



Thursday, March 25, 2021

SPECIAL School Board Meeting Minutes *via Zoom*

MEETING PLACE: 321 E. Third St., Bethlehem, PA 18015 @ 6:00pm

The President called the meeting to order at 6:23pm.

I. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

II. Board Member Roll Call

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mario Acerra ✓ Paul Braden ✓ John Filipos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cheryl Mueller ✓ Rosemary Murdy-Haber Norma Nunez-Ruch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Len Perrett ✓ Frank Shipman Margaret Smith Jasmine Woodson
<p>Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Carise Comstock, Superintendent & CEO ✓ MaryJo Rosania-Harvie, Co-Principal ✓ Lauren Sheldon, Co-Principal ✓ Cheryl Schurz, Director of Finance & Board Secretary 		

III. Executive Session:

Motion: The Board of Directors moves to go into Executive Session at 6:26pm for Personnel, Property and Legal discussion. Rev. Braden arrived at 6:27pm., not present for motion.
MM: Filipos **SM:** Mueller **Motion Carried:** Yes-6, No-0, Abstentions-0

IV. Open Session:

The Board of Directors returns to Open Session at 6:36pm.

Opening Remarks:

- Mr. Acerra, Board President
 President Acerra thanked the Board for joining the meeting and stated the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Health and Safety plan, and Plan B moving to hybrid learning. The infection rate is < 10%, the bus logistics have been worked out, and teachers who have requested vaccinations have been vaccinated or will be soon.
- Dr. Carise Comstock, Superintendent & CEO
 Dr. Comstock thanked the Board for joining the meeting and stated we have a solid plan for returning and the Administration is recommending Charter Arts change to hybrid learning.

V. Public Comments: (limited to 3 minutes per individual) See attachment for comments.

Mission Statement

The Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts provides a unique environment that fosters a creative, rigorous academic approach to learning and a development of talents in the arts. Built on passion, discipline and a commitment to excellence, this integrative educational experience inspires all students to believe in who they are and in what they can accomplish.

VI. Reports

Return to School Presentation: March 2021

Board Discussion-

Mr. Shipman asked why are we waiting until May 3.

Dr. Comstock replied that the Districts need notice in order to plan their bus routes. There will be one route for the month of May and another route for Keystone Test takers in June. Families need time to plan and teachers need to coordinate their lives. Ms. Sheldon said this will allow time for teachers to attend additional trainings in April for hybrid learning.

President Acerra stated Charter Arts has particular challenges because of the arts.

Dr. Comstock replied that outside spaces will be utilized along with face shields and masks. Teachers can reduce the number of students in the building by dividing into different spaces. We are working to create barriers for wind, brass, and vocalists. Dance students and theatre students will have 10 ft square spaces. Visual Art teachers will use document cameras. See through masks will be used to see mouths.

Mr. Perrett asked Dr. Comstock is this a risk?

Dr. Comstock said we have to figure out how to live and work in this new world. We will figure out what works and what to do in the Fall. It is a work in progress.

Mr. Perrett asked Dr. Comstock, why don't the students want to come to school?

Dr. Comstock said we don't have the data to support their decision or rationale as to why they are remaining remote. We will continue to teach with the same impact as remote. We will engage all students in the arts.

Mr. Perrett asked Dr. Comstock, how many days would a student be in school with the hybrid plan, 8 days for instruction and 10 days if they are testing for keystones. Is this a risk for 10 days?

Dr. Comstock said she thinks about the whole child (social, emotional and academic effects). Dr. Comstock replied, "I think 10 days to some students will mean the world". Dr. Comstock replied "Yes, we need to make the right decision".

Motion: Based upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Co-Principals, the Board of Directors approves the change from Plan A, remote learning, to Plan B, hybrid Learning.

MM: Filipos SM: Murdy-Haber Motion Carried:Yes-7,No-0,Abstentions-0

VII. Public Comments: (limited to 3 minutes per individual) See attachment for comments.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:02pm.

MM: Filipos SM: Mueller

Motion Carried:Yes-7,No-0,Abstentions-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Cheryl Schurz
Board Secretary

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March 25, 2021

Public Comments Opening

Zach Weagly, Bethlehem Area School district, Parent of a Freshman Student

Mr. Weagly thanked the Administration for their diligent work and communication. He appreciates the efforts made to bring back students for hybrid learning.

