The regular meeting of the Board of School Trustees of the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation was held at the Administration Building, 1200 Central Ave., Columbus, Indiana on Monday, June 14, 2021 at 6:30 p.m., pursuant to notice having been duly given to the media and to all members of the Board in accordance with the rules of the Board.

On call of the roll, the members of the Board were shown to be present or absent as follows:

Present:    Dr. Jill Shedd, President  
            Dr. Julie Bilz, Vice President  
            Mr. Pat Bryant, Secretary  
            Mr. Rich Stenner, Member  
            Ms. Nikki Wheeldon, Member  
            Mr. Todd Grimes, Member  
            Ms. Kathy Dayhoff-Dwyer, Member

Administration:  Dr. Jim Roberts, Superintendent  
            Ms. Teresa Heiny, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources  
            Dr. Laura Hack, Director of Elementary Education  
            Dr. Gina Pleak, Director of Title Services  
            Dr. George Van Horn, Director of Special Education  
            Dr. Brett Boezeman, Director of Operations  
            Mr. Chad Phillips, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services  
            Mr. William Jensen, Director of Secondary Education

Attorney:   Mr. Chris Monroe, School Attorney

**REGULAR SESSION**

Dr. Shedd offered reflections.

The business meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Dr. Shedd, President, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
WHO/WHY

Update: COVID-19 Plan of Action for 2020-2021 (Dr. Roberts)

Dr. Roberts noted students in all grade levels ended the 2020-21 school year with 5-days of in-person learning. He also shared that in addition to completing the school year, the Prom was held on Saturday, May 1 and high school graduations were held on May 27 and May 29 for CSA New Tech, Columbus East and Columbus North.

Dr. Roberts noted the updated county and state COVID-19 data. He shared that since the first 2020-21 student day BCSC has had 665 positive test cases. The numbers of positive cases since Monday, August 10 are as follows:

- 665 positive test cases (431 students, 162 support staff members and 72 teachers)
- 4% of students
- 14% of support staff members
- 9% of certified staff members
- 4,042 close contacts

Dr. Roberts thanked Director of Health Services, Kelli Thompson and her nursing staff for their extra efforts during the challenging 2020-21 school year.

Dr. Roberts noted that part of the next steps toward decision making for the 2021-22 school year will be seeking guidance from the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Columbus Regional Hospital. There will continue to be discussions with the Columbus Educators Association (CEA) and the solicitation of stakeholder feedback. He shared an initial recommendation will be made to the public the week of Monday, July 5 and, after revisions are made, again the week of Monday, July 12. A final recommendation will be presented to the board at the Monday, July 19 board meeting. He shared he is hopeful the decision will not be as difficult as a year ago based upon what is now known and the data compiled over the course of the last year.

The following information was given in response to questions from the board:

Dr. Roberts noted his discussions continue with other school district colleagues in regards to masks and social distancing guidelines. He shared as a reminder BCSC continues to follow the Governor’s Executive Order in regards to masks. The Executive Order expires on Wednesday, June 30.

Dr. Roberts noted there continue to be students and staff in several BCSC buildings this summer. Those individuals will continue to follow the 2020-21 COVID-19 guidelines in regard to masks and 3 feet social distancing until guideline revisions are updated and approved.

Dr. Roberts responded that, as decisions are made for the 2021-22 school year, we will continue to review data and be open to adjust the mitigation strategies to keep students and staff healthy and in our buildings.
Dr. Shedd shared BCSC continues to fund nursing staff for every school building. She noted that is not the case in many school corporations.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Christy Stackhouse - 1735 South Drive, Columbus
She feels there are other options for parents to choose to protect their children other than wearing masks. She noted data from Psychology Today stating that wearing masks could deter neurological development of a child. She asked the school board to help protect the mental health of students by removing the mask mandate.

Mila Dempsey - 501 S 850 W, Columbus
She thanked Dr. Roberts and the school board for their timeless effort in addressing the COVID-19 challenges. She shared her concerns with lack of parent and school board interaction. She feels parent voices are slowly being removed from decision making for BCSC.
She noted that according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), children are least at risk of developing COVID-19, with a survival rate of 99.998%. She asked for a mask policy that allows parents to choose whether to send their child masked or unmasked for the 2021-22 school year. In conclusion she would like to see parents have a larger voice in the decision making role and more interaction with board members.

