

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BRANDYWINE HEIGHTS AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

August 3, 2020

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Brandywine Heights Area School District was called to order at 6:14 pm by President John Tomasi.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Board Recording Secretary called the roll:**

- |                  |               |                |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| ✓ Mr. Bieber     | Mrs. Henry    | ✓ Mr. Tomasi   |
| ✓ Dr. Carter     | ✓ Mrs. Huhn   | ✓ Mr. Wagaman  |
| ✓ Mrs. Eisenhart | ✓ Mr. Scheetz | ✓ Mrs. Walizer |

**Administration Present:**

- ✓ Mr. Andrew Potteiger, Superintendent  
Mr. Jamison Barnhart, High School Assistant Principal
- ✓ Mr. Matthew Dziunycz, High School Principal
- ✓ Mr. Robert Farina, Intermediate/Middle School Principal
- ✓ Mr. Scott Geist, Director of Athletics
- ✓ Mrs. Carolyn Hanych, Director of Brandywine Virtual Academy
- ✓ Ms. Stephanie Kelly, Elementary School Principal
- ✓ Mr. Craig Neiman, Business Manager/Board Secretary
- ✓ Dr. René Reese, Director of Pupil Services
- ✓ Mr. Thomas Voelker, Assistant to the Superintendent
- ✓ Mr. Michael Wetzels, Director of Buildings and Grounds
- ✓ Ms. Carly Worman, Supervisor of Instruction and Assessment

**Solicitor:** Mr. Benjamin Pratt, Esquire

**Visitors:** Crys McCarty(Mertztown), Daniel Schlegel (Topton), Chris Rehrig (Mertztown), Seth Walizer(Fleetwood), Liz Taylor(Mertztown), Sayword Busher (Topton).

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT**

A motion was made by Mr. Bieber and seconded by Mr. Scheetz to approve the Board of Directors Report.

**A. BHASD Health and Safety Plan**

Approve the Brandywine Heights Area School District Health and Safety Plan for the safe reopening of school and the educational process for the 2020-2021 School Year. This plan may be subject to change based on state or other applicable guidelines per Board A.

**B. Emergency Order**

Approve the motion for the Board to find that the COVID-19 pandemic is an emergency under School Code Section 520.1, which may result in the School District providing the required 180 days and 900/990 hours of instruction to all students during the 2020-21 school year by employing combinations of in-person, virtual, and distance learning appropriate to address the health and safety of students, faculty, and community, and the learning needs of students, and for the Board

to approve, as temporary provisions, the remote and hybrid schedules for instruction included in the District's Health and Safety Plan being submitted to PDE per Board B.

**C. Athletics and Extracurricular Activities Health and Safety Plan**

Approve the updated Athletics and Extracurricular Activities Health and Safety Plan. This plan may be subject to change based on state or other applicable guidelines per Board C.

Mr. Potteiger presented the Administration recommendations for the Brandywine Heights Area School District Health and Safety Plan. A BHASD committee worked through the PDE Health and Safety Plan to develop scenarios to ensure that school can open in a safe manner following the appropriate safety guidelines. The BHASD committee was comprised of five subgroups: Education Planning; Transportation, Food Service; Health Considerations; Athletics, Extracurriculars and Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting, and Ventilation working through the various aspects of the state Health and Safety Plan. The plan provides a common sense approach to reopening BHASD this fall. Its flexibility addresses our student educational and safety needs, is based on decisions made by our stakeholders, and follows the guidance from federal, state, and local health agencies. We have partnered with both local and state health agencies to develop metrics to help guide these difficult decisions. Based on these metrics (articulated in more depth on the "Health & Safety Plan" ) we are planning to reopen school in the yellow. If the COVID-19 cases increase, the BHASD is prepared with additional preventative measures (Red Phase). Should the numbers decrease, BHASD is equally positioned to ease restrictions (Green Phase).

**Public Comment**

Mr. Tomasi asked for comments from the public.

Mr. Daniel Schlegel (Topton) thanked the administration and board members for all the preparation happening over the summer to get ready for school to reopen and for creating a well thought out plan. Mr. Schlegel encouraged the board to start in the red phase due to so much uncertainty at this time.

Mr. Chris Rehrig (Mertztown) shared data metrics from the county. He explained there have been significant challenges over the last five months due to COVID. Masks are ineffective and there is no way to make sure there is 100% compliance. He stated the District can encourage self monitoring however it is also not possible to make sure parents, staff, and students are using the self-monitoring checklist. We have zero control over other people's actions and that needs to be taken into consideration. In his opinion everyone going back to school is going to have consequences and people must be prepared to make this uncomfortable discussion. Young children cannot comprehend and achieve the items that are needed to come back to school safely.

