

COCALICO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Denver, PA

A special meeting of the Cocalico School Board was called to order on Monday, January 11, 2021 by the President, Rev. Kevin Eshleman, who welcomed all those in attendance. The meeting was held virtually. A moment of silence was held, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Rev. Eshleman announced that just prior to tonight's public work session, the Cocalico School Board met for an Executive Session to review legal information provided by our solicitor.

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
Sherri Stull	Andrew Price	Anthony DiMatteo
Samantha Bensing	Dr. Andria Weaver	Mary Rinehart
Bradley Kafferlin		

Guests Present

Jamie Leshar	Courtney Hall	Tara Griest
Erin Kregar	Megan Renaud	Kristine Butz
Timothy Butz	Laura Musser	Kelly Martin
Janie Good	Adam Weber	Mary Stephenson
Kim Youndt	Jeremiah Weber	Kim Marselas
Matthew Behney	Penny Leschner	Katie Steckbeck
Briana Fultz	Robin Boyer	Lynn Detterline
Laken Keehner	Joy Dickson	Matt Kreider
Cheri Showalter	JoAnne Hostetter	Kalea Pohronezny
Linford Hurst	Suelda Hurst	Laura Sorrentino
Matt Landis	Jeremy Popolis	Dede Zimmerman
Stephanie Cooper	Daniel Burton	Roseanne Milligan

Rev. Eshleman began the meeting by explaining the policy for public participation in a public work session. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Ella Musser, Superintendent, who introduced Dr. Beth Haldeman, Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, to present the District's plans for an Elementary Math Pilot. Dr. Haldeman shared that the elementary schools had adopted Math Expressions back in 2013, but recently began having issues accessing online materials. They were also informed by the sales representative that student materials might not be available in the near future. After working with a math program consultant from the Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit in 2018 and starting to write their own curriculum last year, the

elementary math group decided to investigate alternatives for its program. According to Dr. Haldeman, they first took a look at the upgrade for Math Expressions but were disappointed to find that it wasn't much different from the current version. Utilizing Ed Reports, a non-profit service designed to improve education by providing reviews of K-12 instructional materials, the committee searched new elementary math programs by entering criteria and component requirements. Dr. Haldeman stated that the team made inquiries of curriculum leaders at other districts and surveyed Cocalico elementary staff as well. With an 87% response rate, the survey revealed most of the respondents were dissatisfied with the current curriculum. She expects to have a recommendation for a new elementary math curriculum program by late February.

Dr. Musser provided an update on the District's reopening plan and next steps, stating that educating students during a pandemic has been a journey. She described the various steps taken thus far to get the District through the holidays. She announced that Lancaster General Hospital was in the process of scheduling vaccinations for Cocalico's school nurses, and that by the end of January, expected all school employees to be given the opportunity to be vaccinated. Dr. Musser stated the District reached out to students who are struggling, as well as those with 504s or IEPs, to provide them the ability to attend school in person four times a week at the secondary level. She stressed the need to transition from the hybrid schedule to onsite instruction by utilizing a four day in-school schedule first. Doing so would provide time on Wednesdays for cleaning, sanitizing and contact tracing while students were learning remotely.

Dr. Stephen Melnyk, Assistant to the Superintendent for Education Administration, stated that back in October and November we had been warned about an expected rise in the number of COVID-19 cases after the holidays, which we did see. Now what we're hearing from the County is that we've finally plateaued and may even be on a downward trend. Vaccinations are presently being scheduled for school personnel. As a result, the District is looking to bring students back for more in-person instruction; however, time is required to properly prepare for the safety for both students and staff. He said the planned adjustment to four days a week of in-school instruction is February 1st, with March 1st the target date for five days a week of in-school instruction. Dr. Melnyk emphasized that even after staff and students are vaccinated, the need to continue mitigation efforts will remain.

Rev. Eshleman shared that until recently, he was not in favor of totally onsite instruction, but now feels that the District is ready to do so safely and can be consistent going forward instead of going back and forth between the different instructional methods. He acknowledged that the period required by the District to make the switch to the four-day schedule will also allow parents and students time to decide if they'd rather take advantage of Cocalico Connections or the traditional classroom setting.

Dr. Musser thanked Dr. Melnyk and Rev. Eshleman for the information they shared and then reminded everyone that four-day and five-day in-person schedules were already approved by the School Board, so there would be no need for a formal vote to make this change. However, the Board had asked to be consulted before such a change was implemented, and staff and families would benefit from advance notice of such a schedule

change. Instructional spaces, schedules, and lesson planning would need to be adapted for the new schedule, and families would also need time to plan for changes in their household schedule.

Dr. Musser announced that Reamstown Elementary student Cheyan Bashjian was a winner in the statewide Drug-Free Calendar Contest. Her artwork was chosen to represent the month of December 2021.

During the General Comments portion of the meeting, two resident parents addressed the Board. Briana Fultz questioned the inconsistency of parameters followed by sports programs versus more stringent ones followed by the schools. Linford Hurst inquired as to how the District plans to make up for all the in-person learning that was lost.

Time was given for questions and answers after each presentation. There being no more business to conduct, Rev. Eshleman thanked everyone for attending, expressing appreciation for the community interest. The meeting was then adjourned on a motion by Mr. Buckwalter and a second by Mr. Sensenig, with all Board members voting yes.

Sherri L. Stull
Secretary