

**BARTHOLOMEW CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL CORPORATION
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING, MONDAY, August 23, 2021 MINUTES**

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, August 23, 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
 Mr. Todd Grimes, Member

Absent: Ms. Kathy Dayhoff-Dwyer, Member
 Ms. Nikki Wheeldon, Member

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

Attorney: Mr. Chris Monroe, School Attorney

REGULAR SESSION

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

Dr. Shedd, President, called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

Dr. Shedd gavelled out of the regular scheduled Board of School Trustees Meeting, and opened the first Public Hearing of the evening at 6:33 p.m.

Mr. Phillips noted that this is the second of two required Preliminary Determination Public Hearings. He noted that the Public Hearing is to receive input on the proposed, approximately, 13.5 million dollar project renovations. The proposed renovations and improvements to school facilities include, Parkside Elementary School, Schmitt Elementary School, roof replacements, solar projects, and the purchase of equipment and technology throughout the district. Mr. Phillips noted the net impact on the tax ratio would be zero.

The floor was opened for public comment. There were no comments presented from those present.

Dr. Shedd gaveled out of the first Public Hearing, and into the second Public Hearing at 6:34 p.m.

Mr. Phillips noted this Project Public Hearing is required prior to requesting approval of the proposed projects.

The floor was opened for public comment.

The following information was given in response to a question from the public:

The proposed project will not increase tax dollars.

Dr. Shedd gaveled out of the second Public Hearing, and into the third hearing at 6:36 p.m. Mr. Phillips noted the need for the additional appropriation in both the Education and Operation Funds. The requested increase of \$2,200,000 in the Education Fund would cover COVID-19 stipends, added days for certified staff and administrators, a 9% support staff pay matrix increase, and the anticipated 2021-2022 teacher salary increase through collective bargaining. The additional appropriation request of \$363,000, in the Operations Fund, would cover the support staff pay matrix increase, which was effective July 1, 2021.

The floor was opened for public comment. There were no comments presented from those present.

Dr. Shedd gaveled out of the third Public Hearing at 6:38 p.m. and back into the regular scheduled Board of School Trustees Meeting at 6:38 p.m.

WHO/WHY

Recognition: BCSC Teacher of the Year (Dr. Pleak)

Dr. Pleak introduced Ms. Stacy Doub as the 2021 BCSC Teacher of the Year. Ms. Doub is a science teacher at Columbus North High School, and has been in education for 34 years. Dr. Pleak noted that each building nominates an educator to represent their building, and from those nominations the Teacher of the Year Committee selects the award recipient. Dr. Pleak shared that Ms. Doub has had an ultimate impact on her students by constantly developing new ways to inspire students to learn, and by supporting students at their own pace.

Ms. Doub acknowledged her grandparents and their love for learning, noting she always felt she did not choose education, but education chose her.

She thanked the many talented faculty members at Columbus North High School, and her students for their tremendous support.

Ms. Suzi Bruins and Ms. Angela Emmitt, from the Bartholomew Consolidated School Foundation, presented Ms. Doub with a \$500 check from the School Foundation.

Update: COVID-19 Plan of Action for 2021-2022 (Dr. Roberts)

Dr. Roberts reviewed data, both from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Indiana Department of Health (IDOH), and shared the update of the COVID-19 Task Force numbers. He provided an explanation of the color coded COVID-19 maps, and highlighted where Bartholomew County stands in regards to positive test cases. He noted the BCSC metrics, and reviewed the current numbers reported since the first day of the 2021-2022 school year. Dr. Roberts shared that, out of 107 positive test cases reported, 94 are students and 13 are staff members. He noted there have been 698 close contacts reported, and 426 symptomatic individuals that had to be sent home.

Dr. Roberts referenced the numbers that were reported when the district went to eLearning on November 9, 2020. Those numbers were 106 positive test cases (70 students and 36 staff members).

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

The numbers shared tonight are from the first 12 days of in-person learning. The 698 close contact number is the total number from the last 12 days of school. Dr. Roberts noted the current process for identifying close contacts is to consider a 3-foot radius, versus a 6-foot radius that was in place during the 2020-2021 school year.

