

**BOE Regular Meeting**

October 05, 2020 7:00 PM

PPMS Cafeteria

**1. Call to Order**

Dr. Nugent called the meeting to order at 7PM. Other Members Present: Deborah Burke-Grabarek, Cindy Luty, Dan Harris and George Carver. Charles Raymond attended virtually. Also present: Dr. Seitsinger; Superintendent, John Spang; Director of Finance, and Gloria Homiski; Recording Secretary.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Public Comment**

None

**4. Consent Agenda**

Cindy Luty asked to remove the CAFE documents from 9-18 and 10/2 from the consent agenda. All other documents were accepted as presented.

The 9/18 document spoke about mask restrictions. Dr. Seitsinger assured everyone that even our youngest students are wearing their masks daily. Linda Congdon stated that youth-sized masks are made available to anyone in need.

The 9/18 document also talked about Addendum 11: Contact Tracing. Athletic events are still going on around us. Students are social distancing in school, but what about outside of school? Mrs. Luty asked if Dr. Seitsinger could speak to Parks and Rec. He stated that he has been in contact with coaches but that he would follow up.

The 10/2 CAFE document talked about virtual lessons not violating FERPA and yet the article went on to discourage others from viewing virtual meetings. Is this contradictory? Dr. Seitsinger stated that teachers must be aware of who is or is not assisting while students are participating virtually. Caution should be used at all times.

**5. Superintendent's Report/Updates**

Dr. Seitsinger shared remarks from Ann Perzan; Special Education Director, Ivy Davis-Tomczuk; PPMS Principal, and Ray Bernier; PVMS Principal.

Mrs. Perzan reported a smooth opening. A few special education students are participating solely in distance learning. Out of district placements have been contacted. The department is working on excess cost and updating Early Childhood Practices on the school website.

Mr. Bernier stated that last week's pivot to full virtual learning was a good test for students and teachers. The transition went well. Today kids are back participating in the hybrid model. Attendance is excellent face to face, and virtually.

Dr. Davis-Tomczuk reported that teachers have had time to access their technical needs in the event that we are forced to move to full distance learning in the future. Attendance is also very good at the middle school; both face to face and virtually. Hot spots will be given to families in need of better wifi. Dr. Seitsinger shared that the district has received 40 hotspots from the state. They are being recorded and will be distributed to both schools for families in need.

Effective Communication and Collaboration: Dr. Seitsinger shared a letter signed by the Commissioner of Education, the Director of CAPSS, the President of AFT-CT and the President of the CEA. All signers thanked students, staff, and parents for working together to establish and sustain positive education during this difficult time.

Ledge Light Health District: Dr. Seitsinger shared a letter from Ledge Light. Ledge Light is our neighboring health district and works closely with our Uncas Health District. Ledge Light has recommended that their school districts remain in the hybrid model until further notice. Uncas Health's school districts are more varied; some hybrid, some face to face.

Distance Learners Update: Currently, Preston has 43 distance learners and 19 students who are being homeschooled. The number of Distance Learners is not elevating.

Last week Preston Public Schools went to full virtual learning for one week due to one positive case of COVID-19 in our learning community. On Friday afternoon the Leadership Team met to discuss whether or not to return to the hybrid model. On Saturday Dr. Seitsinger participated in a Health Department meeting where it was determined that despite an increase in COVID cases in surrounding areas, Preston can sustain their hybrid model. On Sunday evening a ConnectEd Message went out to families explaining that Preston would indeed return to the hybrid model on Monday, Oct 5<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Seitsinger also explained that he would like to gradually bring back younger students to a 4 day a week face to face schedule. He stated that perhaps grade 1 could return on Oct 19<sup>th</sup> and grade 2 could return on Oct 26<sup>th</sup>. The Board was in agreement with this recommendation.

Mr. Harris asked why he learned about Preston having no transportation last week from NFA and not from Preston. Dr. Seitsinger explained that once students leave Preston Plains Middle School, all communication comes from the high school which they attend. Dr. Seitsinger coordinated messaging with NFA. Preston calls the high schools and the high schools send out their own means of communication to families.

The Board also discussed the need for more substitute teachers. It is getting difficult to fill absences in Preston and many surrounding towns. Dr. Seitsinger explained that he has already raised substitute pay to \$125 a day for some positions.

BOE Vacancy: Tomorrow night the Board will meet in Executive Session to interview 3 candidates interested in filling the open seat on the Preston BOE. A candidate will likely be chosen by Wednesday morning.

**6. Expenditure/Projection Reports**

John Spang reviewed the expenditure/projection reports, as well as the capital projects report with the Board. Mr. Spang emphasized the need for increased technology support. He also stated he would be giving the board of Finance an overview of the BoE report. Dr. Seistinger agreed that technology has significantly elevated in priority and will be a priority topic in the coming budget.

**7. Adjournment**

Moved, to adjourn the meeting at 8:45PM. Luty/Burke-Grabarek. Unanimous. Motion Carries.