

River Valley School District
Thursday, February 10, 2022
Regular Meeting
Middle School Library
7:00 p.m.

Present: Nelson, Jennings, Iausly, Bettinger, Maier, Young, Carstensen, Cates, Minich

Absent: N/A

Admin: Glasbrenner, Krey, Peterson

Others: Stephanie Osborn, Michelle Orcutt, Dan Machovec, Kasey Maxwell, Kevin Thier, Michelle Thier, Jackson Thier, Dr. Furukawa, Shawn Duren, Paula Wedige (Administrative Assistant)

President Jennings opened the meeting. She noted that the meeting had been properly posted and notice had been provided to the appropriate media and each School Board Member. Young moved to proceed with the legal meeting. Maier seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Approval of Agenda

Maier moved to approve the agenda. Cates seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Stephanie Osborn spoke in favor of the district being mask optional and to provide better masks for those who want them. She supports the recommendations from the Policy Committee that will be discussed later in this meeting. Current COVID protocols have affected her family since one child tested positive. She has seen disruptive behavior for the first time due to her child having to be out of school for 10 days. Her other child who was a close contact struggled to get materials for homework. Her children missed 17 unnecessary days of school and learning. She is not in favor of quarantine for close contacts.

Student Council Report

Kasey Maxwell presented the student council report. At the high school, Caleb Alt won first place in welding at the SkillsUSA regional competition. Mock trial will compete this weekend in an attempt to win River Valley's 10th regional championship. AP Biology participated in two virtual field trips through the BTC Institute in Fitchburg to learn about the biotechnology used with genetic engineering and immunology. Upcoming events are the POPS Concert on March 7, Solo and Ensemble on March 12, and Jazz Band and Chamber Ensemble on March 22. The middle school enjoyed a sledding field trip at the golf course with an Olympics theme.

Update from WASB Convention

Jennings attended the WASB Convention as the Board's delegate. Glasbrenner attended several sessions pertaining to education topics. Krey attended sessions on referendum planning, teaching licensing programs, and cyber security.

End of Semester Review of Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Program

Peterson presented two reports tied to funding that helps pay for positions to keep K-3 class sizes smaller. We are on target for our goals and will assess again at the end of the year. There is a lot of social emotional issues in these grades right now.

Update on School District Operations from Administration

It was noted that we have been able to keep students in school by addressing staffing shortages with help from staff, administration and substitutes. Board members were invited to be a guest reader in elementary classrooms during Read Across America Week. Elementary students enjoyed a sledding field trip a few weeks ago at the golf course.

Board Reminders, Announcements, and Training Opportunities

None.

Legislative Update

It was noted that ESSER funds to address the impact of COVID-19 should be released soon.

Consent Agenda: - Checks, Invoices, Receipts – January 2022; Open Session Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2022, Regular Meeting

Cates moved to approve the consent agenda items as submitted. Iausly seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Request for Sabbatical Leave

Erik Johnson, High School Science Teacher, submitted a request for a sabbatical leave for the 2022-23 school year in order to improve science teaching by taking additional courses as well as to have more time available to focus on family. This is his eighth year of teaching in the district.

It was noted that when we had a full time science teacher vacancy last year, it was difficult to find candidates and we only had two people apply. In this same department, we had difficulty filling a long term sub position last year due to another vacancy. This would be a one-year position and posting the vacancy in February doesn't coincide with new graduates who likely enter the job market at the end of April or early May. In addition, the pool of applicants in the field of education is becoming more shallow.

Young voiced concern about losing a good teacher if the request is denied. Nelson asked if we could look for candidates prior to making a decision about the request. It was noted that while the district deadline for an employee to request a sabbatical is in January, there is no timeline on when the Board must take action.

Jennings would like more information on the additional courses that would be taken and how it might help the district. If we move ahead, this could put the district in a bind and we have no guarantee that the teacher will return after the sabbatical. Iausly is concerned about the educational impact on students during this one-year leave.

No action was taken. The Board will discuss again at the March Board meeting. Administration will post a one-year science teacher position to see if we get any interested applicants.

