

EDUCATION/POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

5:30 P.M.

NLSD Media YouTube Channel

Committee Members			Remaining Meeting Dates
	Gale Husack - Chairperson	X	Jennifer Butz Monday, May 3, 2021 Monday, June 7, 2021
X	Michele Martineau. - Co-Chair		David Hauser Monday, August 2, 2021 Tuesday, September 7, 2021
	Michelle Heckman	X	Eric Hill Monday, October 4, 2021 Monday, November 1, 2021
	Robert Keegan, Jr.	X	Gene Marks
X	Matt Link	X	Scott Pyne
X	Tania Stoker	X	James Schnyderite
X	Jill Chamberlain	X	Robert Vlasaty
	Michele Dotta	X	Tim Weaber

Also in attendance: Gary Fedorcha

***** This committee meeting is being recorded. The recording will be posted on YouTube*****

MINUTES

EDUCATION

- Update on return to 4-day in-person learning (Principals)
 - Dr. Stoker reported that the district returned to 4-day in-person learning on March 15th to the two elementary buildings and on March 22nd to the secondary buildings.
 - Mr. Schnyderite, Peters Elementary, reported that it feels like a traditional school year. We're seeing now some of the things that were challenges during the hybrid environment have lessened and some of the things that are traditionally a challenge when you have some of the larger class size are becoming more challenging. The biggest change was an additional 2nd grade teacher, Mrs. Nightlinger, to reduce class size. He spoke with all 17 families about the scheduling changes. All second grade classes are now 17-20 students instead of 24-26 per class. Trying to provide as

much support for the struggling students within the 4-day a week model. Mrs. Bashore, Mrs. Hegedus, and Mrs. Frey have done a wonderful job adapting the schedule to provide reading intervention for struggling students. Interventions are being done every day of the week, 30 minutes per day and on Wednesday for the virtual students either in small group or one-on-one. Through the intervention process there is progress monitoring. Feedback from the teachers and the progress monitoring, they do feel that it is making an impact on those students who were not engaging in the fully remote or hybrid remote model. One of the biggest concerns at the elementary level is there are a number of students that have a large amount of absences. In a traditional year, 10 absences is a concern. There are students with 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 or more absences. There's learning loss everywhere, but missing a third of the school year creates much bigger concerns. Parent/teacher conferences will be held beginning next Wednesday. There will be discussion with parents about the potentiality of retention. Safety & Security--there has been an uptick in some student discipline issues particularly on buses. It is being addressed through the school-wide positive behavior support program. Safety in the cafeteria is going extremely well. The cafeteria and physical education wall is open. Tables are set up in the cafeteria and two-thirds of the gym. Students are able to be seated six feet apart.

- Mr. Pyne, Slatington Elementary, reported that it feels more like a normal school year. The first three weeks, outside of a brief and unexpected building closure, have been going really well. Really pleased with the way that they were able to make the shift. Temperature checks were at 6 minutes when in the hybrid model. The first week of 4-day in-person was 15 minutes, however today they were able to get everyone in the building in 8 minutes. Applauded the teachers for adopting an attitude and working with the students, we all need to do this together. The students and staff have been incredible with the safety guidelines. Families have been very communicative and vigilant. They looked at retention rates in January. Last year at 1%, this year at 5%. Have reduced it by 1% to 4% in the last month. Hoping to reduce it by another 1% by the end of the month.
- Ms. Chamberlain, NLMS Principal, reported that 19 seventh grade students chose to remain virtual and 121 in-person. In eighth grade, 26 of the students chose to remain virtual and 92 in-person. There are about 200 students in the building. The students have been very compliant with the rules and regulations. The lunches are very different. The annex and the cafeteria are open with the tables and about 20 tables have been added to the hallway and the library can be used if necessary. With

warmer weather, there will be a tent outside so students can have lunch outside in the courtyard. There have not been any discipline issues. Parents are grateful that students are back.

