



BOARD OF EDUCATION-REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2020 PEOTONE HIGH SCHOOL - MEDIA CENTER

This Regular Board Meeting was conducted via a teleconference call. Present in the Media Center at Peotone High School for tonight's meeting were President Tara Robinson, Secretary Jennifer Moe, Trustee Roger Bettenhausen, Trustee Jodi Becker and Trustee Paul Douglas. Trustee Jody Thatcher was present via telephone. Vice President Rick Uthe was absent tonight for the regular board meeting tonight. Also present were Mr. Steve Stein, Dr. Charles Vitton and Mr. Don Swanson.

CALL TO ORDER:

At 6:04 p.m., President Tara Robinson called the regular board meeting to order and requested all who are present to please stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. A roll call was taken and the following members answered aye (6): Mr. Roger Bettenhausen, Mrs. Jennifer Moe, Mrs. Tara Robinson, Mr. Paul Douglas, Mrs. Jodi Becker and Mrs. Jody Thatcher (via telephone). Mr. Richard Uthe was absent for the regular meeting of November 16, 2020.

CONSENT AGENDA:

President Robinson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for the November 16, 2020 regular board meeting. Mrs. Moe made a motion and Mr. Bettenhausen seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken and the follow members answered aye (6): Mr. Bettenhausen, Mr. Douglas, Mrs. Moe, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Becker and Mrs. Thatcher. Mr. Uthe was absent for the November 16, 2020 regular board meeting.

OPPORTUNITY FOR VISITORS TO SPEAK:

Mr. Joshua Hendricker, of Monee, IL, addressed the Board to ask why we are not continuing with playing sports at the high school. I know the reason we are closing down the high school now is for staffing based on the letter that came out from Mr. Stein. Mr. Stein responded - the reason that we are not practicing right now, Mr. Hendricker,- is because we are still unable to do that with the closure at this point in time. I feel that if we can't have non-contact students in classrooms then I don't know how we can have non-contact basketball taking place at the same time. I know IHSA is attempting to reach out to the Governors' office with regard to a meeting that supposedly will take place on November 19th, but what most insurance companies have said and ours is one of them, is that they are not going to cover school districts that go against the order that was put in place by the Governor's office. So that is a substantial hurdle for school districts when their insurance carriers tell them that they are not going to be covered if they do not comply with the orders of the Governor's office, IDPH and Office of the Superintendent of the State.

2020 TAX LEVY PRESENTATION:

Mr. Trevor Moore, Chief School Business Official, presented to the Board, the 2020 Tax Levy. Some key points from the 2020 Tax Levy presentation are:

- Our operating levy, which includes all funds except Debt Service is being requested to be set at \$12,501,309 (3.30% over last year's request or 4.90% over last year's actual extension).
- The Debt Service tax extension will decrease by \$1,428,724 to \$2,435,778 or -36.97% • Total Levy Request for 2020 is estimated at \$14,937,087(-6.22% from last year's request).
- We will not receive that much new revenue, but are requesting more due to our Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) and new property being unknown at this time.
- Our best guess as to what we will actually receive, due to being limited to a Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase of 2.3% is \$12,311,953 or \$395,180 in new operating revenue, which equates to 3.32% increase in operating revenue.

After the 2020 Tax Levy Presentation, Mr. Moore asked if anyone had any questions. Board Trustee, Roger Bettenhausen, asked Mr. Moore - "your best guess of what we will be receiving this year will be around \$12,311,953. Can you tell me how this total differs from last year's receipts?" Mr. Moore responded that this year, the amount will be about a \$400,000 increase, last year we were at about \$11,900,000, not including the debt service.

President Robinson thanked Mr. Moore for his presentation of the 2020 Tax Levy.

President Robinson reported that the Good News will be a little different tonight. Our candidates that we will be recognizing tonight will not be in-house with us. All candidates will be recognized at their buildings and candidates' photos will be taken and sent to the Peotone Vedette to be published and posted on their schools' Facebook pages.

