

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Oyster Bay – East Norwich Central School District

Date: July 28, 2020
Kind of Meeting: Workshop Meeting
Location: Oyster Bay High School, Town of Oyster Bay, Nassau County NY
Members Present: Laurie Kowalsky-President
Nancy Castrogiovanni-Vice President
Todd Cronin
Darren Gerbosi
John McEvoy
Maryann Santos

Members Not Present:

Others Present: Dr. Laura Seinfeld, Superintendent
Michael Cipriani, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations
Dr. Lisa Mulhall, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment
Margaret Nolan, District Clerk
Mary Anne Sadowski, District Counsel

Laurie Kowalsky called the meeting to order at 6:45 P.M.

Motion by M. Santos, second by J. McEvoy, to enter into executive session at 6:45 P.M. to discuss legal matters and personnel.

Motion by J. McEvoy, second by T. Cronin to claim out of executive session at 7:30 P.M.

Laurie Kowalsky spoke on the resignation of Dr. Ross from the Board of Education. She spoke on the retirement of Dr. Laura Seinfeld in December, wished her well in her future endeavors and thanked her for continuing in Oyster Bay until then in order to oversee a safe reopening of schools. Mrs. Kowalsky indicated that the Board has chosen to leave the Board seat open at this time in order to focus on the safe reopening of schools and to search for a new Superintendent. She stated that they have submitted an RFP for a search firm to assist the Board in finding a replacement.

Dr. Seinfeld thanked the members of the learning community who were listening. Dr. Seinfeld stated that they have been working diligently on a plan for a safe reopening of schools. The goal is to reopen safely in-person stating that the plan could change based on data and the Governor's office. She stated that school Districts must prepare for three scenarios: in-person, remote or a hybrid which would mean a combination of the two. Dr. Seinfeld stated she would present tonight on what has been done, give an overview of the options and keep a separate list for any open items the Board would like more information about.

Dr. Seinfeld indicated that the community had submitted questions prior to this meeting, some of which the answers are embedded in the presentation or will be answered at future meetings. She reviewed some of the questions received. Dr. Seinfeld reviewed the road to re-entry. She stated the groundwork had been laid in the spring for the reopening of schools in September which included improvements to digital learning. Later in the spring a district-wide re-entry committee, with a number of sub committees, was formed. She thanked those who served on that committee. She stated that the committees have met numerous times while waiting for formal guidance from the State.

Dr. Seinfeld reviewed the timetable of the guidance received which was not until July 16th. However, The District began planning prior to that date. She spoke on the latest dates and guidance received from the State, which included guidelines on social distancing. The guidelines required one of the following: 6-foot social distancing or barriers or face coverings. At a later update the guidelines indicated schools must ensure appropriate social distancing (i.e. 6 feet or barriers) is maintained. The District is working diligently on the plan to be submitted. Dr. Seinfeld reviewed what must be included in the plan. She indicated that there has been a lot of communication with the community which included surveys, signage at buildings and examining all State guidance. She indicated that many health and safety protocols are in place which include ordering of equipment, cleaning, and disinfecting. Face coverings will be required when social distancing cannot be maintained. Protocols have been developed with the health staff for signs of illness, temperature screening and how families will need to support this work. Dr. Seinfeld reviewed the plan for facilities which included the ordering of desk guards, partitions and portable sinks and hand sanitizing stations. Every possible space has been looked at to come up with learning options. Dr. Seinfeld spoke on transportation and reminded everyone of the referendum that passed reducing eligibility to universal for K-6 and .50 for grades 7-12. She indicated that a survey was conducted and out of 500 respondents more than 75% would be willing to walk or drive their children if limited bus transportation becomes an issue. The District is working with the transportation company to ensure safety protocols are met.