Christine Ciccola, Nazareth School District, Parent of a Junior Student

Ms. Ciccola supports hybrid for emotional and mental well being. "It's time for us to go back".

Florrie Stoop, Charter Arts Teacher

Ms. Stoop has concerns about the hybrid plan being unfinished and not safe. According to PDE, we are still in substantial infection.

Kelly Warnke, Quakertown School District, Parent of a Junior and a Sophomore Student

Ms. Warnke favors hybrid for the mental health and education of students. She is concerned about waiting until May to return.

Rob & Tina Grose, Bethlehem Area School District, Parent of a Junior Student

Mr. & Mrs. Grose stated that it is past due to return to school. Other schools are back and going back. May 3rd is late. Students need to be in school. They understand the challenges but other schools are back 4 days a week.

Mia, Freshman Charter Arts Student

Mia said she is struggling because she doesn't know the peers in her class. She needs to have normalcy. She said the sooner we return the better.

Robin Petrie, East Penn School District, Parent of a Junior Student

Ms. Petrie said it is time to go back to school. The only high school not back is Allentown. Her daughter is ready to return. Her daughter's only in person experience is the musical rehearsal. Ms. Petrie asked the Board why are we not going back after Easter.

Holly Stanley, Freshman Student, Music Major

Holly stated she values the safety of students and teachers. She appreciates in person experiences and thanks the Administration for working to bring students back to school.

Sherilyn Scheetz, Visual Arts Sophomore Student

Sherilyn is a new student and has not been in the building. Sherilyn said she needs to go to school.

Michael and Cindy Danko, Parent of a Freshman Student.

They appreciated the work done to bring students back. Is it possible to bring students back before May 3? Mrs. Danko is an educator and she has been back to school.

Mari Weagly, Bethlehem Area School District, Parent of a Freshman Student

Ms. Weagly believes vaccinations are needed for all students if returning more than 2 days per week.

Jodi Fowler, Charter Arts Teacher

Mrs. Fowler has concerns about equity with reopening in hybrid. She has analyzed her student rosters and believes many students of color and minorities have chosen to remain remote. She is concerned that they will not receive the same education as those in hybrid learning. She has serious concerns about their education suffering. Mrs. Fowler is concerned for the health and safety of families who are not fully vaccinated. She is fearful of open campus and guidelines not being followed while in the community. She believes we need to analyze the data for all students, not just the white majority.

Kristin Bruck, Charter Arts Teacher

Mrs. Bruck agreed with Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Bruck is concerned the students continuing remote learning will be left behind. We need to make the best educational experience for all students. She urged the Board to make a decision that will not hurt students.

Sarah Moreno, East Penn School District, Parent

Ms. Moreno stated we don't have a risk free choice. Transmission is not a significant source of infections in school. Take appropriate precautions. We need to be inclusive and access for all students is important. We can be safe as long as we take appropriate precautions.

Florrie Stoop, Charter Arts Teacher

Other schools are re-closing. Our current Plan does not solve the problem. Ms. Stoop has concerns for the health and safety of non vaccinated students and families.

Debbie Nibbie, Northwestern School District, Parent of a Senior Student

Emotionally, artistically and academically her student is not doing well. Her student wants to be back to school. Ms. Nibbie believes creative measures could be done and 1 month is better than no time at all.

March 25, 2021

Public Comments Closing

Sherilyn Scheetz, Visual Arts Sophomore Student

Sherilyn believes in person experiences are a good thing and wished there would have been more so that she could have been in the building learning.

Florrie Stoop, Charter Arts Teacher

Ms. Stoop thanked Mr. Perrett for his questions. Is there an educational benefit to 8 hybrid days? Ms. Stoop is not confident that migration to hybrid will be followed safely, and she is concerned for the safety of students and families.

Kristen Bruck, Charter Arts Teacher

Most teachers will see their students for only 4 days. Many remote students are watching siblings and cousins. We need to make sure that students who are staying home are not left behind.

Jodi Fowler, Charter Arts Teacher

Equity is first and foremost for our students. Mrs. Fowler wants to see all students succeed. Mrs. Fowler is very concerned about minority students.

Holly Stanley, Freshman Student, Music Major

Charter Arts students are from many different areas. Inclusion and equity are a huge priority. We must consider the risk and educational benefits. Holly stated that students are worried about the size of classrooms, especially the music classrooms.