The determining factor for eLearning last school year was the lack of coverage for bus drivers and classroom staff. This school year there are fewer positive cases in adults, and less need to quarantine due to close contacts. Vaccinated individuals are not required to quarantine.

The number of positive cases would be greatly increased if students were unmasked.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Katie Rogers, Columbus, IN

Ms. Rogers believes masks have had a negative impact on her children. She feels that her children are not being protected, but rather suffering by wearing a mask.

Robert Contratto, Columbus, IN

Mr. Contratto spoke as a concerned parent in regards to masks. He believes that parents have a right to make their own decision in regards to their child's health. He feels that during a child's most critical learning period masks are detrimental to the student.

Dori Burton, Columbus, IN

Ms. Burton believes that there is no way to properly test for the Delta Variant of COVID-19. She believes the parent needs to be the one making the decision as to whether their child wears a mask to school.

N. Burton, Columbus, IN

This student is in the 6th grade at Southside Elementary. He feels students should be allowed to make a choice in regards to wearing a mask. He shared children are the future and what is being done now could affect the future of everyone.

R. Burton, Columbus, IN

This student is a freshman at Columbus North High School. He feels his rights as an American have been taken away from him. He asked why the county is requiring masks, and not enforcing other protective measures for more problematic diseases.

William Broaddus, Columbus, IN

Mr. Broaddus feels that his constitutional rights are being violated by requiring masks. He feels COVID-19 shows little to no risk to children. He believes contact tracing, social distancing, and mask guidelines are not consistent across the State of Indiana.

Eric Grow, Columbus, IN

Mr. Grow feels that the public comments spoken at the last school board meeting were not considered prior to the board vote to require masks. He believes the school board took the advice from the medical professionals. He feels the school board needs to explain how they decided on the mask decision. He feels there is a lack of transparency, and explanation from the school board.

Roy West, Columbus, IN

Mr. West shared he wasn't pleased with the outcome of the last school board meeting. He feels the meeting did not accommodate all those wanting to attend the meeting and provide their public comments. He shared only one of the board members explained his reasoning for his vote and that he was voting for his constituents. He asked the school board to do a better job representing their constituents.

Patrick Edwards, Columbus, IN

Mr. Edwards shared that his findings show that there has not been one student who has died from COVID-19 while attending in-person school. He feels that kids have a better chance to stay healthy by not wearing a mask. He asked the school board to reconsider the mask mandate and bring rationale back in the schools.

Chandra Williams, Columbus, IN

Ms. Williams is the mother of four BCSC students. She feels that parents should have a choice as to whether their child wears a mask to school. Ms. Williams shared the choice should lie with the individual who is legally responsible for the child. She noted she feels that the mask increases the chance for infection. She asked that the mask mandate be revised to allow parents to make the choice.

Dan McGurk, Columbus, IN

Mr. McGurk asked why masks are required for students. He feels parents should be allowed to make the decision for their children. He shared he feels the flu proposes a much higher risk to children than COVID-19. He believes children should be able to communicate with their whole face, and shared with masks in place students cannot communicate well. He feels that the student's well-being is at risk, and asked the board to reconsider the mask requirement for children.

Jonathan Abbott, Columbus, IN

Mr. Abbott spoke against the mandating of masks. He shared he believes his constitutional rights are being violated and asked for a response from the school board.

Jason Major, Columbus, IN

He shared his concerns with the contact tracing guidelines, and asked the school board to please keep the students in school.

WHAT

1) NEOLA Policy Revision Recommendations:

Dr. Roberts provided the First Reading of Volume 33, Number 2 of the NEOLA Policy Revisions. He reviewed the recommendations with the school board.

2) Board Commendations:

Mr. Grimes commented on the new soccer complex, and how exciting it is to see the unity of both high schools in Columbus sharing the same field. He gave commendations to the following teachers: Mr. Darin Johnson, Mr. Mike Metz, Mr. Jeff Metz, Mr. Derik Gratz and Mr. Dalton Foley, along with several construction students for their efforts, and many talents, with the Exhibit Columbus Project, "Tunnel Vision". Mr. Grimes shared Advanced Placement (AP) exam score results, and gave commendations to the achievement of those students taking the exams.