GOOD NEWS:

PEOTONE HIGH SCHOOL RECOGNITION OF THE RECIPIENT OF THE SEPTEMBER 2020 PBC EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Mr. Jason Spang, Principal of Peotone High School, announced to the Board the recipient of the PBC Excellence in Teaching Award for September 2020 is Mr. Mike Heywood. Mr. Mike Heywood is a Social Studies Teacher at Peotone High School. Ms. Chelsea McKay nominated Mike Heywood for this award and wrote on his behalf:

I have chosen to nominate Mike Heywood as the Peotone PBC Teacher of the Month. Mr. Heywood is one of the most passionate and dedicated teachers I have ever worked with. He has learned to embrace technology with the most positive attitude and works so hard to do what is best for his students. I appreciate Mr. Heywood because he is always willing to pitch in and work with students even when he isn't required. He has been a huge part of making our show choir a successful program by taking over the combo. He volunteers his time to work with students after school hours and on weekends and has developed relationships with students who share his love of music. He is the first one to come to me with ideas of how we can make our programs better, applied for grants to help out the music program, and sponsors clubs so all students can feel included and have a positive high school experience.

Here is what some students had to say about Mr. Heywood:

Alyssa Shea: Mr. Heywood is one of the teachers who can always brighten your day with just a few words. When I need some good advice he is the person I go to. He always knows what to say. :)

Sarah Blickem: Mr. Heywood is awesome because he puts forth so much effort and energy and it really shows with every performance and practice he comes to.

Trevor Goode: He's so flexible, easygoing, and talented. He has done such a great job at leading the combo for a long time, and he really contributes to show choir as a whole.

Gabriel Barta: Mr. Heywood is legendary. He's an awesome down to earth guy who can jam on the guitar and tell a mean lecture.

Lillian Eglar: He cares about every individual student and makes sure they all succeed!

Kiara Lewis: He always has the best attitude. Never once was he disappointed with our performance, always motivated us and he's a great teacher.

Mackenzie Gallagher: He always brings good, positive energy everywhere he goes!

Dylan Bales: He is not only creative enough to come up with the best ideas for the show choir combo, but he's also talented and engaging enough to encourage new students to explore music.

Congratulations Mr. Heywood!

PEOTONE HIGH SCHOOL

RECOGNITION OF THE RECIPIENT OF THE OCTOBER 2020 PBC EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Mr. Jason Spang, Principal of Peotone High School, announced to Board the recipient of the PBC Excellence in Teaching Award for October 2020, is the Special Education Department, at Peotone High School. Mr. Mike Heywood nominated the Special Education Department for this award and wrote:

The Special Education Department here at the high school has been understaffed since the beginning of the year. They've been working incredibly hard to make up the difference. In spite of the added stress of the pandemic sparking further complications, they've worked above and beyond providing special education services to our PHS students. They've been troopers throughout. For the aforementioned, they deserve the bowling pin and deserve to be recognized for their efforts.

Congratulations Special Education Department!

PEOTONE HIGH SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2020 ACADEMIC STUDENT OF THE MONTH

President Robinson recognized Emma Coffey as the November 2020 Academic Student of the month. Emma is a junior at Peotone High School, with a grade point average of 4.07 on a 4.0 grading scale.



Congratulations Emma Coffey!

PEOTONE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

OCTOBER 2020 STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

President Robinson recognized the following students of the month for October 2020. These students have demonstrated outstanding behavior, good work ethic, and have "gone above and beyond the call of duty" at Peotone Junior High School. The students are **6th Grade - Olivia O'Neill**, **7th Grade - Madison Bostjancic** and **8th Grade - Caelen Farmer**



Congratulations Olivia O'Neill, Madison Bostjancic and Caelen Farmer!

FOR ACTION:

REPORT NO. 28:

**FOR ACTION: APPROVAL OF THE TENTATIVE 2020 TAX LEVY AND
CERTIFICATE OF THE TAX LEVY ADOPTION DATE OF
DECEMBER 21, 2020.**

President Robinson asked for a motion for approval of the **Tentative 2020 Tax Levy and Certificate of the Tax Levy Adoption Date of December 21, 2020**. Mr. Bettenhausen made a motion and Mrs. Moe seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken and the following members answered aye (6): Mrs. Moe, Mr. Bettenhausen, Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Douglas, Mrs. Thatcher, and Mrs. Becker and no nays. Mr. Uthe was absent for the regular board meeting of November 16, 2020.

