

COCALICO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Denver, PA

The regular meeting of the Cocalico School Board of Directors was called to order on Monday, May 24, 2021 by Rev. Kevin Eshleman, President. He welcomed the visitors. A moment of silence was held, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was held virtually.

Before moving to the first item on the agenda, Rev. Eshleman followed up on the public comments from the last public Board meeting that were related to masks and other state requirements.

He explained that the Board did not engage in a dialogue during last month's public meeting, as per Board meeting protocols, but he does want to assure everyone that they did take those comments very seriously. He empathized with the frustration over masks and expressed his own strong desire for a return to normalcy. He recognized that it has not been an easy year for students, parents, staff, or our local businesses and organizations and that everyone is tired and exhausted due to the lack of normal routines and the ongoing uncertainty about what's next. These challenges are taking their toll on every aspect of our community and it is difficult to remain patient for the pandemic to end.

Rev. Eshleman went on to say that the Board's immediate goal is to get through the next 10 days of school in a positive, productive manner, and then he reflected on this year's journey, starting with the shutdown of schools and businesses last spring. He then listed some of what came next: In June, the PA Department of Education provided preliminary guidance to all public schools and required them to submit Board-approved plans that were based on Red, Yellow or Green phases of reopening. School leaders spent many hours writing and rewriting those plans. Even so, there were many times throughout the summer that it was difficult to feel confident about returning to school at the scheduled time. Recommendations for virtual education came from many sources. The District relied heavily on guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics, because they provided the strongest voice for in-person education.

Just days before school re-opened in the fall, new guidance was released by the PA Department of Education, providing brand-new recommendations that were based on whether schools were in counties with "low," "moderate," or "substantial" COVID-19 transmission. At that time, Lancaster County was in "moderate" transmission, and the recommendation was to offer only virtual instruction or to provide some type of hybrid schedule, so that the number of students in school at the same time would be greatly reduced. Schools were expected to provide 6' distance between students where feasible, cohort groups of students, limit the use of shared materials, and so on. There was also a strong emphasis that once the county reached "substantial" transmission, schools would be required to shift to a fully virtual learning environment. All schools were told to prepare for that likelihood.

Despite this uncertainty, however, Cocalico School District was able to open school on time, unlike the large majority of schools that pushed back their start date. Also, unlike the majority of schools in the state, Cocalico was able to offer some in-person instruction to all grades right from the start. Along with many other districts in Lancaster and Lebanon Counties, elementary students came to school five days a week and secondary students had a hybrid schedule in order to accommodate the high number of students in the traditional

program. In November, Lancaster County moved into the “substantial” level of COVID-19 transmission, and districts were very concerned about a sudden, required shift to virtual education. Public school leaders and School Boards were able to successfully push back against a requirement for a complete shift to virtual education. An exception was provided, allowing public schools to continue offering in-person instruction; however, Board Presidents and Superintendents were required to sign an Attestation form in order to continue providing any type of in-person instruction while their counties were experiencing “substantial” COVID-19 transmission. The Attestation form included certain conditions that public schools needed to follow. It required schools to shift to virtual instruction for a few days whenever they reached a certain number of COVID-19 cases. It also required schools to enforce the mask order. The penalty for not following the Attestation was to shut down all in-person learning and offer only virtual education to students at every level, which the District definitely wanted to avoid.

Rev. Eshelman explained that this is how Cocalico School District operated its schools all through December, January, February, March and April. During that time, we experienced many positive cases of COVID-19 in the school setting, and we struggled to keep the doors open for students. It was difficult for students to settle into a routine, because there was always the uncertainty about shifts to virtual instruction or quarantines. It was difficult for parents to plan their schedules because they couldn’t fully count on their children being in school every day. It was difficult for nurses to juggle the many phone calls, visits to the health room, and questions from staff. It was difficult for teachers to keep in-person and off-site students on pace with each other. It was difficult for administrators to find coverage for classes, due to staff absences and substitute shortages. And it was difficult to manage all the tasks related to custodial services, food services, transportation, and more due to an unprecedented number of support staff absences combined with the many new details that needed to be addressed. But thanks to those who pitched in to help each other throughout these challenging months, we had very few required shifts to virtual instruction over this period of time and were even able to transition to a five-day in-person schedule for our secondary students.

In May, things began changing again. On May 4, 2021 school leaders were notified that the Attestation process would expire on May 31, 2021, with the exception of the mask order which would remain in place until 70% of adults in Pennsylvania were fully vaccinated. On May 13, 2021 we were notified that capacity limits had been adjusted. From May 17 to May 30, maximum capacity limits were increased to 50% for indoor events and 75% for outdoor events. On May 31 and thereafter, gathering limits would be fully lifted. On May 14, school leaders were notified that the mask order had been changed to say that fully-vaccinated people could go without a mask, whether indoors or outdoors. However, given that most of the daily population in a K-12 setting had not been fully vaccinated, schools were advised to maintain current practices for the remainder of the school year.

