

Regular Meeting
Steel Valley School District Board of Directors
Steel Valley High School Auditorium
January 28, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Bulger, President, at 7:08 PM

Roll call as follows:

In attendance: Mr. Bulger, Mr. Blick, Ms. Adams, Mrs. Fitzgerald and Mr. Colasante

Zoom Teleconference: Mrs. Ligeros, Mr. Rojtas, Ms. Youngblood and Mrs. Yuhas

Also attending: Mr. Wehrer, Mr. Fetzko, Mr. Colebank, Mr. Keesecker (teleconference),
Mrs. Borges and Mr. Zenone

Flag Salute

Acknowledgements

Moment of Silence

The School Board acknowledged the passing of Patricia Hilla, retired food service staff member and aunt of Mike Coyne, groundskeeper; Dawn M. Elledge, 1988 Steel Valley graduate and cousin of Terri Vargo, middle school paraprofessional, Traci Riley, Park cafeteria staff, and Kerry Riley, substitute custodian; James Matthew Varner, cousin of Diana Borges, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services; Helen M. Hess, mother-in-law of Dennis Keesecker, Director of Facilities; Elizabeth “Betsy” Busche, daughter of Eleanor Buran, retired Barrett teacher and mother of Ariel Busche, 2013 Steel Valley graduate; Mary Takos, mother of Mike Takos, Barrett paraprofessional and mother-in-law of Regina Takos, Park School librarian and middle school instructional resource; Melvin Hathaway, father-in-law of Dr. Aaron Johnson, Secondary Associate Principal; Mark R. O’Toole, son of Eileen O’Toole, retired kindergarten teacher and brother of Keith O’Toole, former school board member 1993-2006; and Dr. Richard Constantine, brother-in-law of Donald Fetzko, Esq., school district solicitor.

Mr. Colasante moved and Mrs. Fitzgerald seconded to place appropriate books into the district school libraries in memory of the above departed.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas, and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

President's Report

Mr. Bulger stated this is the first in-person School Board meeting since October, and he hopes to keep this format as long as possible. He noted that it is the School Board's job to advocate for the District, and he has a good relationship with State Representative Austin Davis. The District will receive funds from a \$2.4 million grant to buy air purifiers for Park Elementary School.

The Middle School Student Government will be recognized tonight for its outstanding efforts collecting over 2,800 pairs of socks for the homeless and other service projects.

He discussed the equity issue between public schools and charter schools. The state gave \$13 million to Commonwealth Cyber Academy and \$9 million to Agora Cyber School. Mr. Bulger asked the citizens to communicate with their legislators about this inequity.

Student Representatives to the School Board Reports

Ben Novotny, Junior Student Representative to the School Board reported that Park School is off to a great start in 2021. The kids have been working hard in their classes and learning a lot!

At Barrett Elementary School, the PTO met virtually and discussed the hoagie sale and yearbooks along with how to provide community involvement with Valentine's Day. The Power Up Program is beginning and the students will be learning various aspects of nutrition and physical education throughout the second semester. This program is sponsored by the AIU.

The Pittsburgh Ballet has begun the Creative Movement Program with the K-2 students and the students are learning through the use of movement education and dance. Over 20 families had the opportunity to participate in a painting activity on January 13. This activity was conducted by Mrs. Fisher and Mrs. Barron.

The staff members continued their professional development with the University of Pittsburgh in the 3R's program, which addresses Reading, Relationships and Racial Equity. Throughout the month, the staff worked closely with students on using proper manners. Over the next few weeks, Ms. Harper, school nurse, and Mrs. Fisher, school counselor, will be reviewing Healthy Habits with the students so they are returning to school safely.

Barrett will be rewarding students who have had perfect attendance for the month, and they will receive a large pizza with a drink or a smoothie from Live Fresh, a local business in Homestead. On January 19, Mrs. Fisher shared stories about popcorn during National Popcorn Day, and she made popcorn for everyone in the office.