REPORT NO. 29:

FOR ACTION: APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF PRESS 105 BOARD POLICIES.

President Robinson asked for a motion for **Approval and Adoption of PRESS 105 Board Policies**. Mr. Stein asked if he can just add, that when the Policy Committee met to review the policies, one of the things we did was to establish myself as the Non-Discrimination Coordinator and the Title IX Coordinator. After I and Mrs. Loy went through the training for the role of coordinator, we realized that this was not the best position for me to be in. So what we did, and this was the only change made to the policies, was to make Mrs. Amy Loy, the Non-Discrimination Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator. The reason being that as we went through the training, we needed to have an initial decision maker for the reports, which will be Dr. Charles Vitton and the final decision maker if it is appealed, would be myself. The Non-Discrimination Coordinator and the Title IX Coordinator are simply putting it all together for the initial decision maker, Dr. Charles Vitton and if it is appealed it would go to myself.

Mr. Bettenhausen made a motion and Mrs. Robinson seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken and the following members answered aye (6): Mrs. Moe, Mr. Bettenhausen, Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Douglas, Mrs. Thatcher, and Mrs. Becker and no nays. Mr. Uthe was absent for the regular board meeting of November 16, 2020.

REPORT NO. 30:

FOR ACTION: APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL. (*Contingent upon receipt and evaluation and employment documentation required by the District and the Illinois State Board of Education*)

President Robinson asked for a motion for **Approval of Personnel of the Certified Staff** listed below. Mrs. Moe made a motion and Mr. Bettenhausen seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken and the following members answered aye (6): Mrs. Moe, Mr. Bettenhausen, Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Douglas, Mrs. Thatcher, and Mrs. Becker and no nays. Mr. Uthe was absent for the regular board meeting of November 16, 2020.

CERTIFIED STAFF EMPLOYMENT:

- Katrina Yager - PIC Virtual Book Club Sponsor (effective date of 10/27/2020).
- Corrisa Campbell - PES - SI K-3 District Long Term Substitute (120 days) COVID19 Absences (effective date of 11/30/2020).

CERTIFIED STAFF

EMPLOYMENT (continued):

CHANGE IN STATUS:

- Kacey Spisak - PES - Kindergarten - District Long Term Substitute (120 days) COVID19 Absences (effective date of 11/30/2020).
- Ariana Meewes - PHS - Long Term Substitute to PHS/PJHS English Teacher (effective date of 11/02/2020).

RESIGNATION:

- Eric Englert - PHS/PJHS - English Teacher (effective date of 10/28/2020).

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS:

Mr. Steve Stein, Superintendent, reported to the Board that I received two FOIA requests this month. One is a request from Smart Procure, this is a revolving request that we received every six months. The second FOIA request, is a commercial request from Local Labs, which is some sort of an organization that hires out guest speakers. They are asking for our guest speakers from 2019 to the present.

Also, I have received the final numbers for the asbestos project at PES. This project was in a board brief to the Board. The asbestos project will consist of two classrooms and a staff bathroom. It is a small enough project, and can be completed over winter break. The cost of this project will be around \$27,000. If the Board is good with this, I would like to finalize it and move ahead with the project over winter break.

Dr. Charles Vitton, Assistant Superintendent, reported to the Board that I have met with each of the High School curriculum departments over the past week to discuss programming for the 2021-2022 school year. Discussed were course descriptions, prerequisites, and proposed course changes (additions, deletions) for next school year. I will be meeting with the Board of Education Curriculum Committee in the coming weeks to begin discussing the curriculum planning process for the 2021-2022 school year. I have also posted several certified teacher vacancies for 2021-2022 based on known retirements at the end of this school year.