After consulting with our district solicitor and other local public schools and taking into consideration feedback provided by staff and families who reached out to us, Cocalico School District determined that it would be advisable to maintain mask expectations for the final days of school. The District did not want to begin asking for proof of vaccination to exempt certain students from wearing masks for the few remaining days of school.

As of today, Lancaster County is no longer experiencing “substantial” transmission. According to the PA Department of Education, “the attestation process is no longer applicable for a school entity once its county has no longer been in the ‘substantial’ level of community

transmission for two or more consecutive weeks. However, if at a later point its county is in the 'substantial' level for two or more consecutive weeks again, the attestation process would apply again. Additionally, the face covering order remains in effect and is required for all school entities regardless of the level of community transmission."

Rev. Eshleman concluded by explaining that by the time we were notified of those changes and/or by the time they would go into effect, it was no longer feasible to make major changes to structures or events that were planned for the final days in the school year. Spaces had been set up for social distancing and limited capacities and staff was not available to set up new arrangements for events or to completely redo plans that were in place. Therefore, the District planned to maintain most current practices for the remainder of the school year, with just a few modifications:

In June, the District will offer an in-person awards ceremony for our high school students. Because of changes in capacity limits, participants can invite family members. Students and local ministers organized a Baccalaureate service that will be held at the Reamstown Church of God on June 6, 2021. They selected this venue due to the many uncertainties while we were still in the planning stages, knowing that churches had far more flexibility with regards to group sizes or masks than what the District could offer in the school setting. The District is also working with the local police department to offer a senior bus parade on June 7, 2021.

The District has planned an outdoor graduation on June 8, 2021 with a rain date of June 9, 2021. A stage will be set up on the football field. Banners, video screens and sound systems will be provided by Stray Production Services so that students and families can easily hear and see the graduates as they offer speeches and receive their diplomas. Because this event is outdoors in a large area, students will not be required to wear masks when they are seated, crossing the stage for their diploma or participating in the cap toss. The goal is to make this a safe and enjoyable experience for all involved, so that the focus can be on our seniors and the honor and recognition they deserve.

Once school is out for the year, the District can begin re-arranging spaces and relax many of the requirements. For example, we will once again be offering in-person participation for the public at the June School Board meeting. The District can also revisit some of the details for how we offer the summer programs we have planned. Based on statements made by legislators who are involved in the vaccination task force, we are hopeful that the mask mandate will be lifted altogether by July 4, 2021. That coincides with the start of many of our summer programs, sports practices that begin in August, and communication with parents about the start of school in the fall.

Finally, Rev. Eshleman expressed understanding that this has been a very, very difficult year for everyone involved. The School Board does not take that lightly and sincerely hopes for a full return to normalcy in the very near future. To help everyone prepare, it might be helpful to offer a School/Community Forum prior to the start of school this year so that families have an opportunity to dialogue directly with some of the administrators and members of the School Board regarding the start of school. August might be an appropriate time for that to occur and the District will send out communication about this meeting later on in the summer.

Mrs. Denise Logue and Mrs. Cherie Pietrantonio presented information about the First 10 initiative and how it has provided structures and supports for families with young children here in the Cocalico Community.

Board Members:

Richard Brenner	Lin Sensenig	Desiree Wagner
Pamela Blicke	Douglas Graybill	Juanita Fox
Rev. Kevin Eshleman		

Administrators:

Dr. Ella Musser	Dr. Stephen Melnyk	Dr. Beth Haldeman
Sherri L. Stull	Chris Irvine	Scott Bennetch
Andrew Price	Anthony DiMatteo	Samantha Bensing
Dr. Susan Snyder	Dr. Andria Weaver	Angela Marley
Mary Rinehart	Brad Kafferlin	Sherry Luttrell

Visitors:

Cherie Pietrantonio	Wendie Sauder	Michael Steffy
Denise Logue	Beth Eberly	Daniel Burton
Julie Zaorski	Trisha Pohronezny	Danielle Nuhfer
Michelle Colon	Robyn Reel	Aubree Fahringer
Lauren Kemler	Kristine Butz	Briana Fultz
Amy Lettorale	Tara Griest	Michele Hagel
Ben Culbert	Kevin Griest	Kendra Martin
Rebecca Culbert	Heather Griest	Kirstie Zwally
Tonia Burton	Suelda Hurst	Katie Steckbeck
Matt Landis	Scott Rigney	Treva Bollinger
JoAnne Hostetter	Corey Noll	Tara Jacobs
Brenda Mason	Laken Keehner	Greg Buck

On a motion made by Mrs. Fox and seconded by Mr. Sensenig, the Board approved the minutes of the School Board meeting held on April 26, 2021. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0. (Addendum attached)

Made to motion by Ms. Wagner and seconded by Mr. Sensenig, the Board approved the Treasurer's Report as written. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0.