Ms. Kristen Craycraft, Senior Student Representative to the School Board, reported that the middle

school is preparing to conduct a special showcase for students on January 22. Ms. Noblet's Life Skills students have been studying world biomes, and they will be taking an imaginary survival trip. Students worked with partners to plan their trip including packing, budgeting, and working together across math, science, and art to build an effective shelter, water filtration system, and compass with natural resources. Students learned about rainforest animals and insects. Ms. Noblet, Mrs. Furrick and the students had a great time learning about the rainforest biome.

Student Government ended the fall semester with two service projects. The students designed and decorated Thanksgiving cards for Parkview residents in Moore Hall. The students realized many of the residents may not have visited with their family over the holidays due to COVID-19 restrictions, and they wanted to raise the spirits of the senior citizens.

Before the winter holiday break, 30 student government members planned a virtual game night for middle school families. Students planned games including "Would You Rather," "Ironman Bingo," "Ironman Jeopardy," and "Among Us." Ninety-five students, staff, and families enjoyed this virtual game night.

Student Government members filmed short videos for our kindergarten and first grade students showing them either reading a story, making a craft, showing off one of their talents, or playing a game. By the end of January, 40 videos were presented to the elementary students and their families.

The Middle School Student Government collaborated with the Student Council at Gateway Middle School for a special appreciation project for local first responders and medical staff. They were excited to meet and plan the event with the seventh and eighth grade students from Gateway. Stay tuned for information about how you can help support these amazing people who have sacrificed so much in the last year.

Mock job interviews will be conducted in Ms. Luvara's exploratory research classes.

Ms. Dunmire-Kuftic's eighth grade math classes participated in "Trending Tuesdays" including a Ted talk at the beginning of the school year as an extension to their every day math curriculum. She believes that the students can benefit greatly from hearing these speeches.

Kristen Craycraft reported that in the High School, a partner program was introduced this week to seniors. Two students have volunteered to participate in a virtual student forum with Senator Jay Costa on December 17.

Senior Isabella Sabo was accepted into the 2021 "I Look Like a Cardiologist" Program run by the UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute.

Graduation preparation began with ordering diplomas, caps and gowns. December 22 was a virtual ugly sweater day.

Success coaches have contacted the families of students who are not consistently attending Zoom sessions, and the administration visited the homes of students who have been struggling academically.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Wehrer noted that it was great to have our students participating in fall sports. He recognized our student athletes:

Football	Nijhay Burt	All-Conference 1 st Team Running Back Defensive Back and Kick Returner All-Conference 1 st Team Wide Receiver
	Inenella Leonard	All-Conference 2 nd Team Tight End
Boys Soccer	Carson Perhacs	All-WPIAL, All Section and Team MVP
	Tyler Wellman	All-Section
	Tony Salopek	Honorable Mention All-Section
Girls Volleyball	Abigail Tester	All-Section 2 nd Team
	Emily Polefko	All-Section 3 rd Team
Girls Soccer	Kelsey Salopek	All-State, All-WPIAL, All-Section and All-Area Team Led the WPIAL in Goal Scoring Leading Vote Getter for All-Section
	Soraya Gibbs	All-WPIAL and All-Section
	Lydia Alexandroff	All-WPIAL and All-Section
	Chelsea Bulger	All-Section

Mr. Wehrer also recognized the Cross Country and Golf Teams. Coach Boehme noted that the cross country athletes ran well this season and knocked minutes off their times. Coach Simpson added that the golf team were a dedicated and hard working group with a 7-5 record, and they dropped an average of five strokes per round this season.

Varsity Girls Soccer Coach Abraham introduced the girls soccer team members. He knew they had a great opportunity this year, and they have been working hard since July.

All students and teams were presented with Certificates of Recognition.

Mr. Wehrer applauded the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) for their outstanding efforts to influence their peers to make good decisions. The SADD group was named Chapter of the Year, Activity of the Year and Sponsor of the Year for 2020. As officers of SADD, Soraya Gibbs and Isabella Sabo were instrumental in organizing these activities. Mrs. Beth McCallister is the sponsor of SADD.