Megan Johnson - 883 Countryside Lane, Columbus
Ms. Johnson strongly feels that masks and vaccines are medical decisions and should be made by a student’s family. She believes masks should be optional and parents should have the freedom to choose for their child. She feels students become fearful and depressed when they are unable to communicate with their teachers. She also feels there seems to be a push for vaccines. She questioned a letter sent to her minor daughter in regards to the vaccine. She doesn’t feel the vaccine belongs in school and noted other locations available to receive the vaccine. She asked parents to familiarize themselves with the BCSC website.

Kelly Whaler - 1674 Deer Creek Way, Columbus
She thanked school board members for representing the community and students. She noted she is her child’s voice and she is responsible for his health, safety and education. She feels the school board is the means for communicating those needs to the teachers. She stated she did not make her child wear his mask over the last school year because she felt it was her decision on how to keep him safe and protected. She asked the school board to please represent the children and make the right decision.

Sarah Huff - 12233 E Webbs Way, Columbus
Ms. Huff shared it is her responsibility for the health, safety, education and emotional well-being of her children. She noted that in order to make decisions for her children she needs to have freedom of choice. She shared information in regards to the ESSER III Grant and asked the school board to delay the approval vote of the grant until further review. In conclusion, she asked the board to give families the freedom to choose what is best for their children by making an informed decision.
Tracy West - 2738 Orchard Lane, Columbus
Ms. West shared if it wasn’t for the extra effort that the teachers put into the past school year her family wouldn’t have stayed with the BCSC program. She noted she was speaking on behalf of other parents who believe they should have a choice in whether a mask is worn to school. She stated she would like to see masks optional going forward.

Ian McGriffen - 20995 E Base Road, Columbus
Mr. McGriffen spoke representing his three children, niece and nephews. He provided a packet of information to the board in regards to why he feels it is difficult to control an air-borne virus with a mask. He also shared information as to why he believes prolonged mask wearing will continue bacterial growth. He shared his concern that since the mask mandate has now been removed for the State of Indiana and the school corporation still requires them to be worn for the 2021-22 school year, he feels children may think that school has now become an unsafe place. He feels we are penalizing our students to meet the metrics. In conclusion he believes the masks are not an effective measure to control the virus and asked the board to allow parents the freedom to choose whether children are to wear a mask for the upcoming school year.

Misty Hunter - 2008 W 850 W, Columbus
Ms. Hunter spoke on behalf of her daughter. She noted it was a struggle for her daughter to wear a mask on a daily basis. Her daughter often had a headache and other physical symptoms on a daily basis. She asked the board, as they move toward a decision, to take into account what is best for the students and their environment.

Amy Menefee - 3310 Heritage Road, Columbus
She thanked the school board for the 2020-21 decision that allowed parents to make the educational choice that was best for their child. She asked the board to allow parents to have this same choice in regards to mask use and the vaccine. She feels parents should not be pressured to give their children an untested or briefly tested experimental vaccine. She asked the board to vote for an optional mask policy. Having an unmasked environment will allow parents to do what is best for their child. She asked the school board to consider parent choice a guideline to follow.

Devon Hunter - 2008 N 850 W, Columbus
Mr. Hunter thanked the school board for their work. He also thanked the parents and the community for their comments and additional input.

William Reid - 15675 E 450 S, Elizabethtown
Mr. Reid shared raising and educating children are part of parenthood. He noted his children attend Rockcreek Elementary and he and his family have been very happy with the teacher and administration collaboration. He shared his concerns of the general overview he received of SEL (Social and Emotional Learning). He noted prior to his children bringing home information he was not aware of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). He shared information he obtained in his own research. In conclusion he shared that he and his wife are opposed to SEL and he is interested to hear from the board on a plan to keep it from the publicly funded classroom.

Kirsten Shofner – 2021 Creekbank Drive, Columbus
Ms. Shofner shared she was often confused with the mask policy, because masks were required in the classroom and not at recess. Being on a bus for an hour with a mask is unacceptable. As of now
people have had the choice to get the vaccine, this means we should feel comfortable about leaving the mask a choice. Please allow the parents to choose what is best for their children.

Sharon Brubaker -1230 S 850 W, Columbus
Ms. Brubaker shared a letter from her daughter who was unable to attend the meeting. The letter noted her concerns with continued mask wearing. She asked that parents be provided options in regards to masks. She believes the school board should not dictate the medical needs of the students. She feels it is time options be provided, the option to unmask children and allow parents to decide what is best health-wise for their child.

