke Hartranft
Robin Witmer	Kelly Current	Dawn Martin
Robyn Renninger	Kayla Landers	Laura Stehr
Kristine Butz	Becky Grimwood	Megan Renaud
Vicki Kreider	Jeremy Campbell	Courtney Hall
Scott Garman	Jodi Garman	Josh Garman
Linford Hurst	Becky Peters	Tanya Burkholder
Joy Dickson	Jamie Leshner	Melissa Pannebecker
Timothy Martin	Kirstie Zwally	Nolan Zwally
Jennifer Martin	Kim Marselas	Allen Dissinger
Tara Griest	John Rios	Matt Kreider
Erin Kregar	Suelda Hurst	

Mr. Graybill began the meeting by explaining the policy for public participation. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Ella Musser, Superintendent, who announced the first presentation of the evening would be from Trout CPA, the District's local audit firm. Mrs. Sherri Stull, Business Manager, added that a local audit of the District's business records is required to be conducted each year. She then introduced Ms. Nicole Cradic, Partner, and Mr. Sean Post, Manager, to present the results of the recent audit of Cocalico School District's financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. They provided a PowerPoint presentation for the attendees and Board members.

Ms. Cradic explained the audit process and testing procedures, and reported that the firm had issued an unmodified opinion, stating the financial statements of Cocalico School District present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the District as of June 30, 2020. She also indicated that no material weaknesses in internal

controls were discovered during the audit, however, the firm did make IT focused recommendations related to the District's continuity plan.

Mr. Post reviewed various government-wide and fund financial statements, explained the reconciliations between the two sets, and provided charts breaking down both General Fund revenue sources and expenditures. He continued that the Single Audit of the District's federal programs was clean as well, with the Cafeteria Fund's National School Lunch Program requiring to be audited this time around. Mr. Post reported that the Cafeteria Fund once again ended the year with a slight surplus, and that the Food Service Director is to be commended for the positive year-end financial results of his department. Mr. Post also reviewed the financial burden PSERS continues to put on the District's financial statements, with Cocalico's share of the State's liability at approximately \$80.7 million at June 30, 2020. He continued the presentation reviewing various schedules and the Notes to the Financial Statements included in the Annual Financial Report. Mr. Post pointed out the upcoming payoff of outstanding debt service and emphasized the need to continue to plan for future capital requirements to ensure funds are available for those purposes. The effects of COVID-19 on both the revenue and expense sides for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 fiscal years were discussed as well, with Mr. Post sharing that the District will feel more of its financial impact in the current year than it did in 2019-2020. He addressed the District's General Fund balance, making suggestions for the future commitment of funds.

Dr. Musser shared a PowerPoint presentation concerning an update on the District's reopening plan. She spoke about guidance received from a number of sources, risk mitigation strategies employed to open school, and the Board-approved model utilized to start the school year. Dr. Musser described conditions at the beginning of the year, reiterated short-term goals as well as successes and struggles, and stressed that Cocalico School District opened and stayed open. She continued with identification of the District's current goals and provided a health and safety review and an update on enrollment. She shared instructional observations, current failure rates, academic adjustments made in October, and results of student/staff/parent surveys. Dr. Musser then outlined the next steps being undertaken, provided a local health update, and listed academic adjustments implemented in November. She posed the question, why consider any changes to the schedule when COVID-19 numbers are rising? She presented information on the various instruction models employed by other Lancaster County school districts, named expert sources contacted by the District and shared the advice given by those sources. Dr. Musser then announced that Lancaster County had just moved into "substantial" rate of transmission with an incident rate of 142.2 cases per 100,000 residents. She noted that in order to transition the secondary students back into school from the current hybrid schedule, a number of mitigation efforts would need to be continued and/or implemented: (1) wearing of masks, handwashing, and limited prospects for students to congregate, (2) adherence to recommended 3 feet of space between students, (3) possible relocation of several of the largest high school classes to the lecture halls, (4) placement of HEPA air purifiers in rooms where 3 foot distancing between desks cannot be maintained, (5) additional rolling desks in middle school media center for lunch periods, and (6) extra

tables to expand seating around perimeter of high school cafeteria for lunch time. Six different options for returning to daily in-person instruction were then presented.

Several Board members shared comments immediately after the presentation. Rev. Kevin Eshleman, School Board President, spoke of the adjustments made thus far and applauded Dr. Musser and the Administration for all the extensive research and work performed in the formation of the various options. He stated that with the steep rise in COVID-19 cases countywide, a lot has changed since the last Board meeting, and so he feels the hybrid model should be kept intact for now but would favor Option 4 with continued safety protocols. Mrs. Juanita Fox stated that she also prefers Option 4, explaining that the December 7th start date for 4 days per week of in-person instruction, then 5 days per week beginning January 21st, with no return immediately after each of the holidays, allows for “quarantine” periods. Similarly, she appreciated retaining the one day per week of virtual instruction to facilitate a smoother transition to all virtual learning if the need would arise. Mr. Richard Brenner admitted that originally he was on board to bring students back in-person, but now is hesitant due to the current surge in COVID cases. He stressed that the District must also protect its staff, or there will not be enough teachers in classrooms. However, given the various choices, he said he preferred Option 4 with continued safety protocols. Mr. Brenner also stressed the importance of the community working together with the School District in mitigating the spread of the virus. Mr. Randall Renninger conveyed the importance of protecting teachers as well as the students, adding that the holidays will be trying. He stated he would favor Option 6, with a return date of January 21st, in an effort to avoid holiday transmissions.

Dr. Musser commented that students could be brought back for additional in-person instruction, but that students and staff must also be ready to go all virtual if necessary. She added that Option 4, with a return date of December 7th, was being considered by the District, but that the District would wait until closer to the date, while monitoring the latest COVID data and guidance, before making it definite. Rev. Eshleman asked students, staff, parents and the community to campaign the continued use of safety measures during the pandemic. Dr. Musser thanked Cocalico staff for the concern shown for students and the long hours spent on their behalf.

During the General Comments portion of the meeting, several individuals addressed the Board regarding students’ difficulties with the hybrid instruction model and concern for the well-being of the instructional staff. Jennifer Martin thanked the School Board and Administration for working to set a tentative return date of students for full-time in-person instruction, stressing that students are suffering emotionally right now. Kirstie Zwally shared that she had quit her job in order to assist her children with their online schoolwork. She feels there is no consistency in the hybrid schedule and asked the District to utilize all available space in order to bring students back. Suelda Hurst asked for clarification on the age breakdown for transmission rates included in the PowerPoint presentation, and urged the District to bring back struggling students. Courtney Hall spoke of the seriousness of the global pandemic and shared concern over rising numbers of positive cases. She thanked the Board for weighing all options, but added that we all need to provide emotional and mental support to students at this time. Vicki Kreider asked for

clarification of what needs to transpire in order to implement Option 4 and reiterated the importance of continuing mask wearing and social distancing.

Time was given for questions and answers after each presentation.

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

Sherri L. Stull
Secretary