

PENN CAMBRIA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
201 6<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
CRESSON, PENNSYLVANIA 16630

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Special Meeting  
October 29, 2020

MEMBERS: Pat Albright, Jenny Guzic, Terry Krug, Rudy McCarthy, Guy Monica, George Pyo,  
Patricia Pyo, Justin Roberts, Michael Sheehan

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A Special Meeting of the Penn Cambria School District Board of Education was called to order by George Pyo, President, at 10:30 A.M., Thursday, October 29, 2020 in the Library of the Penn Cambria High School.

ROLL CALL WAS TAKEN:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Pat Albright (*via phone*)  
Mrs. Jenny Guzic  
Mr. Terry Krug  
Mr. Rudy McCarthy  
Mr. Guy Monica  
Mr. George Pyo  
Miss Patricia Pyo  
Mr. Michael Sheehan  
TOTAL. . . . . 8

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Justin Roberts  
TOTAL. . . . . 1  
QUORUM PRESENT.

**AMONG OTHERS PRESENT:**

William Marshall, Superintendent  
Lewis Hale, Network Administrator

Ed Watt, Parent  
Kristin Baudoux, Mainliner

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the following were the items of business and discussion.

**HEARING OF VISITORS** – Ed Watt, Gallitzin, stated that as a parent of three students, he would like to see students return back to school, as well as the teachers deemed essential workers. With that being said, he made one suggestion in regard to the hybrid schedule, to switch the “B” group to go face to face on Monday and Tuesday rather than Thursday and Friday.

Mr. Marshall responded that this topic will be discussed in executive session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Krug, the Board entered Executive Session to discuss safety issues at 10:34 A.M. Special Meeting reconvened at 11:25 A.M. on a motion by Mr. Krug, seconded by Miss Pyo.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

Mr. Pyo announced that an email was received, stating that the sender was very concerned with student attitudes, depression, and missing out academically, and pleaded that the Board needs to seriously look at moving back to full face to face instruction.

Mr. Marshall added that Penn Cambria School District has partnered with Impact Counseling again this year as part of the PCCD grant, and that Impact Counseling is available five days a week for students.

Mr. Sheehan asked Mr. Marshall how Impact Counseling would operate under the full virtual scenario.

Mr. Marshall responded that the school district would work with Impact Counseling to determine the possibilities. He noted that PSBA recommended that no mental health counseling sessions happen via zoom due to confidentiality.

## **DISCUSSION ITEM**

**CURRENT BOARD APPROVED HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN** - Mr. Pyo started the discussion with the option of maintaining with the Health and Safety Plan that was approved at the last board meeting. The current plan states that the middle school and high school students are to start full face to face instruction on Monday. He added an additional option to consider would be continuing with the hybrid schedule that has been utilized since school started. If the decision is to stick with the current Health and Safety Plan, a resolution will not be needed. However, if the decision is that maintaining the hybrid model is most effective for the district, staff, and students and supports the consistency of the schedule, there will be other items to be reviewed. He also stated that grades Pre-K-4 will remain full face to face because they are able to social distance and do not move class to class. However, the decision of moving to face to face on Monday is for grades 5-12. If the district would change the Health and Safety Plan, the middle and high school students would continue with the hybrid model.

Mr. Sheehan stated that as both a board member and a parent, that the hybrid schedule might not be for everybody and that parents of young students are struggling, but it is normalcy and consistency for the students. Going to full face-to-face instruction is an inevitable shutdown and would be devastating to the education of the students. Adding that as a parent of a Vo-Tech student, going full virtual will be detrimental to their education. The more they go, they more they learn, and the more beneficial it is. Personally, that is why he agrees with both sides.

Mr. Marshall added that if the district stays with the current Health and Safety Plan, the school district will be forced to close the middle school next week and go full virtual, possibly impacting the high school as well. However, if the district continues with the hybrid, the middle school students will be able to return next week.

Mr. McCarthy commented as a parent and as a board member, that he is always looking at what is in the best interest of the faculty, staff, and students in the district. He personally feels that full face to face instruction is acceptable for some of the students now, if not all of the students. Looking at the mental health and interaction with other students, he supports the current Health and Safety Plan. He continued that the plan has been well thought out, reviewed, and evaluated by the Board and administration and it takes into account the health and safety of everybody. He stated that going with the hybrid model does not necessarily mean that the district never goes completely virtual anyway.