Consideration & Action on Rural Virtual Academy Charter School Contract with Medford School District for 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25

The current school year was a pilot year for offering virtual schooling to River Valley students through a partnership with Medford School District. This is financially beneficial to our district compared to losing these same students to open enrollment to other districts since we get to count these students in our pupil count. Administration is recommending a renewal of this contract for the next three years at a further cost savings.

We currently have 14 students that attend virtual schooling at Medford under this agreement. It is offered to students from grades Kindergarten to 12th grade. Different from open enrollment, these students are still allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities at River Valley. Of the eight survey responses we received from these families, all but one rated the program 5 out of 5, with one giving a rating of 4. They want to continue the relationship and there were many positive comments on the survey.

Iausly moved to approve the Rural Virtual Academy Charter School Contract for 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25. Bettinger seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Sports Co-ops

Bettinger moved to approve the sports co-op with Barneveld for gymnastics. Iausly seconded. Motion carried.

Iausly moved to approve the sports co-op with Sauk Prairie for hockey. Carstensen seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Resolutions Accepting Resignations, if any

None.

Consideration & Action on Hirings, if any

None.

Consideration & Action on Policy Committee Recommendations

Discussion regarding Modifying Instructional Model for the 2021-22 School Year will occur later during this meeting.

There were no recommended changes to Policy 728 Wearing Masks and Face Coverings.

As recommended by the Committee, Young moved to approve the second reading of 454.1 Student Automobile Use and 667 Post Issuance Tax Exempt Bond Compliance. Cates seconded. Motion carried.

As recommended by the Committee, Maier moved to approve the first reading of 662 ~~Short Term Borrowing~~ Debt Management, 535 Professional Staff Development Opportunities, and 535.1 Teacher Mentoring (PI-34). Cates seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Modifying Instructional Model for the 2021-22 School Year

The Board heard the following recommendations from the Policy Committee for modifying COVID protocols in the Instructional Model:

- If a staff member or student tests positive, he/she will be isolated at home for 5 days from the start of symptoms. The individual may return to school on day 6 only if the individual is fever free for 24 hours without medication, symptoms have decreased, and a mask is carefully worn for days 6-10. (*Prior to this, individuals were required to stay home for 10 days.*)

- Individuals with symptoms who refuse testing will be treated as a positive case. After the 5-day isolation at home, the individual may return to school on day 6 only if the individual is fever free for 24 hours without medication, symptoms have decreased, and a mask is carefully worn for days 6-10. *(Prior to this, individuals were required to stay home for 10 days.)*
- Masking is required at school for household close contacts for 10 days from the date of the most recent positive household test. If there is a confirmed positive COVID case in the home, all exposed household members without symptoms will be masked at school for 10 days. Families will be encouraged to test on day 5/6. *(Prior to this, household close contacts were required to quarantine at home for 10 days.)*
- The building thresholds remain for the number of confirmed positive COVID cases, which would then require masks for staff and students for 5 days: RVHS: 5 cases; RVMS: 4 cases; RVE: 3 cases; and RV ELC: 2 cases. *(Prior to this, masking was required for 10 days after reaching a building threshold.)*
- If we have met a building threshold, a masking exception will be made for participants during athletic competition and co-curricular performances. *(Prior to this, if a building threshold was met, all individuals in the building were required to wear a mask 24 hours a day/7 days a week.)*

The nursing department requested that if changes are made, to make them effective on Monday, February 14, to give them time to draft education for students returning for days 6-10 as well as to notify individuals who are already out of isolation.

Dr. Furukawa's recommendation is to leave the masking at 10 days when a building threshold is met. He feels 5 days is still too aggressive. He is OK with reducing the number of days to 5 to allow an individual to return to school but mask for days 6 to 10. He noted we are still tracking close contacts to allow families a choice on how to react if they have been exposed to a positive person. When asked about using 7 days instead of 5, he noted he would like to keep consistent with the CDC, which makes it more consistent between the schools and the public.

