

08 11 2020 Special Work Session COVID Update 10 00 AM

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Item 1

1. [10:00 AM - 12:30 PM Update COVID-19 by Superintendent](#)

Minutes:

Superintendent Byrd introduced Dr. Joy Jackson, Director, Polk County Department of Health to commence the medical portion of the COVID 19 updates. On hand was also, Nicole Hinds, MD, Pediatric Medical Director, Lakeland Regional, Dr. Daniel Haight, MD, Medical Director, Infection Prevention, Lakeland Regional, Adriana Cadilla, Physician, Infectious Disease Nemours Hospital, Timothy Regan, Chief Medical Officer and ED Physician, Lakeland Regional, Kenneth Alexander, MD Division Chief of Infectious Disease, Nemours Hospital and Donna Bhisitkul MD, Medical Director of Children's Emergency Dept. Lakeland Regional.

Dr. Jackson stated that there is a desire to open schools and to keep the community, students and staff as safe as possible. Expert resources have been utilized thru CDC and other organizations to steer reopening plans. She explained the strategies and processes that are going to be used in the schools.

Dr. Tim Regan, stated that there have been declining cases of COVID19 in the last several weeks. The basics of wearing masks, social distancing and hand sanitizing have been successful in keeping the general public safe. Statistically, younger people do better with this illness. His medical opinion on school opening is that there are other health issues more detrimental than COVID19, such as the psychological aspect of staying home and not being able to socialize. There are signs of depression and anxiety among kids as well as numerous cases of child abuse, malnutrition and obesity; these are clearly health issues for kids.

Superintendent Byrd stated that according to the downward trend, we will stay

on schedule to open. There are several options for students if they don't feel comfortable in brick and mortar.

Dr. Cadilla, stated that the transmittal of infection in hospital settings have been avoided by masking, social distancing and hand washing, which go a long way. It is imperative that the public take this as a public health initiative. Schools must open safely by giving parents the options to keep their children home if they can or sending them to school if they don't have an option. Transmission will be limited if we follow guidelines in schools. We will see a spread if we let our guards down and begin socializing without following guidelines.

Dr. Daniel Haight the classroom should be treated like a hospital by rapid recognition of someone who is ill as well as someone that someone can be asymptomatic. Hand sanitizing, keeping hallways clear from crowding and understanding contact tracing so we can put an envelope of protection on teachers and staff. Nothing will be 100% except us protecting each other.

Superintendent stated that the Department of Health developed their own frontline for us. We will provide disinfectant to classrooms, PPE has been purchased for staff, supplies were ordered for cleanliness etc..

Dr. Jackson stated that looking at data for Hillsborough they have also decreased in cases. Orange has downward trends. Not to say that disease will not come back and forth but key metrics are improving. Dr. Jackson answered Ms. Fortney's question on tests performed and percentage that is positive. She stated that the number of people who test positive for first time divided by the people tested is how they get their rates. She feels comfortable with the Department of Health's test number reports. The Health Department will work close with schools to help assist with case investigation contact tracing.

Mr. Townsend expressed his concerns on crowding in schools. Dr. Jackson answered concerning spacing in schools and on buses. Superintendent Byrd addressed Mr. Townsend on the measures that will be implemented to keep everyone safe.

Mrs. Cunningham stated that it is imperative to open schools. She is pleased to hear Dr. Reagan comments on it being the prudent things to do for parents and the nutritional aspects for our children, the mental health piece as well as child abuse aspect. It is time to exercise our rights. We must give our parents the right to choose. We need to continue on our path and do what is moral and correct for our children.

Mrs. Miller would like to hear from Dr. Jackson what the ratio of student to staff should be. Dr. Jackson stated that its not about ratios; its about social distancing and sizes of rooms.

Dr. Bhisitkul stated that they have seen, since March, an increase in patients requiring evaluations for child abuse, anxiety, sexual abuse, attempted suicides

and baker acts. This is a detrimental effect on children and returning them to the safety and support of the school system will make an effect.

Dr. Regan spoke about testing that is most commonly done is one that tells of a tiny piece of genetic material inside the virus. As a person recovers, they are no longer infected but tiny molecules come out and people remain positive for 3 months after.

Mrs. Fortney is concerned about classes being larger. Superintendent Byrd clarified that classes are not larger. Many students are going virtual and eLearning.

Mr. Townsend spoke about staggering classes and we should begin with the youngest kids and the neediest kids first and gradually bring them back.