The SADD students who completed the PA SADD Certificate of Leadership Program:

Kristen Craycraft, Gabrielle Matusky, Benjamin Novotny, Sophia Thompson

In addition to these accomplishments, Sophia Thompson, President of the Steel Valley SADD Group, received the Gold Presidential Volunteer Service Award.

The Middle School Student Government was recognized for its collection of socks for homeless men and women. They called it Socktober, and they collected 2,830 pairs of socks. The top three students who went above and beyond:

Hannah Lesser	6 th Grader	Collected 409 pairs of socks
Abbie Fitzgerald	8 th Grader	Collected 486 pairs of socks
Mason Rager	6 th Grader	Collected 620 pairs of socks

January is School Board Recognition Month, and Mr. Wehrer thanked the members of the School Board for their service and their dedication of time during these challenges times.

The Middle School Student Government and its sponsor Ms. Erin Noblet created a YouTube message for the School Board. Each student held up one word from the message, which read:

“Happy School Board Appreciation Month. Thank you for your time and hard work over this last year! We know you don’t have easy jobs and have to make difficult decisions. Thank you for putting students first and caring about our success, health and safety.”

The High School Student Council provided Nancy B’s cookies to each Board Member to thank them for making their experience good at Steel Valley High School.

Mr. Wehrer announced that we are eager and anxious to receive COVID-19 vaccines, and he feels that educators should have been put in the first phase to receive vaccines. He announced that we have a

provider, Cornerstone Care, which would vaccinate our employees. The vaccine is not mandatory, but he does encourage folks to get the vaccine.

He discussed the return to school plan in which our students will have more time with our quality teachers.

Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services' Report

Mrs. Borges is looking forward to students coming back into the buildings next week. She announced that the District is in need of paraprofessionals to work with our students.

Director of Academics, Information & Technology's Report

Mr. Colebank stated that he is anticipating a new shipment of Epi pens for each school building.

The secondary course selections will be completed online for the 2021-2022 school year. The kindergarten registration forms can be found on the Steel Valley website and completed electronically.

Apple released information that there is glitch in its 14.2 operating system, and employees and students should update their software. The Steel Valley Tech Support will assist people with this software update.

Solicitor's Report

Mr. Fetzko recommended the Board waive the current accrued interest of \$515.00 on Block & Lot 131-G-333.

Mrs. Fitzgerald moved and Ms. Adams seconded the motion to approve the following:

The Board waived the current accrued interest of \$515.00 on Block & Lot 131-G-333.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

Citizen Comments on Agenda Items

Donna Dreshman inquired about the following motions:

- (1.5) Asking with the subdivisions is the district looking to sell some of he parcels, if so which ones?
Mr. Fetzko fielded the question.
- (1.0) Asking has anything been done with the pool?

- (7.0) How many Act 93 employees are eligible and going to take the retirement incentive? She added a follow up question regarding the retirement incentive asking if it will be offered again in the near future incase someone changes their mind if they did not take it now?
Mr. Bulger responded to the above inquires.

Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Rojtas moved and Mrs. Ligeros seconded the motion to approve the following meeting minutes:

December 7, 2020 Re-Organization and Worksession Meeting

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger. Abstain: Bick

Negative: None. Motion carried.

December 10, 2020 Regular Meeting

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

1.0 Financial Management

Mr. Blick moved and Mrs. Fitzgerald seconded the motion to approve the following:

1.1 Motion to approve the list of bills:

1.1.01 General Fund invoices for January 2021 in the amount of \$522,055.10

1.1.02 General Fund hand checks for December 2020 in the amount of \$1,751,774.51

1.1.03 General Fund Revenue Reports for November and December 2020

1.1.04 General Fund Expenditure Reports for November and December 2020

1.1.05 General Fund Balance Sheets for November and December 2020

1.1.06 Food Service invoices for December 2020 in the amount of \$39,793.73

1.1.07 Food Service Revenue Reports for November and December 2020

1.1.08 Food Service Expenditure Reports for November and December 2020

1.1.09 Food Service Balance Sheets for November and December 2020

1.1.10 Payroll Funding Transfers for November and December 2020

1.1.11 Athletics Fund Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for October 2020

1.1.12 High School Student Activities Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for October 2020

1.1.13 Middle School Activities Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for October 2020

1.1.14 External Groups Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for October 2020

1.1.15 Athletics Fund Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for November 2020

- 1.1.16 High School Student Activities Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for November 2020
- 1.1.17 Middle School Activities Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for November 2020
- 1.1.18 External Groups Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for November 2020
- 1.1.19 Athletics Fund Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for December 2020
- 1.1.20 High School Student Activities Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for December 2020
- 1.1.21 Middle School Activities Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for December 2020
- 1.1.22 External Groups Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for December

1.2 Motion to approve a Special Sick Leave for PSERS credit purposes for the employees presented for emergency sick leave taken for the employee’s own illness or quarantine under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act

1.3 Motion to approve payments to:

BDA Engineering	Invoice #191101-8	\$4,340.00
BDA Engineering	Invoice #191101-11	\$742.50
Kudravy Architects, LLC	Invoice #20046	\$1,776.00

The funds will be paid out of the 2019 Capital Project Fund for the HS/MS HVAC Project:

1.4 Motion to approve real estate tax refunds due as a result of change in assessments to:

Clark Memorial Baptist Church	Lot & Block 131-C-38-01	\$174.71 for year 2018 \$180.13 for year 2019 \$186.55 for year 2020
UCG Three LLC	Lot & Block 131-B-366	\$265.44 for year 2020
Pine Tree Investments Inc.	Lot & Block 131-G-54	\$277.73 for year 2020
RTO SA Holdings 181 LP	Lot & Block 131-E-290	\$329.35 for year 2020
Triple Investments LLC	Lot & Block 131-B-360	\$130.26 for year 2020

1.5 Motion to approve and accept the bid proposal presented by Gales Consulting Engineers & Land Surveyors to do all work required for the Subdivision of Blocks and Lots 181-N-200, 181-E-190, 181-E-275 and 181-K-25, and contingently to do other individual subdivision for the District, if approved and directed by the Administration after consultation with the Board Committee on Subdivision to subdivide a portion of land which would include the hockey deck and a triangle portion of Campbell Field parallel to Sullivan Drive, West Homestead, for the same bid amounts as set forth in its bid proposal.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

1.6 Motion to approve a \$5.75 per line collection rate for current real estate tax collectors for the 2022 through the 2025 real estate tax years. In addition, installment collection will also be compensated at \$5.75 per transaction.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:
Adams, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.
Negative: Blick. Motion carried.

2.0 Operations

Ms. Youngblood moved and Mrs. Fitzgerald seconded the motion to approve the following:

- 2.1 Motion to affirm the Administration's decision to purchase emergency ventilation equipment from Filtech Filtration Specialist in the amount of \$60,232. The Federal School and Safety Grant may underwrite this cost.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:
Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.
Negative: None. Motion carried.

3.0 Co-Curricular Leadership

Mr. Colasante moved and Mrs. Ligeros seconded the motion to approve the following:

- 3.1 Motion to approve fundraising requests as presented.
3.2 Motion to authorize payment of \$2,500 to the Senior Breakfast/Reception account to defray the costs of the Senior Breakfast for the Class of 2021.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively to table:
Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.
Negative: None. Motion carried.

4.0 Co-Curricular Leadership

Mrs. Ligeros moved and Mrs. Yuhas seconded the motion to approve the following:

- 4.1 Motion to appoint Daniel Rojtas as the Steel Valley Board of School Directors' representative for a two-year term to the Steel Valley Enterprise Zone Corporation Board of Directors through December 31, 2022.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively to table:
Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.
Negative: None. Motion carried.