Mr. Jason Spang, Principal of Peotone High School, reported to the Board that: Peotone High School would like to thank all students and staff that contributed to the Virtual Veterans Day Ceremony that was posted on November 11th at 10:00 a.m. It was a huge success. Special thanks to Mike Heywood, Chelsea McKay, Kate Herder, Erin Blievernicht, Don Swanson, Chief Mort, John Ruckman, Rick Bolanowski, Jim Butler, Dr. Vitton, Mr. Stein, and all students who volunteered to submit a recorded thank you to administration! Spirit Week was planned take place at the high school from November 16th - November 24th. With the school closure we are rescheduling to a date to be announced later. When it is safe to return, the students have decided that they would like to dedicate the spirit week to Ms. Schultz. The dress up days will be as follows:

- Character Day (dress up as your favorite movie/TV character).
- Jersey Day.
- Country vs. Country Club Day.
- Occupation Day.
- Class Distinction Day - Four Seasons (Seniors: Winter, Juniors: Fall, Sophomores: Summer, Freshmen: Spring)
- Purple Out (this was Ms. Schultz's favorite color)
- Blue Devil Spirit Day.

Student Council would like to share some more information at a future Board Meeting with regards to some other things they have planned in commemoration of Ms. Nichole Schultz.

Mr. Brandon Owens, Athletic Director/ Assistant Principal at Peotone High School, reported to the Board that after running at the Cross Country Regionals on October 24th, Amelia Kuypers qualified for Sectionals with a run of just over 22 minutes. The following Saturday, October 31st, she competed at Sectionals at Harvest Christian Academy. Even with an injured ankle, Amelia ran just under 24 minutes on a very tough course. Mia placed 85th among all the runners that morning. Congratulations to her on a great season! Fall Sports Awards Night (Golf & Cross Country) The Fall Sports Athletic Awards Night was held on Tuesday, November 10th for golf and cross country. The Cross Country MVP was awarded to Mia Kuypers and Most Improved went to Madyson Kibelkis. The Golf MVP Award was given to Miles Heflin and Michael O'Connor received the Most Improved. 13 of our Fall Athletes received the All Academic Award - Karli Borsch, Matt Derkacy, Miles Heflin, Connor Janik, Dominick Esquivel, Jon Sears, Kyle Pryor, Gabriel Barta, Madyson Kibelkis, Mia Kuypers, Amanda Meltz, Sophie Perry, and Lucas Raymond.

Our IC8 Conference continues to meet on a weekly basis. At the end of October, wrestling was moved to the summer season and will not take place this winter, and basketball games appear to not be a likely scenario either.

In the past few weeks, three conference schools have made the decision to not play winter basketball at this time. In addition to these schools, many area schools have made the decision until further details have been provided by IDPH/ISBE and IHSA. I fully expect all of our conference schools to make the same decision within the next few days and weeks. Unless changes are made by IDPH/ISBE or IHSA, I do not expect there would be area teams to play in December.

Although our conference schools, do not plan to play, all expect to hold basketball practices at least a couple days per week under IDPH guidelines:

- No - Contact Practices or Competitions.
- Training Phase with Masks and Social Distancing.
 - Individual Drills - Shooting, Dribbling, etc.
 - Conditioning/Weights.

I have been in contact with our head basketball coaches who have started to plan out upcoming winter practices if no season were to take place. They are all under the understanding that these will strictly be training and conditioning. They are not allowed to scrimmage or run drills in which contact is possible. I personally feel that under the current guidelines, this is perfectly fine and would still be an opportunity for these basketball players to work on their skills, make improvements, and have an outlet. I honestly have no idea when basketball would get moved to, but I can almost guarantee that it would probably create some form of an issue with overlap, which would have an effect on some particular season. If they say, "basketball in the spring," it's possible that it could take place during the football, boys' soccer, and girls' volleyball seasons (Spring Seasons, which is what was referenced by Pritzker) OR baseball, softball, girls' soccer, track and field, and wrestling (Summer Seasons). I just feel that if we do not at least allow practices for basketball, there's a good chance that some of these students will not have a chance to play, because of their interest in other overlapping sports. I would like to allow the opportunity for these teams to still hold practices at least through December, unless further guidance from the state prevents that from happening.

I hope to receive further guidance regarding basketball after the IHSA meeting on Thursday, November 19th. We additionally plan to meet again this Friday with our Conference Athletic Directors.