3) Board Member Reports:

Dr. Bilz shared an update, and reviewed happenings of the August 18, 2021, BCSC Health Trust meeting.

Dr. Shedd attended the Indiana School Boards Association Leadership Roundtable on Thursday, August 18, 2021, and provided a meeting update. She shared on Friday, August 19, 2021 she attended the Business Advisory Council Meeting. She noted this is the 18th year for the council. She shared that Dr. Roberts provided the Council with an update on COVID-19 data, and shared a draft of the Strategic Plan to the members present.

4) Cabinet Reports:

Mr. Phillips shared a fall Preliminary Enrollment Report for the school district. The report indicates total enrollment is up from last school year. Kindergarten enrollment numbers are near the normal average this year, after a decline in enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year. The drop in numbers were due primarily to the pandemic. He shared the numbers remain low across the school corporation for all 5th grade classes. The Columbus Virtual Pathway (CVP) currently has about 350 students enrolled.

HOW

5) Requests for Approval (Dr. Roberts)

Dr. Roberts reviewed the following items for the Board.

- a. Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting of August 9, 2021
- b. Supplemental Contracts (Dr. Hack/Mr. Jensen)
- c. Field Trips/Professional Leaves (Dr. Hack/Mr. Jensen) – no requests
- d. School Fundraisers (Dr. Hack/Mr. Jensen) – no requests
- e. Claims and Payroll (Mr. Phillips)
- f. Teacher Appreciation Grant Policy (Dr. Pleak)
- g. Resolution to Approve 2021 Lease Rental Bond (Mr. Phillips)
- h. Adopt Preliminary Determination Resolution (Mr. Phillips)
- i. Adopt Reimbursement Resolution (Mr. Phillips)
- j. Adopt 2021 Additional Appropriation Resolution (Mr. Phillips)
- k. Revised 403(b)/401(a) Plan (Mr. Phillips)
- l. Permission to receive bids for HVAC Building Control Projects at Clifty Creek Elementary and W.D. Richards Elementary (Dr. Boezeman)
- m. Permission to receive bids for HVAC Building Control Projects at Mt. Healthy Elementary and CSA Fodrea (Dr. Boezeman)
- n. Title I, Part A Grant (Mr. Edwards)
- o. Title I, Part D Grant (Mr. Edwards)
- p. Title III, Part A Grant (Mr. Edwards)
- q. Non-English Speaking Program (NESP) Grant (Mr. Edwards)

Dr. Roberts shared additional information on the reviewed items and requested approval.

Dr. Bilz made a motion to approve the reviewed items and Mr. Bryant seconded the motion.

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

6) Request for Approval of Human Resources Recommendations (Dr. Pleak)

Dr. Pleak requested approval of the Human Resources Recommendations as presented.

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

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

BOARD INPUT/REVIEW

Mr. Grimes thanked the public for attending the school board meeting and voicing their comments, and concerns. He congratulated Ms. Doub for being the recipient of the 2021 BCSC Teacher of the Year, and Ms. Mindy Summers for placing in the top 25 in the State of Indiana. He extended best wishes to both the Columbus North and East Athletic Teams, as they compete against each other during this upcoming Rivalry Week. He noted that both high schools recently merged their band programs to form “Sound and Spirit of Columbus”. The band will make their debut, with a half-time performance show, Friday night at the North versus East football game.

Mr. Stenner shared his appreciation for those attending the meeting, and for sharing their public comments. He thanked both the students and staff members for their efforts in the Exhibit Columbus Project.

Dr. Bilz thanked everyone for their emails to the board members, and for sharing their public comments. She shared that the mission of the school board is to keep all children safe and in school.

Dr. Shedd thanked those individuals that came to the meeting to express their concerns. She noted that the school board will continue to look at the data, and the comments received from the public, in order to make the very best decision for all students.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next regular School Board Meeting will be on Monday, September 13, 6:30 p.m. in the Terrace Room of the Administration Building.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

_____ President

_____ Secretary