

Alpha Borough Public School Board of Education

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

January 28, 2021 6:00 p.m.

Approved February 16, 2021

Agenda

I. CALL TO ORDER - 6:00PM

II. OPENING STATEMENTS

A. Reading of the Notice of Public Meeting-

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is either discussed or acted upon.

The Board has fully complied with the notice requirements by advertising in The Express Times and The Star-Ledger posting publicly and by notifying the Municipal Clerk of the date, time and place of the meeting.

B. Roll Call

Travis Conway	X
Christopher McGee	X
Jennifer Pettinelli	X
Loretta Reed	X
Patrick Smith	X

C. Flag Salute – Pledge of Allegiance

D. Silent Meditation

E. District Mission Statement:

The mission of the Alpha Public School is to provide every student with the opportunity to receive a high quality education, in a small, personal, caring, safe and positive environment in which all students at all grade levels achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. In partnership with the parents and the community, a competent and dedicated staff guides students to develop confidence and become productive and contributing members of a constantly changing society.

Mrs. Pettinelli announced that the purpose this Special Meeting this evening is to discuss Alpha's plan for reopening our school.

III. PUBLIC INPUT

Mr. Kaminski asked if a second public input would be had after the Board's discussion.

Mrs. Pettinelli said that there would be a second public input session.

**ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

Agenda

IV. Reopening Committee Recommendations

Mr. Cohen reported to the Board on the Pandemic committee meeting. He spoke about the changes to the State requirements to opening schools under Orange on the matrix. Schools will no longer need to quarantine entire classes, but rather the students and siblings in the building. Mr. Cohen stated that the majority of the Pandemic committee recommends to the Board that even though the changes were made by the State, the school should remain remote until the county returns to Yellow on the matrix. If the Board would like to open, the majority of the Pandemic committee recommended a staggered schedule with Group A attending Monday and Tuesday, all students remote on Wednesday, and Group B attending Thursday and Friday, so students would be in school 2 days and remote 3 days.

V. Board discussion on remote/in-person/hybrid learning

Mr. McGee stated that the evidence he's seen does not show that there was a spike in numbers in the school during in-person learning. He said that the best learning is in-person. He felt that the teachers are doing a good job remotely, but he would like to see a ½ day in-person schedule five days a week. By prolonging the reopening of school, our students are giving up another school year.

Mr. Conway echoed Mr. McGee. Remote learning is getting tougher and tougher on the students and there is no substitute for in person learning. He also echoed that the teachers are doing a good job remotely. He is also in favor of a ½ day in person schedule five days a week. Mr. Conway questioned why it is a Board decision to reopen, but was not a Board decision to close. Mr. Cohen said that the State wanted the Board to now make that decision.

Mrs. Reed asked how many students had COVID. Mr. Cohen responded with the numbers 6 or 7, Mrs. Walker confirmed that there was only 1 positive case while the students were in-person, the rest were after Thanksgiving, while students were remote. Mrs. Reed said that based on those numbers she thought it was good to go back.

Mr. Smith echoed the Board members, adding that we have gone above and beyond the safety and cleaning requirements, noting the plexi-glass barriers for all students. Mr. Smith was in agreement with a 5 day ½ day in person schedule.

Mrs. Pettinelli echoed the Board and stated that the CDC came out on Tuesday stating that in-person instruction can be carried out safely as long as mask wearing and social distancing are maintained. Students educational, developmental, emotional, and mental health needs are best met in school. There is little evidence that schools spark outbreaks or increase transmission in the community. Alpha's reopening plan was well thought out and planned to keep the students and staff safe. The Board has spent the necessary money to have thermometers for temperature checks, plexiglass barriers, also alternating arrival and dismissal doors to limit student

**ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

Agenda

movement throughout the building. Mrs. Pettinelli proposed Monday as a remote learning day for all students, with the staff working from home to allow for cleaning of the building and Tuesday - Friday ½ day in person instruction with the option for parents to continue remote instruction for their children.

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

Mr. Kaminski - It is disheartening that the Board would go against the Association, teachers feelings, and Committee's recommendations. He said that God forbid something happens to the staff, the Board will be responsible.

Mrs. Payne - Working from home is difficult, teachers materials and delivery is better in school. She would like the Board to allow teachers to work on Mondays in school, if that is what we decide to do.

Mrs. Phillips - Asked for clarification on students coming to school with symptoms and would they be sent home?

Mr. Cohen said that the students would be sent to the nurse and then sent home for 10 days or after a negative COVID test. The students' siblings would also have to be sent home for 10 days or a negative COVID test as well.

Mrs. Flynn - Asked what the plan is if teachers are sick?

Mr. Cohen said that it would be done as it has in the past.

Mr. Kaminski asked how it would be handled if more teacher are out?

Mr. Cohen said that depending on the numbers, the school may need to go fully remote on those days.

Mr. Kaminski asked if the Board was willing to meet in person again for their meetings?

Mrs. Pettinelli said that the Board will have Mr. Cohen look into the square footage of the gym and cafeteria to see the capacity so that it can be determined how many people can be in the room at a given time. The Board will also need to amend the resolution previously passed to allow for the Board to reconvene in the school. The Board does not have an issue with meeting again at the school, but was continuing to go remote for the safety of the staff and students. It will be discussed further at the work session meeting and a motion to amend the resolution will be made at the regular meeting in February.

Mr. Kaminski said that there is a risk if the Board hasn't reconvened.

**ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

Agenda

Mrs. Pettinelli said that the Board was thinking of the staff and students, but will discuss amending the current resolution, but that will allow community members into the building and will require additional cleaning of the areas used.

Mr. Conway said that he was not sure how on-site versus remote meetings had anything to do with the education of the students. He felt that more people attend remotely and the Board receives more input from the public than during on-site meetings.

Mr. Kaminiski responded that it is a matter of leadership and setting the example.

Mr. McGee addressed Mr. Kaminski by saying that there is a risk, but we understand that we are taking mitigating steps. He also said that he was more than happy to reconvene the meetings on-site.

Mr. McGee made a motion to direct APS to reopen 5 days a week on an early dismissal schedule beginning February 1, 2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. Smith.

Roll Call Vote

Conway - Yes
McGee - Yes
Reed - Yes
Smith - Yes
Pettinelli - Yes

The motion carries.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Loretta Reed, seconded by Patrick Smith, to adjourn at 6:32 p.m.

VOICE VOTE - All in Favor

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Pettinelli
Board President