Now that wrestling has been moved, all other winter sports (besides basketball) are allowed to participate under IDPH/ISBE guidelines. These would include: girls' bowling, competitive cheer, and dance.

Scott Wenzel, Principal of Peotone Junior High School, reported to the Board that:

Full Remote Learning - Day one is under our belt and in all regards things ran smoothly. We created and shared a bell schedule that would accommodate staff and students enough transition time from one class to the next. We provided the students with a schedule of where to be and when. Staff took the opportunity on Thursday and Friday to get students and themselves prepared for full remote learning. Wendy and I are visiting classrooms before the remote learning begins, checking in to classrooms as remote learning is going on, and problem solving anything that is brought to our attention.

Communication - Staff has been reaching out in a variety of ways to parents and students. Many emails have been sent, phone calls, remote office hours, and some individual times have been requested by teachers for Google Meet. Teachers are continually reaching out to students who seem to be struggling. The SST Team (Mr. Wenzel, Mrs. Bean. and Ms. Schlickman) meet each month with grade level teams to receive feedback from teachers on students. We will continue to reach out and make contact from the school to each student. We are keeping track of this through PowerSchool Log Entries. I have also been reaching out to each grade level remote learner group through Google Meet.

Learning Lab - A short two weeks ago we started with a Learning Lab at PJHS. Learning Lab is held in the media center on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 1:30-2:30. We currently have two paraprofessionals supervise the lab. It is by invite only from Wendy or me as we reach out to families and students by email and phone. We limit the number of students to 10 each day. We are hearing a lot of positive feedback for those who have taken advantage of it.

Yearbook - Mrs. Wojtanowski and the yearbook staff are looking at new and creative ways to provide memories of this school year in the yearbook.

Mrs. Wendy Bean, Assistant Principal of Peotone Junior High School, reported to the Board that our first day of being fully remote with live streaming went very well. The teachers were very pleased with how things went. Many commented about how nice it was to see students without masks on. Although our engagement percentage was high, it was not 100% so we will work toward that each day moving forward.

Prior to the closure, we started a Learning Lab in which students were invited back into the school to work in the school setting with guidance from our paraprofessionals. This was going well. In order to maintain social distancing, this is by invitation only with precedence being given to students with IEPs and 504s.

Eight students participated in the IESA Speech Contest on November 2nd. It was great to see their performances and they all did very well. Thanks to Mrs. DeGraaf and Mrs. Schubbe for making this happen.

We don't have any athletics slated to begin until January. We have some contact days scheduled for December for basketball and volleyball pending our school situation at that time and any new restrictions.

Mrs. Joanne Obszanski, Principal of Peotone Intermediate Center, reported to the Board that PIC teachers report a successful first day as we transition to Remote Learning. As to be expected, there were some typical glitches with joining google classroom and learning new schedules. We are happy to say that parents did take advantage of calling PIC's office and/or calling/emailing teachers directly to insure any confusions with google classroom could quickly be addressed and cleared up to ensure a smooth day. My message to parents and staff today and last week was one of patience with students, teachers, and the

transition process in general. Our teachers expressed appreciation for having Friday to prepare for the first day of Remote Learning. Overall attendance across the board was very high. In many ways, the integration and use of technology embedded in teachers' everyday instruction since the start of the school year is a big contributing factor for this success, in addition to the District Issued Chromebooks for each student. Since the start of the school year, teachers have demonstrated great support for each other, teamwork, learning and using new technology, utilizing resources available in order to improve student experiences as well as their own as we move in and out of in-person vs remote learning. PIC is very appreciative of Technology for the support provided to staff and students. Teachers, students, and parents continue to gain confidence and expertise with Remote Learning. Our teachers and paraprofessionals are working side by side in the arranged google meets in order to support our students during remote learning. Paraprofessionals are also exploring using break-out rooms in order to further support students in addition to google meets. Our goal is to continue to support teachers and paraprofessionals as they explore and use technology for remote learning and to be a resource to students and parents to also improve their remote experiences. PIC's after school Learning Lab consisted of approximately 30 students prior to our recent school closure. We look forward to resuming Learning Lab once we return to in-person instruction.