Beginning Balance 4/1/21	\$30,049,861.22
--------------------------	-----------------

Receipts:

PDE – Basic Education	1,146,789.00
PDE – Plan Con Bond	36,644.48
PDE – Title I	23,980.27
PDE – Title IIA	5,028.07
PDE – Title IV	2,114.53
PDE – CARES-ESSER	48,862.96
PDE – COVID-SECIM	1,593.47
PDE – NSL	156,496.29
County of Lancaster – Realty Transfer Taxes	32,607.36
County of Lancaster – Delinquent Taxes	75,681.21
LCTCB – Wage Tax	143,853.96

May 24, 2021

Commonwealth of PA – storage tank refund	194.27
Berkheimer – delinquent per capita	82.50
United States Treasury – 941 refund – COVID-relief on federal taxes paid by district	1,420.72
Utica Insurance payment	4,968.85
Lancaster-Lebanon IU13 – refund duplicate payment	482.20
UGI – refund	1,299.26
Blackbaud Giving Fund – donation	145.95
Cocalico Care Center – monthly transportation services	2,780.00
Cocalico Food Service – salaries and benefits	61,668.80
District Magistrate – fines	550.00
School Rental/Land Lease	6,380.00
Mission Inspire Student Fees	1,107.00
Athletic Fees	3,208.51
Student Fees	363.97
Fuel Sharing Fees	3,617.85
Insurance Receipts from Retirees	45,900.97
Insurance Receipts from Employees/Cobra	6,373.46
Miscellaneous Income	2,617.33
Interest	2,415.18

Total Receipts \$1,819,228.42

Total Receipts Plus Beginning Balance \$31,869,089.64

Expenditures:

Invoices approved for month of April	1,145,311.86
Invoices for Athletics for month of April	13,320.71
Payrolls – 4/9 & 4/23	2,104,100.62
Health Insurance Transfer	500,000.00
Fulton Bank – Monthly Fee	934.34

Total Expenditures \$3,763,667.53

Void ck#155110–Cory Showalter-Official-duplicate payment	(56.40)
Void ck#154265-Payliance-returned check-prefers ACH	(25.00)
Void ck#155045-Lezzer Lumber-duplicate payment	(696.40)
Void ck#155106-Timothy Crowther-duplicate payment	(56.40)
Void ck#155107-Wayne Goodman-duplicate payment	(56.40)
Void ck#154999-Warwick Volleyball-event cancelled	(225.00)

Net Expenditures \$3,762,551.93

Ending Balance 4/30/21

\$28,106,537.71

Mr. Sensenig made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Fox, to approve invoices in the amount of \$1,201,863.85. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0. (Addendum attached)

Mrs. Fox made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sensenig, to approve the Capital Project Fund Account Register in the amount of \$82,983.30. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0. (Addendum attached)

Mr. Sensenig made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wagner, for Board approval of a Joint Purchasing Resolution. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0. (Addendum attached)

Mr. Brenner made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wagner for approval of resolutions authorizing notice of proposed final budget. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0. (Addenda attached)

Ms. Wagner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sensenig, for Board approval of the following agreements: River Rock Academy, Lancaster-Lebanon IU13 Supplemental Service, and Addendum to Settlement Agreement and Release. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0. (Addenda attached)

Ms. Wagner made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Fox, for Board approval of special education supplemental contracts. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0. (Addenda attached)

Mr. Sensenig made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Fox, for Board approval of the student and adult meal prices for 2021-2022. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0. (Addendum attached)

Mr. Sensenig made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Fox, for Board approval of the designation of several organizations to handle aspects of school business for 2021-2022: Fulton Bank – depository for District accounts, Kegel, Kelin, Litts & Lord – District solicitor, and Trout CPA – District auditing firm. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0.

Ms. Wagner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sensenig, for Board approval of the designation of individuals to handle aspects of school business: Juanita Fox – Board Treasurer for a one-year term 2021-2022 and Sherri Stull – Board Secretary for a four-year term 2021-2022 through 2024-2025. Roll call vote, all members voting yes, except for Mrs. Fox, who abstained. Motion carried 6-0.