5.0 Educational Leadership

Ms. Adams moved and Mrs. Youngblood seconded the motion to approve the following:

- 5.1 Motion to accept a donation from Donors Choose in the amount of \$582.65 to create a

Virtual Classroom Posters project in the Middle School to show live webcams of nature.

5.2 Motion to approve the 2021-2022 Senior High School Academic Handbook.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

6.0 Communication & Technology

Mrs. Fitzgerald moved and Ms. Adams seconded the motion to approve the following:

6.1 Motion to approve the Amendment to the Communication/Recruitment Management

Agreement between the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and the District from October 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 to provide communication services.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

7.0 Personnel Management

Mr. Rojtas moved and Mrs. Fitzgerald seconded the motion to approve the following:

- 7.1 Motion to approve a Memorandum of Understanding between the Steel Valley School District and the Steel Valley Act 93 Group for a retirement incentive dated January 28, 2021
- 7.2 Motion to accept, with regret, the retirement of Dennis Keesecker from the position of Director of Facilities effective at the close of business on June 30, 2021, under the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Steel Valley School District and the Steel Valley Act 93 Group dated December 10, 2020
- 7.3 Motion to accept, with regret, the retirement of John Zenone from the position of Director of Operational Services/Board Secretary effective at the close of business on June 30, 2021, under the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Steel Valley School District and the Steel Valley Act 93 Group dated December 10, 2020
- 7.4 Motion to accept, with regret, the retirement of Diana Borges from the position of Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services effective at the close of business on June 30, 2021, under the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Steel Valley School District and the Steel Valley Act 93 Group dated December 10, 2020
- 7.5 Motion to accept, with regret, the retirement of Dr. Aaron Johnson from the position of Secondary Associate Principal effective at the close of business on June 30, 2021, under the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Steel Valley School District and the Steel Valley Act 93 Group dated January 28, 2021.
- 7.6 Motion to accept, with regret, the retirement of Bradley Thompson from the position of

elementary music teacher under the terms and conditions of Article XXVIII Retirement Incentive Program in the current SVEA collective bargaining agreement effective August 15, 2021.

- 7.7 Motion to approve the revised job description of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator as presented
- 7.8 Motion to approve an intermittent Family Medical Leave of Absence for Employee No. 137 effective February 1, 2021, not to exceed 60 days in duration
- 7.9 Motion to approve the hiring of Kady Paczkoskie and Edward Walker as day-to-day substitute teachers for the 2020-2021 school year at the approved daily rate, contingent upon receipt of current clearances, compliance with Act 168 and passing the District's pre-employment screenings, which must be completed within 30 days.
- 7.10 Motion to approve the hiring of Ellen Baker and Jacob Tichon as substitute custodians for the 2020-2021 school year at the approved daily rate, contingent upon receipt of current clearances, compliance with Act 168 and passing the District's pre-employment screenings, which must be completed within 30 days

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Rojtas, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

Mr. Bulger wanted to take a moment to say something about the retirees. He thanked everyone and wished everyone the very best.

Mr. Wehrer also took a moment to say something personal about all the retirees. He expressed his thanks and said they will all be missed, professionally and personally.

Citizen Comments

Mr. Bulger read emailed comments from the citizens on agenda items.

The first comment he read aloud was from Mr. Deutsch. The comment reiterated a question that was asked at the October in person meeting regarding financial stability of the district. Mr. Deutsch explained that the Superintendent could be referred to answer financial questions of the district.

Next comment was from Barb Pielin, mother of an 8th grade student. She states, "The kids need to be back full time; Steel Valley is a small school district compared to surrounding areas. We should be able to this safely."

Another comment from Jamie Blick, mother of Park Elementary and Middle School students, says that synchronous learning is the only way we can move forward. She explained that almost every neighboring district has been doing this since September. She states we have to try it or the district will face harsh reality next year when families take their kids elsewhere for education

Another statement was received from Rebecca Feehan, teacher, Long Island, NY. She states, “My district does half in class and half remote everyday. We live stream every period through Google Classroom. It’s pretty easy.”