PIC's Character Trait focus for the month for October was Motivation. We are proud of the various ways our students demonstrate our monthly character traits. Thank you to Miss McIntyre, PIC's Social Worker for her contributions to developing our Character Ed program along with the support of our teachers for allowing us to come into their classrooms to meet with our students.

Congratulations to October Student/s of the Month for demonstrating Motivation:

4th graders - Charley Isbell, Colten Greenquist and Misael Farias

5th graders - Adrianna Udstuen, Peter Widinski and Greyson Denny

Kindness is the focus character trait for November.

Thank you to Mrs. Schubbe, for providing recordings on the book, "The One & Only Bob" for all PIC students to continue to appreciate reading and the library. Miss Yager reports strong participation with PIC's Virtual Book Club. We look forward to session two in January. Thank you to PTO for their continued efforts to support our schools. Currently PTO has a Spirit Wear Sale that ends Saturday, November 21st. Links to order are available on PTO's Facebook page and PIC's Weekly Updates. PIC teachers report good participation for a successful recent virtual P/T Conferences. Finally, thank you to all the families that donated to PIC's Veterans Day Drive. We collected a large amount of socks and toiletries which will be donated to Manteno Veterans Home on behalf of PIC and our school community.

Mrs. Carole Zurales, Principal of Peotone Elementary, reported to the Board that we have a lot to celebrate and recognize at PES this past month:

- We had 683 POP stars for Quarter one. All in person learners participated in Space theme games and I delivered Peotone POPstar signs to all remote learners as their quarter one reward.
- Even though Halloween looked different, we had a lot of fun with Book or Treat with PHS Students, Our Troll Themed Halloween Party all morning long, and a socially distant Halloween Parade. Our Remote Learners got to participate in a Virtual Halloween Parade and a Halloween themed Remote Learner Recess.
- We had successful Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences with 92% attendance.
- Our November monthly focus is “An Attitude of Gratitude...the Sequel” We did a Giving with Gratitude Fundraiser where students donated to support Helping Hands and Adopt a Soldier. Our goal was to raise \$1,000 and we ended up doubling our goal and raised \$2,021.67! We will be doing a Gratitude Game during morning announcements starting tomorrow that will take us until Thanksgiving Break.
- Our Virtual Veterans Day Assembly came together perfectly to honor Veterans with grade levels singing patriotic songs, our Poppy Wall, and student interviews.
- Today was our first day of Full Remote Learning. We had 96% of our students in attendance today. Teachers did an exceptional job with preparing and navigating through this new model for Remote Learning at PES. Our students were live in their Classroom Google Meet during our normal in person hours from 8:20 a.m.-12:05 p.m. following their classroom schedule with their teacher. Students participated in whole group lessons and independent work. We started today and will continue to utilize breakout rooms for small group instruction with our reading specialist, special education teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessionals when they push into classrooms. We had a few technical difficulties which were expected, but we have already come up with ideas and solutions for tomorrow.

Mrs. Terry Wuske, Director of Food Services, reported to the Board that I would like to report that the Food Service department had their first Full Remote distribution of the meal packs ordered for the week. We had 146 students order for the week of 11/16/2020 resulting in the production of 730 lunches! I would like to thank the cafeteria staff for a GREAT job! We would also like to thank the parents of the community on supporting the school lunch program.

Mrs. Jennifer Haag, Director of Transportation, reported to the Board that the Transportation department are deep cleaning the buses while we are temporarily closed.

Mr. Ruben Suarez, Director of Technology, reported to the Board that tablets and chrome books at PES were quickly prepared for distribution to students when the decision to go to remote learning was made. PIC's internal network issues were resolved. We are still working on a solution to improve the microwave connection between PIC and PHS. Also, working with Secure Halo to implement MFA at the request of our Insurance Company. Working with Proven to implement a solution for printing from the Chromebooks since Google will shut down the solution we are presently using at the end of this year.

Mr. Dave Osborne, Director of Buildings and Grounds, reported to the Board that all of the equipment needed for dispensing chemicals into the boilers has been installed. Elemental Solutions will be out this Thursday to start that process and show us how it works. The boilers started up this year with the usual problems but not too bad. Grass cutting has ended for the season. I think Green Arbor did a very good job for us.