Mr. Sensenig made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wagner, for Board approval of a resolution to appoint Ausma Buffenmyer as School District Tax Collector for 2021-2022. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0. (Addendum attached)

PERSONNEL

Ms. Wagner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sensenig, for Board approval of the 2021-2022 Support Staff Performance Evaluation and Compensation System. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Sensenig made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wagner, for Board approval of a job description. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Sensenig made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wagner, for Board approval of Rebecca Culbert, Assistant Elementary Principal, effective July 1, 2021. Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Sensenig made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wagner, for Board approval of the following personnel actions:

- (a) Approval of the following professional staff resignations:
 - (1) Melissa Whitcomb, Denver Elementary Teacher, effective the end of the 2020-2021 school year
 - (2) Megan Burkhart, Cocalico High School Teacher, effective August 18, 2021
- (b) Approval of the following professional staff leaves of absence:
 - (1) Danielle Nuhfer, Cocalico High School English Teacher, child rearing leave effective September 22, 2021 through the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year
 - (2) Laura Sorrentino, Cocalico High School Math Teacher, sabbatical leave effective the 2nd semester of the 2021-2022 school year and the 2nd semester of the 2022-2023 school year

Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Brenner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sensenig, for Board approval of the following personnel actions:

- (a) Approval of the following support staff resignations:
 - (1) Desiree Miller, full-time Custodian, effective June 1, 2021
 - (2) Amanda Groff, part-time Paraprofessional, effective the end of the 2020-2021 school year
 - (3) Mary-Beth Levan, part-time Paraprofessional, effective June 8, 2021
 - (4) Michael Messner, part-time Paraprofessional, for the purpose of retirement, effective the end of the 2020-2021 school year
- (b) Approval of the following support staff personnel:
 - (1) Heather Smith, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, effective June 7, 2021
 - (2) Kristin Wise, substitute Administrative Assistant/Library Assistant, effective June 19, 2021
- (c) Approval of a supplemental contract for the 2020-2021 school year
- (d) Approval of staff for summer programs
- (e) Approval of STS employed guest teachers

Roll call vote, all members voting yes. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Richard Brenner reported about the CTC's five-year plan for equipment and technology, the manner in which they will pay for student textbooks, and staffing shifts that reduced wait lists for high-demand programs.

Mrs. Mary Rinehart reported on student counseling services provided by Community Services Group (CSG) at every one of our school buildings throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

Dr. Beth Haldeman reviewed our curriculum process and summarized how we determine what is included in our curriculum and instruction. She also provided information on the 1619 Project and Critical Race Theory, confirming that it is not the basis or foundation of the District's curriculum. Though the topics from Critical Race

May 24, 2021

Theory and 1619 may be mentioned in certain courses for the purpose of informing our students about others' perspectives, they are not presented as factual content in any of our courses here in Cocalico.

Dr. Ella Musser expressed empathy and gratitude for students, families, school personnel and the School Board for all the ways in which they adapted to the challenges of the pandemic. She congratulated the following students and staff: Conor Meise, for being honored by the Patriot-News and PennLive with the "Best and Brightest" award; Hannah Custer, for being awarded the Breckbill award, as a result of being selected the top student athlete for all Lancaster-League sports throughout the entire 2020-2021 school year; Mr. Shipton and his student Seth Pittsburg, for recognition as 5th place winners in a Statewide Stock Market Challenge; Mrs. Ohline, for being selected for an Award of Honors for her preparation of the Special Senior Newsletter the District sent out last summer to recognize the 2020 graduates; and our high school seniors for their grace and maturity during this unusual year.

Rev. Kevin Eshleman reported that the School Board met in an Executive Session on May 10, 2021 to interview for the Assistant Elementary Principal position and to review management goal completion and performance evaluations. He also announced that public Board meetings will be held in person starting in June.

Ms. Desiree Wagner applauded the First Ten Group for their efforts, emphasizing the important role of early childhood education.

During the general comments portion of the meeting, several residents voiced opinions and concerns: Mr. Corey Noll questioned if "Critical Race Theory" was being taught in our schools and who decides if it is taught. He asked about the District's exit strategy for masks and whether the District has to follow Governor Wolf's mandates. Finally, he wondered if Cocalico will mandate the vaccine. Ms. Brianna Fultz reported that the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Governor's office advised her that the Cocalico School Board can decide whether masks should be worn in school, and she urged the Board to vote on not requiring masks. In addition, she mentioned that a group had gathered outside just prior to the Board meeting, and she expressed concern about the board using a different entrance for the meeting. Mr. Daniel Burton questioned how the District will make up the budget deficit, and commented on the amount of money spent on technology for Cocalico Connections. He shared that the state provided guidance rather than law regarding masks and vaccinations, and that he would like the consequences for not following the attestation to be made public; in addition, he questioned whether Cocalico would require vaccinations. Mr. Burton emphasized that the District should teach students the difference between fact and theory when considering topics such as "Critical Race Theory".

On a motion made by Mr. Sensenig, seconded by Mrs. Fox, and unanimously agreed to by the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Sherri L. Stull
Secretary