Dr. Seinfeld outlined some of the many aspects involved which include: child nutrition, social emotional learning, attendance, technology and connectivity, teaching and learning and bilingual/world languages. Dr. Seinfeld stated that the District is required to submit a plan that includes in school, remote, and hybrid and that plan needs to be communicated to families. A plan has been developed for each scenario depending on what the Board decides. The goal is to open school safely for all or as many students and staff as possible. The majority of families indicated they are comfortable sending their children back to school. Throughout the return, especially in the first phase learners need to feel connected to teachers and each other, instructional experiences are comparable in rigor, scope and magnitude to traditionally delivered education and transitions between in-person and remote learning are made seamlessly. Dr. Seinfeld reviewed some of the parameters and constraints not just for Oyster Bay but all districts. In determining what is possible the district remains in close contact with colleagues across the county and with health official including the Department of Health. At this time, 75% of schools are working toward having elementary schools in every day. Many(66%) are planning to have middle school hybrid and 91% are looking at hybrid for high school. The goal for remote instruction, if schools need to close, is students at home will follow a schedule that mirrors a typical school day and participate in live meetings with teachers and classmates. A sample schedule for high school was shown. Based on feedback that Mrs. Lasher received from her survey based on the pilot programs 70% preferred the classic schedule. She showed the results of a survey sent regarding elementary digital learning. Elementary parents would like some flexibility for their children and would prefer seeing their own teachers. Sample virtual schedules were shown for all elementary grades.

The results of the survey, which asked if the District is required to use a hybrid approach to learning which approach would be preferred, was shared. Of the K-12 results the majority would like children in every day followed by students attending school on alternate days rather than alternate weeks or a split schedule.

Dr. Seinfeld gave the Board elementary options for all returning giving detail on what each experience would look like and the pros and cons for both options. She indicated she would pause for discussion and decision making by the Board so the results could be communicated to families for their planning. Option A, kindergarten would be ½ day in person and ½ day remote. After much discussion and questions the Board voted unanimously for Option B for elementary which is all students in school with desk guards.

Dr. Seinfeld reviewed options for grades 7 and 8 and 9-12. She indicated that she shared earlier that the majority of districts are opting for a hybrid for middle level and 9-12, although not all districts have 7-12 in the same building. Detail was given on the options for both 7 and 8 and high school and the pros and cons of both options. She thanked the administrators and staff for looking at every aspect of these options from every angle including measuring rooms, examining schedules, looking at space and more. Option A would be all students in school with desk guard and masks. Option B would be hybrid, students in grades 7 & 8 would attend every day, students in grades 9-2 would attend on alternating day schedule. In both options 7 & 8 would remain as a cohort. Additional considerations were reviewed and what instruction would like was discussed. After a lengthy discussion and numerous questions, Mrs. Kowalsky asked for a vote by the Board. The vote was 4 – 2 as listed below:

Option A
John McEvoy
Darren Gerbosi

Option B
Nancy Castrogiovanni
Todd Cronin
Maryann Santos
Laurie Kowalsky
(With the provision that it is reevaluated after a month and look to bring seniors back in as soon as possible.)

Dr. Seinfeld spoke on the need for additional staff professional development and training. As indicated in the Board letter she is proposing adding September 2nd and 3rd as Superintendent's Conference days and changing the start date of school to September 8th, the day after Labor Day. The Board unanimously agreed.

Dr. Seinfeld reviewed the importance of the home school partnership. She stated she would like to ask the community for their support with regard to reminding students what to expect and preparing them for wearing masks and other safety issues. She would also ask for input on their plans for using transportation and for their plans and comfort level relative to returning to school in the fall.

Dr. Seinfeld stated the reentry committee would be meeting tomorrow and there was another Board meeting next week. She thanked the Board for their attention.

Dr. Seinfeld stated that there has been discussion relative to temperature scanning and surveys for parents to complete. There was a vendor present this evening to present on an option for temperature checking and data retention. Michael Cipriani introduced a representative from Intralogic Solutions who would be showing some options for thermal temperature scanners hand and wrist scanners and an app that is available regarding a questionnaire that needs to be completed. The representative gave a detailed presentation of the options his company could provide. At the conclusion of the presentation The Board discussed temperature taking, screening and a questionnaire. Dr. Seinfeld shared that they had already purchased 20 or more no touch thermometers.

Motion by N. Castrogiovanni, second by J .McEvoy, to enter into executive session at 10:07 P.M.
Motion by N. Castrogiovanni, second by M. Santos, to claim out of executive session and adjourn at 10:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Nolan, District Clerk