Ms. Liz Taylor (Mertztown) stated she had significant concerns with the initial plan to start in green however thinks the hybrid plan is a very good start. Ms. Taylor questioned if we were to come back 100% in person if that is an all day class session and hybrid/virtual will be a half day schedule. She also questioned how students will be getting the same education doing hybrid and virtual as they would be getting if they were coming back full time in person. Ms. Taylor asked if virtual academy and the online curriculum if the district goes virtual is the same and if it has been equally effective and successful as Brandywine's curriculum. Lastly Ms. Taylor thanked the Board and Administration for all the effort that has been put into the reopening plan.

Mr. Potteiger explained that the green phase will be a full day session. The minutes that are actually lost is about ten min per class period. When there are only half the students you can get a little bit more done. When the students are not in school they will be learning virtually and teachers will be working with virtual students in the afternoon. There will be more live sessions and synchronous learning so there are opportunities for students to connect with the teachers in the afternoon to get one on one support. The virtual academy is different from online learning through the school district but the District works to make sure if students transition back to the district's curriculum is seamless.

Ms. Crys McCarty (Mertztown) questioned how students will be divided into groups A and B. A lot of community members have multiple students in the district and would not want to split the days there children are at school in person. Ms. Mcardi thanked the Board for all the effort being put into the health and safety plan and explained she feels the District should start in the red phase. If there can't be 25 people in an auditorium how can there be 400 students in a school or in a cafeteria.

Mr. Potteiger stated that students will be divided into groups alphabetically. Kindergarten students will be geographically divided instead of alphabetically.

Ms. Sayword Busher (Topton) explained her concern about virtual learning and how students with an IEP will be supported and not fall behind. She stated she is extremely worried they will not get the same support as if they were in school. She asked if the school would start in one phase and she did not feel comfortable sending her children to school if she is able to opt to continue virtual learning.

Mr. Potteiger described the partnership that pupil services and the virtual academy has to ensure each student is comfortable in the virtual environment and getting the unique support each student needs.

### **Board Discussion**

Mr. Tomasi shared questions that have been forwarded to him from community members about the reopening of schools.

Mr. Bieber questioned If school reopens in red if there will be staff furloughs.

Mr. Potteiger explained the District's plans to maintain the same number of staff so we can provide the same educational experience for students as we would in person.

Mr. Bieber questioned if there is a significant increase in cases within the District but not county wide if the District will change phases and plan accordingly.

Mr. Potteiger explained if something happens at the local level The District would adjust the plan accordingly.

Mr. Bieber questioned if there would be staff monitoring the bus riders.

Mr. Potteiger explained our partnership with Brandywine transportation and their plan for the safety aspect of bus rides.

Mr. Bieber questioned if staff and students travel to a hotspot state if a quarantine will be mandated.

Mr. Potteiger explained quarantining is a recommendation but the District is not mandating it.

There was Board discussion about temperature checks and whether or not it should be administered to both students and staff, where the best place to provide temperature checks would be as well as who would be administering the temperature checks each day.

Mr. Potteiger states the Administration will investigate temperature checks and look at ways to develop a plan. More information regarding this topic will be shared at the August 17th Board meeting.

Mrs. Huhn expressed concerns about transportation and bus drivers being able to focus on driving their bus route safely while also focusing on if students are wearing masks, potential temperature checks and assigned seating for students. Mrs. Huhn suggested adding an aide on the bus to assist with additional responsibilities.

There was additional Board discussion about transportation and how many students per seat, who is responsible for disinfecting the buses, what is being used to disinfect buses, as well as the addition to aides on the busses.

Mrs. Huhn questioned if additional custodian staff would be added to the schedule and if there would be training on how to clean properly.

Mr. Potteiger explained moving part time employees to full time would allow for better monitoring and disinfecting throughout the day. There will be Professional Development for cleaning staff before the start of school.

Mr. Wagaman stated setting a timeline to reevaluate changing phases such as a quarter would be more beneficial to most parents and would be parent and student friendly. This would allow families to have more planning associated with phases.

There was Board discussion on what it takes for the District to transition between phasing.

Mr. Potteiger explained the key piece is the flow of information to the Department of Health and getting information back from them that will help to drive the decision.

Mr. Scheetz questioned if the District will be in a virtual environment can the advisors from clubs and extracurriculars virtually meet with students so they are still getting that component of school and are teachers being encouraged to continue with their clubs if possible.