Mrs. Guzic asked Mr. Watt his opinion on complete virtual learning as a middle school parent.

Mr. Watt responded that complete virtual learning is worse than the hybrid, where students at least have two days to interact with teachers and ask questions.

Mrs. Guzic continued that everybody wants to be back full face to face, but some are not thinking of the possibility of a closure. The reality that the district stays in full face to face instruction is not likely to happen.

Mr. Pyo indicated that his biggest concern is that if the district goes full face to face, it would simply be enhancing the opportunity for students and faculty to go full virtual and it is going to be detrimental to every student.

Mr. Sheehan commented that looking at neighboring districts, a forced shutdown will be inevitable. The hybrid model could delay it. Also pointing out that shutdowns are immediate and that it could be nine or ten o'clock at night when everyone is notified that the district will be shut down for ten days.

Mr. Pyo noted that the district could still be shutdown in the hybrid model but agreed that he believes putting off full virtual learning and would be better for the students. He added that it is the Board of Directors' responsibility to make sure that the school functions in the best possible way, in a manner that is effective for students to learn.

Mr. Monica mentioned that one of the dangers is that not having contact with the high school students gives them too much time not concentrating on good things. The physical and mental balance for students is to have as much contact as the district can provide for them. Parents need to work; they cannot always be at home and they depend on the school district.

Mr. Marshall stated that the issues the school administrators are facing now is that the Department of Health is overwhelmed. If there is a positive test, the district must contact the Rapid Response Center and have the Department of Health return the call. The issue that we have been dealing with since Monday is that we still have not heard back from the Department of Health. It is regarding the number of students that have encountered someone who is positive. There are instances now where

schools must close because they need time to contact trace. If this would have been two Tuesdays ago and we contacted the Department of Health, we would have heard back that day. Now the Department of Health is asking the school to do the contact tracing of school activities.

Mr. Sheehan commented that the Board always takes pride in the students and the way they excel academically. If the Board does not follow suit with other districts, he believes that Penn Cambria students will excel academically versus failing miserably in a virtual environment. He also clarified that if the district goes full face to face instruction and then faces a shutdown, that the district does not revert to the hybrid model, it will revert to full virtual.

Mr. Pyo stated that one hundred percent virtual environment will create a problem for some of the students that do not have the technology to access all of the resources. All of the students do not maintain the same level of technology in their home and that there is still a deficiency there.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the length of a shutdown would depend on the recommendation of the Department of Health.

Mr. Marshall replied that if the district would shut down next week that it will not be from the Department of Health; that the shutdown would be from the school district. However, the Department of Health could extend the shutdown.

Mr. Krug requested clarification on the length of a shutdown if the state gets involved.

Mr. Marshall responded that it would depend on the Department of Health's contact tracing.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

A motion was offered by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Monica, and approved unanimously by voice aye vote, to accept the following resolution:

##### **HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN**

That the Board of Directors hereby approve modifications to the existing Penn Cambria School District Health and Safety Plan to show that the district would remain in the hybrid model, which means PreK-4 students would continue in full face to face instruction and grades 5-12 would use the hybrid model effective November 2nd, utilizing the Monday/Tuesday and Thursday/Friday days for instruction with remote learning session on Wednesdays. (*See Addendum "A"*)

ROLL CALL:    *Yes:* Mr. Albright, Mrs. Guzik, Mr. Krug, Mr. Monica, Miss Pyo, Mr. Sheehan, and Mr. Pyo  
                  *No:* Mr. McCarthy  
                  *Abstain:* 0

The Board discussed the following items in connection to the revised Health and Safety Plan: Hybrid model will stay in effect through December 23, 2020; student hybrid group days will flip with Group B students generally attending the first two days and Group A students attending the second two days for the second marking period; synchronous (real-time) sessions will be offered for all students grades 5-12 on Wednesday, November 25<sup>th</sup> as a way to practice synchronous sessions should they be necessary at some point during this year; scheduling a special meeting the week of December 14<sup>th</sup> to discuss the hybrid model; notifications to parents in regard to the change in the Health and Safety Plan; and that meal services as offered in quarter one will continue through quarter two.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was offered by Miss Pyo, seconded by Mr. Krug, and approved unanimously by voice aye vote, to accept the following resolution:

**RESOLVED:** That there being no further business, this meeting is adjourned at 12:10 P.M.