OTHER:

President Robinson reported that I will now turn the meeting back over to Mr. Stein for discussions of full remote learning, and also if we are returning to in-person on November 30th, or if you have other suggestions or recommendations that you wanted to discuss with the Board tonight.

Mr. Stein reported to the Board that I was able to get to most of the buildings today, and as you heard also from the principals tonight, many positive things of remote learning. We did have a couple of technical hiccups at PES, some of the teachers had issues with their bandwidth. Don Swanson and Brian Cann have some ideas to correct the issues and have made changes to correct the issue. But what I am hearing and what you are hearing, I think it went very well today with teacher and student instruction.

Mr. Stein also reported to the Board, that one of the things that we are seeing in the area is an uptick in the positivity rates and also throughout our region, and I think some of our neighbors are taking an approach that they are staying out for the week after Thanksgiving and not coming back on November 30th. I think there are concerns that have been raised to say that there will be traveling during the Thanksgiving holiday, so our neighboring districts would want a little lull before coming back to school right after the Thanksgiving holiday.

Mr. Stein asked the Board "are we comfortable with coming back on November 30th right after Thanksgiving?" The trend lines are not good for the positivity rates. This is certainly a bit of a concern right now for me. Like I said, we have schools in our area who are taking a little different approach and coming back on December 7th assuming there will be traveling for the Thanksgiving holiday.

The Board discussed in length the pros and cons of returning to in-person learning on November 30th.

Board Secretary, Jennifer Moe stated that I think students should return to school on November 30th. It is also extremely difficult for parents to keep up with all of this. And if we stay out until December 7th, what will stop us from us from not staying out longer?

Board Trustee, Jody Thatcher reported that I am 100% in support of staying full remote until after Christmas. The uptick in the positivity rates will put a stress on our teachers, on their mental and health well-being. I am very concerned for our teachers.

Board Trustee, Jodi Becker, can I ask - do we know what the consensus is of the teaching staff of the District?

Debbie Caza, Union President, responded to Mrs. Becker - We actually did a survey with all of our members, which are teachers, paraprofessionals and secretaries to see when they are comfortable for students to return to the classroom. We started with the November 30th date sent out by the District, we also put out the date of January 4th and also the two weeks after winter break, which I know some districts in our area are planning to do that after winter break. We had 107 members return the survey. Out of the 107 members, 62.3% said to wait until two weeks after winter break. 24.5% said after the Thanksgiving holiday and 13.2 % said after the winter break. I also want to stress that there some fear out there among our teachers and staff - one fear that I am hearing— is they do not want to be in the buildings especially now that the positivity rate is increasing. And some of the teachers and staff see numerous students throughout their school day which increases their chances of contacting the virus.

Mrs. Caza also informed the Board that some of the members' surveys includes their comments or concerns. Mrs. Caza gave a few examples to the Board. She said that she will send the rest of the members' comments in an email to the Board because some of them are very lengthy, if they would like to read them, after the board meeting tonight.

Mrs. Monica Cowger, one of the District Nurses, responded that if we come back on the 30th - we might be right in the same place that we are now - chasing cases left and right, working late every night, just to stay atop of the contact tracing of the students and staff.

President Robinson asked the nurses if they have the numbers of positive and quarantine cases right now in district. The nurses responded, that we have 33 staff members that are out on quarantine, 190 students that are out on quarantine (close contact) and eight positive student cases (all of these totals are district-wide).

President Robinson reported that this is a tough call either way - there is no easy answer.

Trustee Roger Bettenhausen, responded - we heard a number of times that in-person is the preferred and the best education for the students – but if under the circumstances that we are operating under now especially the inconsistency of here in for a couple of weeks, out for a couple of weeks – is remote learning at this point teaching our kids better instead of in-person because of the inconsistencies? Our number one objective is the teaching the kids. At this point, are they getting a better education from remote learning instead of in-person?