Mr. Tomasi questioned if there will be challenges with social distancing and what will be provided for mental health services.

Mr. Potteiger described the free counseling services that are provided through the community task force for all students in the District. All staff will be involved with Professional Development to be trained to make sure mental health is a priority.

Mrs. Walizer spoke about how she worked with the reopening committee and school psychologists are involved.

There was Board discussion about face masks and face shields, what and when staff and students are required to wear face coverings, the effectiveness of face shields, how it will affect learning especially at the elementary level and for special education students and what will be done if staff or students do not comply with wearing a face mask.

Mr. Scheetz questioned if youth group and community sports would have a pathway to use the facilities if the county is in green phase but the District is in a yellow phase. These are outlets for students and might be the only opportunity for them to express themselves. Would have to be the group coming in to buy the correct materials .

Mr. Potteiger explained the outside organizations would not be permitted to come into the facility currently. The District will begin the school year with the plan of not allowing outside organizations to use the facilities however there will be continued analysis of this as the school year goes on.

Mrs. Huhn questioned what other Districts were using for metrics and if Brandywine Heights is the only district using the metric model layed out in our Health and Safety Plan.

Mr. Potteiger explained the data is not available and the metrics are unique to Brandywine Heights.

Mrs. Huhn commented that the Virtual Academy is a fantastic opportunity for any family if they are concerned sending about their students back to school. If you are worried and do not agree with the Board please speak to Mrs. Hanych, she can address any concerns anyone may have about the Virtual Academy.

Mrs. Walizer added the Virtual Academy is an excellent opportunity that other Districts in the county strive for.

Mrs. Huhn asked what the difference between synchronous and asynchronous learning was because it is crucial for families to understand there will be a difference between online learning in the spring and online learning with the new school year.

Mr. Potteiger explained asynchronous learning means there are no live sessions and it is progressive. Once school starts it will be a synchronous live teaching approach and it is critical to have teachers connecting to students more frequently.

Mrs. Huhn asked what the current enrollment for Kindergarten is, what the average class size is and how this will impact their first interaction with the district.

Mr. Potteiger stated the current projected kindergarten enrollment is one hundred. The average class size would normally be twenty however with AM and PM kindergarten classes the new class size will be ten.

Mrs. Huhn questioned what gym and recess look like for all grades since students can't share items.

Mr. Potteiger explained there will be separate classes going out together and sharing the resources. Miss. Kelly has worked very hard to create a plan and schedule for classes in regards to recess and resources being used.

Mrs. Huhn questioned if there are special procedures to make sure nursing staff has what they need to keep themselves safe since they will be exposed and if there will be extra staffing or sticking to the model the District has been using.

Mr. Potteiger explained the District will be maintaining the existing nursing staff model and nursing staff will have the materials they need to stay safe while caring for students.

Mr. Bieber questioned if there was discussion about the start of school being pushed back if numbers for COVID cases increases to prepare for a virtual environment. Additionally he asked how building subs will be added and acclimated to the District depending on phasing.

Mr. Potteiger explained there was consideration but the District has not committed to moving school back. Professional development is being provided to all staff to be able to smoothly transition between phases if necessary. There is usually one building sub per building and this year we will have two per building.

Mrs. Huhn asked to clarify what the Board is voting on.

Mr. Potteiger confirmed the Board is voting on the BHASD Health and Safety Plan and support model we will use to determine the phase.

There was additional Board discussion about the timeline the Administration will use to make decisions to change phases.

Mr. Tomasi asked that the Board members and community be updated on the data metrics in regards to changing phases.

Mr. Potteiger explained the way the Health and Safety Plan is outlined it states "decisions will be made on at least 2 consecutive weeks of data".

Mr. Pratt stated the way it is written it gives flexibility to make new decisions.

Roll call was taken to accept the Board of Directors Report.

Y Mr. Bieber      N Dr. Carter      Y Mrs. Eisenhart      \_\_ Mrs. Henry      Y Mrs. Huhn  
Y Mr. Scheetz      Y Mr. Tomasi      Y Mr. Wagaman      Y Mrs. Walizer

Motion Carried - 7yeas/1 nay/1 absent

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Tomasi asked for comments from Board members and the public.

Mr. Tomasi announced there was an executive session prior to the meeting to discuss personnel contract negotiations and district staffing.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Bieber seconded by Mr. Scheetz to adjourn the meeting at 9:54 p.m.

Motion carried with all yeas.

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Approval Date

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Craig Neiman, Board Secretary  
Chaydeanne Brunner,  
Recording Secretary