Eric Streeval: 3997 Jonathan Ridge, Columbus
Mr. Streeval noted his concerns with mask wearing. He shared he feels individuals are being shamed into wearing masks or not wearing masks. He also noted his concerns with curriculum choices.

Amy Streeval: 3997 Jonathan Ridge, Columbus
She noted she is very much in support of dropping the mask mandate. She shared her opinion in regard to the remarks of the CDC and mask mandates. She believes they have not been consistent. She noted her son lost 20 in-person days of school because of being identified as a close contact. She asked that the process for quarantine time for close contacts be reevaluated.

WHAT

1) Board Commendations

Mr. Grimes congratulated Indiana Commission of Higher Education Scholarship recipient, Hannah Franklin. Hannah is a student at Columbus North and part of the class of Next Generation Hoosier Educators.

He noted the C4 program continues to provide great opportunities for students. The program was recently presented the Indiana Governor’s Workforce Cabinet Award, for their excellence in business community partnerships. He shared that each school year approximately 900 students from BCSC receive the opportunity to tour local businesses in conjunction with a C4 course, Preparing for College and Careers.

Mr. Grimes commended three Columbus East students on their Senior Project efforts. The presentations included T.J Barkhimer, Ethan Blade, and Shalee Darringer. T.J. received his private pilot license. He plans to attend Indiana State and later become a cargo pilot. Ethan plans to attend the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. He was the online editor of the East High School student newspaper, The Oracle. He also continued to oversee funding efforts to help support the publication. Shalee plans to go to school to become a psychologist. She organized a cleaning fundraiser for The Crump.

Mr. Grimes also commended fourth year CSA Lincoln teacher, Ms. Brittany Mahoney. Ms. Mahoney received the 2021 Sally Hanley Excellence in Teaching Award. He acknowledged her unique teaching style and the learning opportunities she creates for students. Mr. Grimes congratulated Ms.
Peggy Myers, a special education teacher at Columbus East. She is the recent recipient of the 2021 Edna Folger Award. Ms. Myers is not only a teacher, she founded the Best Buddy Program and is the Unified Track Coach at Columbus East High School. She was nominated by a former Columbus East student.

Dr. Bilz congratulated the Columbus North High School Band. The band received an award from the Indiana State School Music Association (ISSMA) for the 2020-2021 school year. She recognized the outstanding achievements of the musicians and the staff.

2) Board Member Reports

Mr. Grimes gave a report on the High Ability Broad Based Program. Those attending discussed updating the website to include testimonials about the program, more consistent information going out to schools and parents, and how to meet the needs of high ability learners that remain in the general education classroom.

Mr. Grimes also reported on the Bartholomew Consolidated School Foundation. On Tuesday, June 1 the School Foundation had a strategic planning session. The 2020-21 budget proposal and the Q1 financial activity were reviewed. There was also discussion on strategic objectives; heightening community awareness of the school foundation and establishing goals to broaden and grow revenue base.

Ms. Wheeldon gave an update on the Redevelopment Commission Meeting. She shared the efforts continue with the revitalizing of the downtown area of Columbus. She noted the recent passing of Sarah Cannon. Ms. Cannon was the President of the Redevelopment Commission.

Dr. Bilz provided an update on the Diversity Council Strategic Planning Meeting. The Diversity Council reviewed the council’s purpose, mission and values to determine if a new direction needed to be taken or if continuing on the same path was still beneficial.

Dr. Shedd shared she took part in the exit audit meeting with the State Board of Accounts. She reported the meeting went well and informed the board they would be getting information in regards to the audit. The final report will be public at the end of July on the State Board of Accounts website.

3) Cabinet Reports

ECA Report:

Mr. Phillips presented the 2nd Semester Semi-Annual Extra-Curricular Account Report. He noted the continuation of receipting and spending less money over the last semester were due highly to COVID-19 restrictions. He shared the overall reduction in receipts and spending were roughly 50% over the prior school year.
Support Staff Pay:

Dr. Pleak and Mr. Phillips presented a plan for a 9% increase to adjust the pay scale matrix for more than 900 support staff. This pay adjustment does not include administrators, teachers or special contract employees. Mr. Phillips noted that the last time pay had been adjusted to the support staff matrix was in 2016. He shared that this past spring BCSC was invited to participate in a state-wide study to compare support staff positions and support staff pay to other districts across the State of Indiana. BCSC submitted district data and received good feedback and information. Mr. Phillips shared that out of the 290 school districts across the state of Indiana, 240 districts participated in the study. The data indicated BCSC lags behind neighboring districts and peer school districts.