Amber Wedig, mother of two Middle School students. She said, “I don’t understand why synchronous remote learning is not an option. It is my understanding that other districts have been able to do this thing for their remote students.”

Tara Perhaps added her comment by asking, “I’d personally like to know the exact reasons why the in-person AND Zoom classrooms can’t be done simultaneously. They seem to be done in other districts! There are not a lot of happy people in our district right now. So many of them are thinking of leaving. There has to be a better solution.”

Jodi Strom stated that synchronous learning is needed for in-school students and for remote. She says that so many kids are disengaged at home and not showing up for classes. She asks what the dropout/failure rate will be for our already small district if we continue on the path of least resistance because something is hard to do?

Marie Diulus, mother of Park student, states she would like to see synchronous learning at least 4 days a week with live streaming in the classrooms. An appropriate remote option will need to be provided. If not, families are forced to send their children into a situation they do not feel comfortable. Synchronous learning leaves an option for students that may have to quarantine.

Don Dudas states that there really is not much difference in streaming from a teacher’s home than streaming from a classroom. He feels that parts of the problems that the district faces are that most actions have been reactionary rather than proactive.

Melissa Cherevka states that the model that would benefit most family situations would be a synchronous model for both remote and classroom learning simultaneously. She asks why she has heard that it is not feasible.

Tabith Schempp started her comment by fully supporting the district with all of their plans to protect our students and staff that were put in place until November. She wanted to move her concerns to the plan that was set in place effective February 1st and February 15th. She feels like there are so many things in this new plan that could be done better or are not being fully relayed to the parents. She does want to see the students return full-time but have a lot of concerns with the way things are being handled in all buildings. She would like to confirm how the district is following the Health and Safety Plan that they have established when on page 29 is states, “Classroom/learning space occupancy that allows for 6 feet of separation among students and staff throughout the day, to the maximum extent feasible.” That statement concerned her that the school cannot promise a minimum 6 feet separation between students and staff. She also wanted to know why the district was no longer given an option to keep students at home to learn via zoom live sessions with one of our teachers as our remote instruction model.

Comments and concerns from Jill Conroy, states that her 7th grader is only learning end of sentence punctuation, she feels this is a major issue. She feels that some teachers do not know how to work on Zoom and that the students are left out of school too early. She questions why school taxes continue to go up while these students are not returning to school. She is considering St. Therese school if the students do not return to school.

Christine Beatty is concerned about the students not going back to school. She has a kindergarten student and expresses concerns for the Elementary students going back only 2 days a week. She explained her husband and her have full-time jobs and it is difficult. They may be looking into private schooling.

Melinda Fedoris, mother of a 1st, 4th and 5th grader. She believes that the option being provided by the district for those choosing to stay remote is unacceptable and lacks educational equality. She is hoping that a remote option similar to what was offered last time around will be available. She also asked when vaccines would be available to our teachers and staff.

Mindy Toboz questioned why it seems that that our district seems to be one of the few districts that cannot go back in-person teaching. She also inquired about the uniform policy, Mr. Bulger answered her question by stating the uniform policy will not be enforced, the district will be going with the standard dress code that they had before. She is appreciative of the work the district has already done, but is hopeful for better communication from the district to the public in the future.

Stephanie Hughes started of her comments and concerns with thanking the district in their efforts in coming up with a plan for returning to school safely. She had to questions. First question, “Why is Friday only a 3 hour day and not a full day on Zoom with the teachers?” Mr. Bulger answered that the afternoon on Fridays is for teachers to have additional planning for their asynchronous lesson plans. Second question, “Is this the plan for the remaining of the school year or will you re-evaluate for full time in person or full time remote learning (pending on the choice of the family)?” Mr. Bulger answered that we are going to re-evaluate this plan in 2 weeks.

