

Lexington City Schools
Minutes
August 24, 2020

The Lexington City School Board met on August 24, 2020, at 5:00 pm via Zoom video conference for a Special Called Meeting on the updates to School reopening and School calendar. Present: Timothy Diette, Owen Collins, Tammy Dunn, Mollie Fox, Glenn Sullivan, Rebecca Walters-Superintendent, Stephanie Burch-Clerk.

Upon motion of Mr. Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Dunn, the Board approved the Agenda.

Ms. Walters gave an update to School Reopening and School Calendar. She stated that this has been the hardest decision since she started her educational journey. She went over the current plans and strategies; they have consulted with and followed guidance from VDOE, VDH, and the CDC; developed an instructional plan that offers families a choice of in-person instruction or a 100% virtual learning option; communicated plans and procedures with families and community; adopted a universal masking policy following CDC/VDH guidance; trained staff on COVID-19, classroom first aid and cleaning/disinfecting (using CARES Act funds from the school and city allocations to purchase needed supplies); provided Chromebooks for all students K-8; face masks and face shields, gloves, PPE for nurses, foggers for cleaning, hand sanitizer and signage were procured.

Ms. Walters stated that we know that students learn best at school, but have worried about social and emotional wellness of our students without the support from our teachers, counselors, and staff. After the August 12th School Board meeting we agreed to move forward with the current plan at that time, monitoring community transmission data and any new updates or input in deciding if modifications to the plan would be needed. With current concerns and considerations, Lexington/Rockbridge County is now considered an area of “moderate transmission” with fluctuating data. As the start to school approaches, teachers and staff have voiced concerns and fears. While we have sincere worries and fears among many of our staff, we also worry about our students and their families because we know our community depends on our schools being open.

Ms. Walters, after discussing all the concerns, made a recommendation that the School Board consider implementing a Phase II reopening plan to provide 100% virtual learning for all students K-8 for the first nine weeks of school. Many districts have moved to this approach. Also, to be considered at this time, an update to the school calendar to delay the start date to September 8th and modify the calendar to add student days during the year. Lexington City Schools will continue to monitor VDH COVID data for our community and communicate regularly with VDH for guidance regarding K-12 schools and determine a plan for second quarter by the October 14th School Board meeting. All students K-8 will participate in 100% virtual learning M-F with 4 days of direct instruction from the teacher (M-Th) with “on your own” learning tasks, and 1 day of independent, asynchronous instruction (F). Teachers will be

accessible on Fridays by email, phone, or conference. Some students with specialized services (IEP or EL) may be offered in-person service time weekly as determined by their IEP team or case managers. Students will complete daily learning tasks for attendance and academic purposes. New instruction will be provided and grades will be assigned. Teachers will provide “live” synchronous instruction, offer recorded lessons, and asynchronous instruction to complete at home. Elementary students will follow a daily schedule with several developmentally appropriate blocks of teacher-guided instruction, “on your own” learning time, and breaks for lunch and movement. Middle school students will follow a daily schedule of core courses and an elective block with breaks between classes and a lunch/movement block. Band would be offered as a virtual class. All students will have a virtual P.E. class with a physical fitness log and health lessons. Teachers and staff will work at school Monday-Friday. Health and safety mitigation strategies will be followed for everyone at school. Each K-8 student will be provided a school-owned Chromebook for at-home learning and LCS will offer weekly meals distribution for pre-order and pick-up at school.

Ms. Walters stated that none of these plans and decisions have been made lightly. There is not a “no-risk” or “right” plan to meet the needs of all involved. We can, however, determine the safest possible plan for students and staff to start the school year and make modifications as our situation changes.

Mr. Diette thanked Ms. Walters, Mr. White, Ms. Camden, and Mr. Keesee for all of the time and hard work that has gone into this process. Ms. Fox asked Ms. Walters why K-1 were not moving into Phase II. Ms. Walters explained that it would be extremely difficult for them to be socially distanced, wearing face masks and sitting in a space that is 6 feet away from each other. Discussion was very little. Mr. Sullivan stated that staffing demands are hard and the concerns and anxiety levels are high among the teachers and staff members. Ms. Dunn also stated that stress levels are high and that 100% virtual would relieve some of the stress and worries.

Ms. Walters shared the revised calendar with the Board for approval. Some changes were made with the start date being September 8, 2020, and the year ending June 4, 2021. President’s Day in February will now be a school day.

Upon motion of Mr. Collins, seconded by Ms. Fox, the Board approved the revised school calendar for 2020-2021.

Upon motion of Ms. Dunn, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, the Board approved the Updates to School Reopening plan.

Ms. Walters plans to send out to all teachers, staff, parents and post on facebook the updated calendar and the revised learning program.

Upon motion of Mr. Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Dunn, the Board adjourned at 6:11 pm.

Board Chair

Board Clerk