Mr. Phillips shared that currently the school district has the opportunity to give this increase to support staff thanks to the increase in per pupil support from the state during the last budgetary session. Future pay increases will be guided by the percentage increase resulting from the prior year collective bargaining agreement with CEA. This does not impact referendum pay.

Mr. Phillips presented the current support staff matrix scale and the proposed changes and Dr. Pleak gave examples of the increase for several support staff positions. Mr. Phillips noted support staff members are paid out of multiple funds. He also added the increases are able to be addressed without effecting any of the planning processes. Dr. Pleak concluded by noting that the increase allows the school district to give the students the best support, stay competitive in the market and recruit and retain the best individuals for these positions.

The following information was given in response to questions from the board:

The five to seven grade on the matrix contains the largest range of employees. This range consists highly of teacher assistants.

Faster growing districts will see an increase in revenue and are able to allocate those funds accordingly. The growth in BCSC has been slow and steady. There have not been any large increases/decreases in enrollment or revenue for over a decade.

We did not realize how much all positions were lagging behind other districts until reviewing the data from the study. We believe a 9% increase is adequate to hire and retain our current employees. This helps BCSC compete well within the market.

HOW

4) Requests for Approval (Dr. Roberts)

Dr. Roberts reviewed the following items for the Board.

a. Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting of May 10, 2021
b. Supplemental Contracts (Dr. Hack/Mr. Jensen)
c. Field Trips/Professional Leaves (Dr. Hack/Mr. Jensen)
d. School Fundraisers (Dr. Hack/Mr. Jensen)
e. Claims and Payroll (Mr. Phillips)
f. Dual Language Grant application (Dr. Pleak)
Dr. Roberts shared additional information on the reviewed items and requested approval.

Dr. Roberts shared the ESSER III Grant application focuses on in-person learning. We will state on the application that we are already in-person and have been following the adopted plan of the school board.

Dr. Pleak noted that parents have been informed either through an email or letter in regards to the additional Pre-K classroom availability for the 2021-2022 school year.

Ms. Dayhoff-Dwyer made a motion to approve the reviewed items and Mr. Bryant seconded the motion.

Upon a call for the vote, Items 4) a-l were unanimously approved.

5) Request for Approval of Human Resources Recommendations (Ms. Heiny)

Ms. Heiny requested approval of the Human Resources Recommendations as presented.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the Human Resources Recommendations and the motion was seconded by Dr. Bilz.

Upon a call for the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

BOARD INPUT/REVIEW

Mr. Bryant thanked the public for coming out and voicing their opinions in regards to mask wearing.

Dr. Bilz thanked the public for voicing their opinions and for the emails that were sent in regards to mask wearing. She noted she would definitely look at the research and data presented. She insured parents they are an important part of the school corporation and do have a say with decision making within the school district.

Mr. Stenner thanked the parents for attending the meeting and providing feedback.
Ms. Dayhoff-Dwyer thanked Ms. Heiny for her years of service to the school corporation. She also thanked the public for their input and email correspondence. She shared that the board will certainly make the best decision for the students and staff.

Ms. Wheeldon commended Human Resources for the complex task of hiring over 92 individuals for the 2021-22 school year. She also thanked the public for their comments.

Mr. Grimes thanked the parents and community members for their thoughtful input. He also thanked Dr. Pleak and Mr. Phillips for their efforts with the support staff increase. Mr. Grimes congratulated Ms. Heiny on her retirement and wished her the best.

Dr. Shedd acknowledged her colleagues for their thoughtfulness. She noted the board has quite a bit to review and will continue to ask for public input as decisions are made for over ten thousand students. She also congratulated and thanked Ms. Heiny for her contributions to the school corporation.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next School Board Meeting will be on Monday, July 19, 6:30 p.m. in the Terrace Room of the Administration Building.

School Board Strategic Planning Session, July 30, 2021

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

______________________________________President

______________________________________Secretary