It was noted there are currently 11 positive cases in the schools. Staff is concerned about how to track and manage students who are returning after day 5 but are required to mask for days 6 to 10. Another issue is keeping those students separate from others during meals and rest time when they are without masks, which seems to be a bigger issue with younger kids. It would be difficult to find the space needed and most were not in favor of using plexiglass to separate a student from others. Some felt this was a low risk situation and asked if separation was necessary. Dr. Furukawa agreed this would be a low risk situation. Cates noted that the district has offered KN95 masks to staff who want them. Young wondered if anxiety from staff isn't about own safety as much as how to manage returning students on days 6 to 10. There was some consensus not to separate students returning for days 6 to 10 who are without masks during meals and rest and to accept the low risk. Peterson feels this is helpful to staff.

As recommended by the Policy Committee, Young moved to approve a masking exception for participants during athletic competition and co-curricular performances. Cates seconded. Motion carried with Bettinger opposed.

As recommended by the Policy Committee, Young moved to approve if a staff member or student tests positive, the individual will be isolated at home for 5 days from the start of

symptoms. The individual may return to school on day 6 only if the individual is fever free for 24 hours without medication, symptoms have decreased, and a mask is carefully worn for days 6-10. Cates seconded. Motion carried.

As recommended by the Policy Committee, Young moved to approve individuals with symptoms who refuse testing would be treated as a positive case. After the 5 day isolation at home, the individual may return to school on day 6 only if the individual is fever free for 24 hours without medication, symptoms have decreased, and a mask is carefully worn for days 6-10. Carstensen seconded. Motion carried with Maier opposed.

As recommended by the Policy Committee, Carstensen moved to approve masking is required at school for household close contacts for 10 days from the date of the most recent positive household test. If there is a confirmed positive COVID case in the home, all members exposed without symptoms will be masked at school for 10 days. Families will be encouraged to test on day 5/6. Cates seconded. Show of hands was Nelson, Jennings, Cates, Carstensen, Minich in favor and Young, Iausly, Bettinger, Maier against. Motion carried.

As recommended by the Policy Committee, Cates moved to approve a change from 10 days to 5 days for masking when a building threshold is met. Jennings seconded. Show of hands was Jennings, Young, Cates, Minich, Maier in favor and Bettinger, Iausly, Carstensen, and Nelson against. Motion carried.

Consideration & Action on Buildings and Grounds Committee Recommendations

As recommended by the Buildings and Grounds Committee, Maier moved to approve the request from Eagle Scout, Jackson Thier, to implement a disc golf course on the Spring Green school campus. Carstensen seconded. The project will be ready for fall. The course will consist of 9 holes, each with a tee box and a chain basket to catch the frisbee. There could be times when some holes would not be available, due to practices on school grounds. Motion carried.

It was noted that the Stadium Upgrade Project fundraising efforts are almost at \$680,000.

Consideration & Action on Resolutions Accepting Gifts, if any

Bettinger moved to adopt the Resolutions Accepting Gifts as follows: \$500 J&J Total Lawn Care LLC to welding shop; dental hygiene products valued at \$60 for National Children's Dental Health Month from Alex Wedige and Molly DuCharme to the nurse's department; and \$150 various donations to Fund 21 for families in need (in memory of Athleen Haas). Minich seconded. Polled vote was 9-0 in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Iausly moved to adopt the Resolutions Accepting Gifts as follows for the Stadium Upgrade Project: \$250 Dave, Julie, and Casey Hopkins and Riley, Danny, Evelyn, Kerri, and Brad Williams; \$50 Denny and Shirley Coppernoll (In Memory of Bob Nachreiner); \$600 Pat, Patty, Zach, Mason, and Lizzie Lomasney; \$1,000 Aris Georges; \$3,000 Lisa and Tim Roelke (in memory of Pete and Mary Alice White); \$1,210 various donations (in memory of Bob Nachreiner); \$5,870 from various teammates (in memory of Chris Kraemer); \$1,000 Kim and Richard Cates; \$1,500 Tim, Gina, Cole, and Jalyn Eastlick; \$25 Ken and Jamie Haas (in memory of Athleen Haas). Carstensen seconded. Polled vote was 9-0 in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Iausly moved to adjourn at 8:38 p.m. Maier seconded. Motion carried.

Submitted by Paula Wedige for:

Deborah Nelson, School District Clerk