Michelle Townley spoke on updated parent information. July 27 46% for Campus learning, 45% Campus eSchool and 9% Polk Virtual. The deadline of August 3rd 46% Campus eSchool, 45% and 9% for Polk Virtual. 66,688 parents responded. On August 9th we had updated numbers with 48% Campus learning, 42% Campus eSchool, 2% for Polk Virtual. There are 38,648 for Campus learning, 34,220 for eSchool and 2,583 for Polk Virtual. Schools have contacted families to ensure their preference.

Mrs. Miller asked about the 8% that have not responded or cannot be reached by school. Do they default to campus learning? Mrs. Townley stated that these are people that have not answered the school, filled out the survey and have not responded in anyway. Yes these students default in case they show up to orientation, this helps transportation to prepare.

Mrs. Porteous reported on the staff survey update from July 27 29% either way is fine, 27.7% eLearning, 38.1% face to face. On August 3rd, 39% prefer face to face, 28% either way and 36% Campus eSchool.

Mrs. Miller asked if there is an appeals process for those that have been denied virtual teaching opportunities? Mrs. Porteous stated there were 267 requests, 257 approved and 10 denied. We have to have medical documentation with a complete ADA form. The ADA form is a form letter and is specifically for employees. If an employee requests caretaker assistance, it can be requested with a letter and medical documentation stating that they need caretaker assistance. We have two attorneys on the committee that are certified through Florida Bar.

Linda King spoke on 2019 health plan projections, changes and finances. The changes were projected to bring us out of the red and back to positive. She stated that we are receiving COVID claims, which complicates the plan.

Mr. Perrone went over the current fund balance and stated that funding has been an issue. Statewide average at 9.78. We need to reserve the CARES ACT for a rainy day. This will be padding the fund balance and cuts that will be coming mid year.

Item 2

2. [12:30 PM - 1:00 PM BREAK](#)

Item 3

3. [1:00 PM - 2:30 PM Superintendent of Schools Search with Andrea Messina, Florida School Boards Association](#)

Minutes:

Andrea Messina, FSBA thanked the board for trusting them with the Superintendent search. Mrs. Messina gave an overview of how John Richert will explain building a timeline and Dr. Vogel will explain community involvement options.

Mrs. Cunningham asked at what point will discussion on transition period between Superintendent Byrd and the new superintendent? Mr. Richert explained that a transition period could be build into the timeline, depending on what the board would like. He stated that the transition can be a month long.

Dr. Vogel spoke on the primary focus, which is to follow CDC guidelines while involving community and key leaders. Its beneficial to involve the community in several ways such as surveys, student forums, citizens advisory committees and teacher associations as well.

Mrs. Messina stated that community members can submit questions for candidates during the live interview. We need to know about 1. Community involvement 2. Start date 3. The Overlap. 4. transition time and 5. Advisory Committee. Board must be prepared to make commitments. Please have calendars ready! There will be a three hour pre-search interview where all details on timeline will be locked in as well as discussions to get a full grasp of what the district and the board. There will also be three days of interviews scheduled.

John Richert mentioned that candidates can submit their applications to human resources or directly to FSBA.

Mrs. Cunningham stated that the next work session will be held on August 25th. We would like to have discussion on the community piece, transition time etc. We can set a date for the three hour pre-search at this time.

Ms. Reynolds reminded everyone that August 25th is the second day of school and staff needs to be out at schools.

Board consensus to have a special work session for Superintendent search on August 25th at 2PM and Board Meeting to follow at 5PM.

Susan was appointed Staff Point Person for FSBA.

INFORMATION ITEMS

BOARD AGENDA REVIEW

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

4. [Board Member Comments](#)

Minutes:

Lynn Wilson addressed the health plan issues in respect to funding and claims. He also addressed the issue with the return of students to schools. Mr. Wilson has no interest in "not" complying with State Law and working with DOE. We do have a plan and we have offered choices to parents and teachers.

Sara Beth Reynolds stated that we cannot by any means say who the least vulnerable students are or dictate what is best for the students. We are obligated to honor what our parents and students need. Its about how things are implemented.

Sarah Fortney stated that she is torn. Itinerate teachers are concerned because they travel to so many locations.

Kay Fields commended Mr. Wilson on his comments. Mrs. Fields stated that we do have a plan and it was presented to the board, therefore; we owe it to our families and employees to keep our promise. Measures have been taken to keep students and staff as safe as possible.

Lisa Miller stated that she has not seen the plan rolling out as concisely as she would like. Mrs. Miller mentioned that there is no MOU in place and it has not been resolved.

Meeting adjourned at 2:35 PM. Minutes were approved and attested this 25th day of August 2020.

Lori Cunningham, Board Chair

Jacqueline M. Byrd, Superintendent