Mr. Stein responded, I agree with you, Roger, and like what Mr. Spang said, that this is the second time out at the high school. Mr. Stein reported that my fear is what Monica had said that we are going to come back on November 30th and we will be close to the same state that we were in when we left.

Board Trustee, Roger Bettenhausen responded that my vote is to stay out until after winter break and come back in the New Year. We can always reevaluate this at the December 21st board meeting.

Board Trustee, Paul Douglas responded that I like the consistency for the students that Dr. Vitton talks about, and I am fully on board with what Roger has said. I think, let's give this a chance, these kids learn more when they know what to expect. We can reevaluate at our next meeting on the 21st.

Board Secretary, Jennifer Moe, responded that I do agree with what Dr. Vitton says about consistency and it is definitely the key but without a good mental health piece, I think it is all for nothing. I do want, however, to go on the record to say, that in a time like this, there is no disputing that we need teachers, we appreciate teachers, we value teachers and without teachers we would all be lost, in any facet we can get them that we need them, appreciate them and we respect them. But I think - the more days we can have in-person contact with these kids the better the kids will be.

Board Trustee, Jodi Becker, responded that I strongly consider what the teachers are going to work with better. I am a huge component of in-person learning. I think we fail with remote learning in possibly with the schedule, but I am on the outside. But I have seen huge improvements with a lot of the teachers. And I do like the idea of the teachers of putting the kids in break out rooms and then come back and have a discussion with the teacher - this is fantastic! I vote to come back in January.

Board Trustee, Jody Thatcher, responded, I vote to keep our entire district, both students, staff and families at home safe, for two weeks after our winter break.

President Robinson asked Mr. Stein and Dr. Vitton for their opinion.

Mr. Stein recommended to the Board to have things closed down until the end of winter break. Let's reevaluate, where are at, on the 21st. We can see what is happening with the rates not only in just in Peotone but in the region. We can make a decision then, if we need it extend it out further.

Dr. Vitton stated that I agree with Mr. Stein and his recommendation but I would like to say that parents along with our staff need to continue their communications with the nurses if they are in close contact with anyone who has contacted the virus or if they are COVID positive. So by December 21st we know where the teaching and support staff stands with the positivity rates of the virus.

President Robinson reported that this is difficult, I would love to see kids back in school. Part of me thought about keeping them out like Manteno and Beecher until January 17th and meet again on the 30th to reevaluate. I appreciate Debbie's survey of the staff, and I also know it is tough to teach remote. There is no easy answer at all. I rather see everyone in school - but I respect the opinion of the majority of the Board.

The best option for us is to honor the directive from Mr. Stein to keep the students out until after our winter break. We have our board meeting on December 21st, and we can also have candid conversations each week and as the Board, reevaluate on the 21st..

The Board also discussed sports and whether or not we can have practices for sports that are slated to run now. Some ideas from board members were, can we have mentoring from the coaches for students who are involved in sports, even though we are in remote learning. Can students come in two or three days to practice for sports that are slated to run now? Mr. Stein responded that he will talk to Mr. Owens about sending a draft to the Board members regarding student practices for sports for the board's approval. The Board can then make a decision about practices.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

For the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees or legal counsel; collective negotiating matters; student disciplinary cases and other matters relating to individual students; pending, probable, or imminent litigation; security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonable potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public or public property.

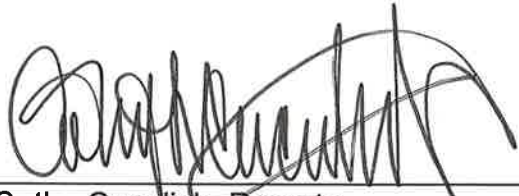
There May Be or May Not Be Action Following the Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:40 p.m. President Robinson asked if anyone had anything for executive session tonight and the board answered no. President Robinson then asked for a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting. Mr. Bettenhausen made a motion and Mrs. Moe seconded the motion and on a voice call vote, the following members answered aye (6), Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Bettenhausen, Mrs. Moe, Mr. Douglas, Mrs. Thatcher, Mrs. Becker and no nays. Mr. Uthe was absent for the regular board meeting of November 16, 2020.



Tara Robinson, President



Cathy Cuculich, Reporter