Rachelle Anstiss stated that she feels that cameras should most definitely be in the classrooms for the remote kids. She explains that she is not asking that the teachers have to interact with the remote students but she feels at a minimum the students should be able to see the teacher’s instruction. She noted that other schools are live streaming teachers when they are doing instruction and does not understand why our district cannot do the same.

Deborah Gallagher, a paraprofessional at Barrett Elementary, expresses her concerns with social distancing, especially in the cafeteria.

Cara Karstetter expressed her views on the different plans that were voted on and approved previously. She stated that she feels that asynchronous model is a waste. She presented information on what our neighboring school districts are doing for their teaching models. She did her own research pulling data from the website, www.niche.com as well as calling each district directly and speaking to parents who children attend those districts. The majority of schools she referenced have a hybrid model with synchronous / live teaching with the students in the classroom and the students that are remote. She questioned why FERPA was being used, as one of the reasons SVSD cannot live stream from the classrooms to the homes, while all of these other schools are exactly doing that. She concluded that returning to school full time could be done because it has been proven other districts are doing it. She wants to feel that the students and their education come first.

Mr. Bulger concluded that those were all the comments and concerns that were emailed to him.

Mr. Blick referred a question to Mr. Wehrer to elaborate on the dress code but with no uniforms. Mr. Wehrer said that it is decent attire and just common sense on what is appropriate. He said the expectations of what is considered to be worn for the dress code is on our website.

Erin Noblet stood in front of the board and explained the different “hats” she wears as she attends the school board meetings. She was there earlier in the evening wearing her “teacher hat” expressing how

proud she is of her students and how hard they work and she is thankful for all the assistance she has from her awesome co-teacher and support staff that assist her throughout the day. She then turned to what she called her “parent hat” and she expressed how she feels sick to her stomach and how her heart hurts from how this return to back-to-school plan has turned our community into such a mess. She expressed how she has read all the negative online comments, refraining from commenting herself. She has listened to friends and colleagues opinions and she feels that she is over it; she is searching for the Ironmen Pride that we all claim to possess. She expresses how we are at a critical point in our district. She is scared that close friends are looking to send their children elsewhere for schooling. She is looking for strong educational leadership who is constantly looking outside the box to deliver the highest quality education to her son and his peers. Prior to developing a plan, we need to have confidence that it was driven by data and that multiple plans were actively being considered. She asks information be conveyed earlier. She turned to Mr. Wehrer and asks him for strong leadership during this time and to direct his administration team to lead us effectively and to hear out the public and our concerns. She concluded with she is ready to come back to work in the buildings on Monday and do what is expected of her and she expects that from her son’s teachers and her colleagues.

Mr. Colasante responded that he is appreciative of her comments and he confirmed that there is no one up here that is quitting and he wants to see our district survive. He expressed the blame is going to go everywhere.

Jim Deutsch comments on the questions that were asked at tonight’s meeting were not answered. He brought up the 6-foot distancing that was referenced in Mr. Wehrer’s letter that was sent out to the community.

Mr. Wehrer explained that 6 feet referenced in our Health & Safety plan states that 6-feet will be maintained when feasible. Mr. Wehrer states that he wants to make clear to people that the 6-feet is a goal and not a promise. He wanted to make that transparent in his letter because some people may be uncomfortable at times when there is not a 6-feet separation.

Jim Deutsch, asked for synchronous teaching to be explained and then asked why our district is not doing synchronous.

Mr. Wehrer explained that synchronous is the teaching and the instruction is going on at the same time.

Jim Deutsch asked why we haven’t tried synchronous.

Mr. Wehrer explained that he agrees that synchronous is attainable, and the reason why it is not currently being used is because the plans that were put together did not include it. Mr. Wehrer concluded that he has advocated for it previously.

Jim Deutsch asked about communication and why it seems poor within the district.

Mr. Wehrer expressed he has noticed communication in the district as needing to be better, but he feels there has been some improvement.

Mr. Colasante added that other districts have had meetings about back to school plans recently and that this whole situation is a moving target. He agrees that the students need to be back in school.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 9:40 PM