- Mr. Vlasaty, NLHS Principal, reported that they've gotten positive feedback from the students, parents, counselors, and teachers. Lunches were thought to be the biggest challenge. There were six areas identified to use and he overplanned. Nice weather has allowed the seniors to sit outside and they're happy about that. All classrooms are three feet or more distanced, well over 50% are six feet or more. Attendance practices will remain status quo. One of the good things with being back 4-days per week is they're able to follow-up with students, to check on them, to give them extra attention to motivate them to improve their attendance as well as their academics. Average of about 10 minutes for temperature check in the morning. As far as discipline, minor issues, no major issues, still very, very low.
- Mr. Link complimented the principals, professional staff, school counselors, school nurses, and support staff. From the communication leading up to the transition to four days, the first week back for the students, really exceeded his expectations and the students themselves with maintaining all the protocols that are in place.
- Mr. Fedorcha also complimented the principals and all of the staff for a wonderful transition.
- Mrs. Martineau asked Mr. Schnyderite if the bus discipline issues were the traditional issues we see on the bus from the younger students or are they related to COVID precautions? Mr. Schnyderite responded that they are not related to COVID. Students are not being defiant and taking down masks. It's your typical six, seven, and eight year old hijinks.
- PDE 20-21 Waiver (Dr. Stoker)
 - Dr. Stoker presented the waiver from PDE.
 - There has been a lot of discussion as to whether there will be a waiver for the 20-22 school year. There was a waiver during the 19-20 school year. The Federal Government, USDE, put out that they were going to accept applications for waivers. Pennsylvania Department of Education, PDE, did apply for a waiver. This is the response to the application from PDE made to USDE. On March 23, 2021, PDE did apply to USDE to waive accountability, school identification, and related reporting requirements for this school year. It is not a testing waiver. So, this does not mean that the district gets to forgo PSSA, Keystones, PASSA, WIDA, etc. but it is for accountability. This means that when we talk about the Federal Report

Card or the Future Ready PA Index, some of those requirements are not going to be there this year. But, there is still the testing that needs to happen. There are still some requirements the USDE put out with regard to giving the waiver. They are going to still make Pennsylvania publicly make available chronic absenteeism data. They gather information with regard to teachers' access to technology and also students' access to technology. That any school that was identified for comprehensive, targeted, or additional targeted support and improvement in the 19-20 school year or that the status was continued into this school year that they will maintain that identification status in the 21-22 school year. In summary, this essentially is PDE and the schools that fall under that jurisdiction are given an accountability waiver with the state having to report out those pieces but not a testing waiver. PDE, knowing that there are still fully remote or that there are students that are participating in five-day or four-day virtual, they may not want to come in and test in these mandated assessments, they have extended the testing window through September 2021.

POLICY (Dr. Stoker)

- All three policies are related to special education. While there have been no recent changes to the federal IDEA or it's implementing regulations or corresponding state law or regulations, there have been some updates to the state cyclical compliance monitoring process that prompted minor revisions to some of the policies related to special education.

- Policy #113.1 - Discipline of Students With Disabilities
 - Dr. Stoker shared the updated draft language for the policy with one change to me made on the draft.
 - This policy is being recommended for legal liability reasons.
 - Board members on the committee approved the policy moving to first reading on 4/12/21 Board agenda.

- Policy #113.2 - Behavior Support
 - Dr. Stoker shared the updated draft language for the policy.
 - This policy is being updated because it's mandated for compliance with the State Board of Education regulations.
 - Board members on the committee approved the policy moving to first reading on 4/12/21 Board agenda.

- Policy #113.5 - Confidentiality of Special Education Student Information
 - Dr. Stoker shared the updated draft language for the policy.
 - This policy is being recommended for legal liability reasons.

- Board members on the committee approved the policy moving to first reading on 4/12/21 Board agenda.

Mrs. Martineau asked if there were any questions from the public. There were none.

Meeting closed at 6:14 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 3, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.