

The Cumberland County Board of Education met in-person and virtual on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 6:00 PM for a Special Board Meeting with the following board members present: Alicia Chisolm, Greg West, Deanna Jones, Susan Williams, Nathan Warfel, Charles McKellar and Donna Vann. Judy Musgrave and Carrie Sutton participated by virtual session.

Others present were Superintendent Marvin Connelly and Board Attorney Nick Sojka. Associate Superintendents participated both virtual and in-person when needed: Ron Phipps, Betty Musselwhite, Lindsay Whitley, Mary Black, Ruben Reyes, Stacey Wilson-Norman, and Clyde Locklear.

1. OPENING ITEMS

1.01 Mrs. Chisolm called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1.02 CONSIDER a Motion pursuant to Board Policy Codes 2300 and 2450, effective for this meeting only, to waive any requirements that board members participate in the meeting in-person, and to ratify and formally adopt the virtual meeting format described in the Meeting Notice. Upon a motion by Greg West, seconded by Susan Williams, the board members unanimously approved item 1.02.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Upon a motion by Donna Vann, seconded by Nathan Warfel, the Board unanimously adopted tonight's agenda.

3. AGENDA

3.01 CONSIDER Approval of Pre-K through Fifth Grade Student Return to Plan A

Dr. Connelly provided the Board with a comprehensive overview of the Pre-K through Fifth grade return to Plan A in alignment with Senate Bill 220. In addition to the recommendation to return, Dr. Connelly shared the options available for parents to remain virtual if they desired to do so. Additionally, slight changes would be made to the calendar. Our plan follows guidance of health officials and face coverings will be required on buses and in classrooms for all - unless medical needs prevent the use of face coverings.

Dr. Connelly shared his gratitude for all the work that was done to make the transition to Plan B a smooth transition. He also shared information on cohorts, transportation and current numbers of students in blended, in-person and virtual learning.

Mrs. Chisolm opened the floor to Board members for comment.

Mr. McKellar stated he would like to send the Pre-K through fifth grade to Plan A on Monday (Mar 22) as a 'trial run' to see how it goes. Dr. Connelly shared that was not a possibility with all that goes into transitioning.

Mrs. Williams asked about principal input. Dr. Connelly provided the response from principals, which the majority supported the transition to Plan A.

Ms. Sutton shared that some principals are more comfortable than others to return. She also asked if we were required to return to Plan A. Dr. Connelly and Mr. Sojka clarified from the legislation that Plan B does not meet the intent of the legislation.

Mrs. Musgrave asked about Wellness Wednesday's and Dr. Connelly responded that Wellness Wednesday's would continue.

Greg West made a motion to approve the Pre-K through fifth grade students return to Plan A as presented by Dr. Connelly. Susan Williams seconded the motion and the Board approved unanimously.

3.02 CONSIDER Approval of Transition to Plan A for Sixth through Twelfth Grade Students

Dr. Connelly provided the Board with a comprehensive overview of the Sixth through Twelfth grade return to Plan A in alignment with Senate Bill 220. Again, Dr. Connelly shared the options available for parents to remain virtual if they desired to do so. Additionally, slight changes would be made to the calendar. Our plan follows guidance of health officials and face coverings will be required on buses and in classrooms for all - unless medical needs prevent the use of face coverings.

Mrs. Chisolm opened the floor to Board members for comment.

Mr. McKellar stated he is not against the recommendation but feels the timing is off. He feels we need to use a test period with Pre-K – Fifth grade before we move to Sixth – Twelfth grade. Mrs. Jones asked about water system checks. Mrs. Fields shared all adjustments and changes made to best accommodate all concerns. Mrs. Fields also explained the cleaning supply shipments and replenishment plans, as well as resource materials provided.

Mr. West, Mrs. Vann, Mrs. Chisolm and Mr. Warfel all shared their support. Mrs. Williams asked about the input from principals. With the high number of principals requesting a return to Plan A, Mrs. Williams shared her support.

Ms. Sutton asked Ms. Bolden for input on guidelines for middle and high schools. Ms. Bolden responded and also shared the current transmission rate. Ms. Sutton shared that keeping her community safe was her top priority and she feels we are moving too fast. She stated that she cannot support this plan.

Mrs. Musgrave asked if teachers were surveyed. Dr. Connelly responded that teachers were not surveyed but appear to be excited for students to return to school. Dr. Connelly also stated that we are prepared to shut down or quarantine if it became necessary.

Greg West made a motion to approved the Sixth through Twelfth grade students return to Plan A as presented by Dr. Connelly. Donna Vann seconded the motion.

Voting in favor of a return to Plan A for sixth through twelfth grade were:

Mrs. Chisolm, Mr. West, Mrs. Vann, Mr. Warfel and Mrs. Williams.

Voting against a return to Plan A for sixth through twelfth grade were:

Mrs. Jones, Mr. McKellar, Mrs. Musgrave and Ms. Sutton.

4.0 ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Mrs. Chisolm at 7:05 PM.

Dr. Marvin Connelly, Superintendent

MC/ph