

On January 19, 2021, the Special Board Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Spring-Ford Area School District was called to order at 7:32 p.m. in the cafeteria of the Spring-Ford High School with the following in attendance:

Region I: Wendy Earle and Dr. Margaret D. Wright
Region II: Clinton L. Jackson and David R. Shafer
Region III: Thomas J. DiBello, Christina F. Melton and Diane C. Sullivan
Presiding Officer: Colleen Zasowski
Asst. Superintendent: Robert W. Rizzo
Chief Financial Officer: James D. Fink
Solicitor: Mark Fitzgerald, Esq.
Student Reps.: Eshika Seth and Allison McVey

The following Board Member participated via Zoom: **Linda C. Fazzini**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Zasowski asked for a moment of silence in memory of Doug Carson a longtime Spring-Ford employee who passed away. She reminded the public of the process for attendance at the meeting and for making public comments at the beginning and end of the meeting.

I. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

There were no public comments.

II. PRESENTATION

Mr. Rizzo presented a PowerPoint that highlighted the second semester survey results and the spectrum of options for grades 7-12. He provided the weekly municipality/district cases and PCR positivity rates. Mr. Rizzo also advised that the original commitment rate percentages for the 2nd marking had dropped significantly from 70.1% who committed to in-person under the hybrid model down to 43% who actually attended in-person. He explained the 7-12 grade capacity in a classroom and social distancing that can be maintained depending on the number of students actually present in the classroom. Mr. Rizzo went through the survey questions and provided the data on the family response to those questions. He provided the family preference data that was able to be collected from the responses of families who participated in the survey, which was lower than hoped for. Mr. Rizzo provided the distancing guarantees can be provided and those guarantees that cannot be attained. He advised the board on the options available to them for consideration and the needs associated with those options. He cautioned that families need to understand that close contact quarantines will happen and that there may be building closures if positive case numbers reach the threshold as well functional closures if the district experiences any staffing shortages.

The board asked if any feedback was obtained from the nurses and the administration and Mr. Rizzo advised that they all support the 4 days in-person option as well as keeping the virtual and cyber options. Discussion took place on the potential need for additional nursing staff support to help with expediting contact tracing. There was conversation on

the reasons why Spring-Ford seems to be experiencing more building closures in relation to other districts that are open for in-person instruction that are not seeing the frequency of closures. Mr. Rizzo advised that he would check with other districts to find out their closure procedures. The board questioned the timeline needed to put everything in place and return grades 7-12 to in-person instruction 4 days a week and Mr. Rizzo advised that everything could be accomplished and students could return on February 4th.

Mrs. Zasowski made a motion to implement the 4-day in-person option/model as presented by the administration to coincide with the virtual and cyber models, effective Thursday, February 4, 2021 through the end of the school year. Mrs. Earle seconded it.

The floor was opened up for public comment on the motion.

Mary Jo Mcnamara, Royersford, asked when the asynchronous day would be and Mrs. Zasowski replied that it would be Wednesday.

Discussion took place regarding the desire to gather further input from the nurses on the 4-day in-person option. The board also spoke about whether or not students should be required to have their computer cameras on while participating in classes virtually. Mr. Rizzo advised that he would explore both of these discussion items and get back to the board with more information.

A question was asked as to the timeline when families would be required to commit to either returning for the 4 days in-person, remaining virtual or enrolling in cyber learning and Mr. Rizzo advised that the commitment timeline would begin tomorrow and run until Sunday, January 24th. He added that he will provide the board with an update at the January 25th Board Meeting.

The motion passed 9-0.

A. **Robert Rizzo**, Assistant Superintendent, to provide an Update on the Recent Survey Data and Educational Options for the Second Semester.

III. **BOARD COMMENT**

Mr. DiBello asked that on the agenda for January 25th that they finalize the whole screen versus non-screen issue and Mr. Rizzo advised that he would flush this out a little more and have it as a discussion item for that meeting.

Mrs. Melton asked that representatives from the nurses be in attendance at the meeting on January 25th to provide their input and Mrs. Zasowski replied that the nurses will be present at every meeting going forward to provide updates and input. Mrs. Melton asked that the nurses drill down what is needed to assist with contact tracing. Mr. Jackson asked specifically that Erin Lewandowski to come to the meeting to speak.

Mr. DiBello asked that Mr. Rizzo look into what Souderton School District is doing since they have only had to close one time and provide information on what he is able to gather. Mr. Rizzo replied that he will reach out to Souderton and report back.

IV. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

Kristin Norwood, Collegeville, asked about the plans for other activities such as prom and Mr. Rizzo advised that he had already spoken to Dr. Colyer who indicated that the planning was in the works and that information will be shared as soon as possible.

Christine Grines, Royersford, questioned why the asynchronous day could not be moved to Monday or Friday and Mr. Rizzo explained that two of the main reasons are that we coordinate with the Western Center and all 3 of the sending districts are asynchronous on Wednesday and the other reason is due to the services we provide to our students that align with Wednesday being the asynchronous day and any change would require some significant shifts in the schedule.

Kate Doyle, Collegeville, thanked the district for adhering to the metrics that were agreed upon regarding building closures and for being conservative. She requested that in the event of a closure that the district return to the 2-day model going forward.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DiBello made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Shafer seconded it. The motion passed 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Fern
School Board Secretary.