

SPRING LAKE BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING DECEMBER 2, 2020

The Spring Lake Board of Education held a Special Meeting on Monday, December 2, 2020 via electronic video conferencing using Zoom Webinar, Webinar ID 897 7897 6901, as permitted by the Open Meeting Act amendments and due to the COVID-19 emergency. Jennifer Nicles called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Board members present: Jennifer Nicles, Curt Theune, Bruce Callen, Kathy Breen, Katie Pigott, Dennis Devlin and Jeff Lauinger.

Superintendent Furton provided the remote meeting protocol.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eric Kipling, 15246 South Scenic, SL – SL teacher and parent, provided support for remaining in remote learning as he feels teaching in person is not safe and continuing in remote is not a burden on the students. He commented that only 22% of teachers feels safe going back to in-person and urged the Board to consider the teachers emotional and physical health and continue remote learning.

Sarah Adams, 13400 Red Leaf Ct, Nunica – agreed with the comments of Eric Kipling and provided that the majority of the teachers don't feel safe going back. She feels that teachers are meeting the needs of students, doesn't feel going back is worth the risk and would be safer to stay in remote.

Becky Gray, 19025 N. Fruitport Rd, SL – SL teacher and long-time resident, commented remote attendance by students has been great in her classes and that she feels much safer in remote teaching. She noted the absentee rate prior to the move to remote learning was anywhere from 24% - 36%. Considering going back to in-person learning causes her more stress and anxiety, and she asked the Board to continue remote learning through December.

Susan Dalman, 15235 138th Ave, SL – SL parapro and parent, indicated that 70% of teachers do not feel comfortable returning but support staff were not asked how they felt. She stated remote learning was going well for her students and feels it is too risky to return for a mere 2 weeks.

ACTION ITEM

CONSIDER RETURN TO IN-PERSON LEARNING ON DECEMBER 7, 2020 FOR GRADES PK-8

Curt Theune moved, supported by Kathy Breen, to suspend the rules for discussion.

Dennis Furton provided a recap of factors that lead to the district moving to remote learning on November 16. He noted this was not intended to be a long-term situation but changes in the number of positive cases in the region prolonged the need and students have been out of the classrooms for 21 days as of this meeting date.

Mr. Furton noted that there is no question teachers/staff are doing a great job with remote learning; however, he has heard widely from parents about the struggles of students with remote learning and believes students need to be back in-person. He indicated he understands that there may be surges in numbers and disruptions, but based on facts as of today, not predictions, he feels it is in the best interests of the student to return December 7.

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Mr. Furton shared the following information:

- CDC updates regarding quarantine timeframes
- Local data from the Ottawa County Department of Public Health
- Dashboard information for the district from November 6 through December 2
- MI Safe Start Map positivity rates for this region
- Parent survey results from December 2 with 62% of surveys returned indicating a desire to return to in-person learning on December 7 with 38% indicating a return on or after January 4

Advocating for the students, Mr. Furton recommended to the Board that students in grades PK-8 return to in-person learning on December 7, and students in grades 9-12 on December 9 if allowed by the state.

Questions, concerns and support for both sides were heard from Board members.

Curt Theune moved, supported by Jeff Lauinger, to approve Superintendent Furton's recommendation to resume in person learning for grades PK-8th beginning December 7, and for grades 9-12 on December 9 if allowed by the state.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes – Dennis Devlin, Jennifer Nicles, Jeff Lauinger, Curt Theune

No – Kathy Breen, Bruce Callen, Katie Piggott

ADJOURNMENT

Curt Theune moved, supported by Jeff Lauinger, to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: Yes – Unanimous

Jennifer Nicles adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Date

Board Secretary