

The Board of Education, Downers Grove Grade School District 58, DuPage County, Illinois met in special session on Tuesday, August 18, 2020, at Herrick Middle School. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, in-person meeting attendance was limited to 50 people and the meeting was live streamed to the public on the District's YouTube channel.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The President called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and announced that it was a special meeting of the District 58 Board of Education. Present at Herrick Middle School: President Darren Hughes; Vice President Gregory Harris; and Members Kirat Doshi, Steve Olczyk, Jill Samonte and Tracy Weiner. Present via videoconference: Member Emily Hanus. Members absent: None. Also in attendance were Kevin Russell, Superintendent; Jayne Yudzentis, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel; Justin Sisul, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Jessica Stewart, Assistant Superintendent for Special Services; James Eichmiller, Assistant Superintendent for Technology and Learning; Todd Drafall, Assistant Superintendent for Business/CSBO; Catherine Hannigan, Manager of Business Services; Kevin Barto, Director of Buildings and Grounds and Melissa Jerves, Board Secretary.

2. FLAG SALUTE

President Hughes led the flag salute.

3. DISCUSSION

A. Return to Learn Plan 2020-21 Update

Dr. Russell and the administrative team began their presentation with an update on the progress made in developing the modified on-site plan and online academy plan. Dr. Russell then outlined the most recent guidance received from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). He noted that the guidance is problematic for school districts because it is more restrictive, requiring diagnostic COVID-19 testing and significant long exclusion periods that would be disruptive to the educational process. The guidance also calls for personal protective equipment (PPE) for certain staff members that is costly and difficult to procure and fit-test on short notice. The District is still awaiting more specific metrics from IDPH and the DuPage County Health Department (DCPD) that would provide clear guidance on safely opening schools. Many neighboring districts have already made the decision to move to fully remote instruction because the guidance is unclear.

Dr. Russell stated that the administration recommends postponing on-site learning and shifting to remote instruction until October 2. The online

academy would also be postponed; all students would participate in remote learning provided by their home school. The District is developing a transition plan that would allow students and teachers to meet each other in small groups at school prior to shifting to the fully remote model. These meetings would allow students build relationships, get materials, and learn about their technology tools.

The administrative team provided more details about the fully remote plan. A consistent districtwide curricular scope and sequence will be developed for the first trimester to minimize the effects of any transition between remote and onsite learning. Preschool and kindergarten students will maintain the morning and afternoon schedules; Lester and Highland kindergarten students will be grouped by school and taught by the same teachers as the on-site plan. Grades 1-6 will be grouped in classes of 24 or fewer, which will require reallocation of staff to accomplish. To minimize the impact of future transitions to in-person learning that may require shifting of class sizes, grade level teams will develop relationships both with students in their remote homeroom and those across the grade level. For middle school, the daily structure will be designed with specific synchronous class times.

The District remains committed to providing free appropriate public education to its special education students. A transition plan is being developed to move to on-site instruction before October for specialized programs (BEST, RISE and DLP). The first two weeks will feature modified instruction times to minimize the number of students on-site to practice safety protocols. A consistent remote option will still be available to families who prefer one. Some on-site direct instruction will be available for English learners, related services, special education, and homeless/low-income populations.

The District plans to provide a combination of in-person and remote experiences during the first four days of school. Opportunities for students to meet their teachers in-person in small groups are being developed; the components of these days will be designed collaboratively with teachers and administrators. Full remote learning begins September 8.

Key changes in Remote Learning 2.0, as compared to remote learning last spring, include a significant increase in the hours of learning (5 total, with 2.5 synchronous instruction via Zoom); a regular daily and weekly schedule for staff and students; improved assessment and feedback methods; and replication of successful instructional strategies from the classroom in the remote environment (such as small groups). The District will also work with families to support students who cannot participate in synchronous remote instruction. The instructional day will have set hours, and staff will work on-site to support students during on-site opportunities, remain accessible to families, and remain accessible to each other for collaboration and professional development.

Next steps will be to finalize the trimester curriculum development, provide ongoing professional learning for remote learning strategies, continue to develop protocols for specialized programs, establish communication timelines from the District, building and classroom levels, and work with community partners on childcare options.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Craig Young, DGEEA president, commented that there will be a lot of support from teachers for a fully remote plan, which is the safest option. He suggested that the District extend its recommendation past October to give more stability for families, particularly in setting up long term plans for child care.

A parent asked that students enrolled in online academy be allowed to participate in remote learning with their home schools.

Lisa Pocius, O'Neill parent, expressed support for the fully remote recommendation.

Brian Sweeney, Lester attendance area, questioned whether any thought was given to keeping staff safe who are coming into school buildings.

Laura Hope, Herrick parent, asked that students in the online academy be included in the fully remote classes with their home school.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

A. Board Action Regarding Return to Learn Plan 2020-21

Member Olczyk moved and Member Doshi seconded the motion to postpone both modified on-site instruction and the online academy and start with fully remote instruction until October 2, 2020, with small group on-site transition days September 1-4.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Members Doshi, Hanus, Harris, Hughes, Olczyk, Samonte, and Weiner
NAYS: None Motion carried

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Hughes announced the following dates:

Monday, August 24, 7 p.m. Special Meeting/Budget Workshop

Monday, August 31, 3:45 p.m. District Leadership Team Meeting

Friday, September 4, 7 a.m.

Financial Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, September 14, 7 p.m.

Regular Board Meeting

7. ADJOURNMENT

Member Harris moved and Member Doshi seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Members Doshi, Harris, Hanus, Hughes, Olczyk,
Samonte, and Weiner
NAYS: None Motion carried

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Darren Hughes, President

Melissa Jerves, Secretary