

CLEAR FORK VALLEY LOCAL SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting
Butler Elementary Cafeteria
October 21, 2021
6:30 p.m.

District Mission Statement: *Striving to Exceed Expectations*

The Regular Meeting of the Clear Fork Valley Local School board was called to order at 6:30 PM by Board President, Mr. Gary McCue.

Roll call was taken and the following members were present: Mr. Ryan Knuckles, Mrs. Lori McKee, Mr. Gary McCue, Mr. Carl Gonzalez, and Mrs. Amy Weekley.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Raymond Hoskins of Woodruff Road read the following statement:

My name is Ray Hoskins. I live at Woodruff Rd. I have two students in the district, one is a freshman and the other is a sophomore.

I would like to thank you, the Board, for allowing me to speak tonight. I come in all humility and honor as I know that yours is an incredibly difficult task. I do not come to cast aspersions or unfair criticisms. I come to stand up for our students who do not seem to have a voice right now. It is both my right and my duty as a freedom-loving American, and veteran, to stand-up for those who are unable to stand up for themselves.

As a former high school history teacher, I always encouraged my students to think critically. I think it is time for us to do the same.

A few weeks ago, my son was contact traced and quarantined at home for a week and possibly two. Fortunately, he is old enough to take care of himself or my wife or I would have had to have taken time off work to be at home with him which could have cost us thousands of dollars in lost wages. Lost wages to stay home with a perfectly healthy child.

This time away from school could have cost him significantly affecting his grades and academic progress. I struggled with math in school and I can't imagine how far it would have put me behind missing out on an entire week of instruction. I was not skilled enough to learn it from the book on my own. I was barely able to learn it with the instruction of my teachers. Yet, we are merely sending work home for them to do while the rest of the class continues on.

During his quarantine, there were no online options for instruction, which I do not understand, as every teacher in the district was teaching online last year. If a child is

quarantined, shouldn't they have the same access to instruction that they had during the shut-downs of the last few years?

Fortunately, my son is a very good student and he was able to get caught up. He is a much better student than I ever was.

Sadly, some students have had multiple quarantines.

I would like to take issue with the practice of contact tracing. It is nonsensical and arbitrary at best. Any child not wearing a mask who is literally timed to be within three feet of a person who was diagnosed with COVID for fifteen minutes is now contact traced via video monitoring and forced to quarantine regardless of whether or not they are symptomatic. These numbers are totally arbitrary as just last year the distance was six feet. Now it is only three. What changed? And where did the fifteen minutes come from? Why not fourteen or sixteen? What is the difference between fourteen minutes and fifty nine seconds and fifteen minutes? Is one second that much more dangerous? Let's think critically.

In talking to members of the staff, the students at the High School and Junior High who are most being affected by these quarantines and indirect masking mandates are those who are involved in extracurricular activities. When the kids are setting their watches for fourteen minutes and thirty seconds to alert them when to change seats, you know they are thinking more critically than we are. What student athlete wants to be forced to take a week or two off practice, conditioning, and competition? That could result in a significant loss of position, playing time, and even injury as they will no longer be in top physical condition?

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic there have been less than 600 kids die from this disease. In the same time, nearly 1000 kids have died from Pneumonia. According to Dr. Marty Makary, of Johns Hopkins' University, the total number of kids who have died from COVID without some underlying condition is between ten and twenty. That's ten to twenty out of a total of a population of 74.1 million children in the US. (www.childstats.gov/AMERICASCHILDREN/tables/pop1.asp) And, according to Dr. Sanjay Gupta, CNN's Chief Medical Correspondent, a 51-year-old man who is vaccinated is at a higher risk of dying from COVID than a child who is NOT vaccinated.

At the beginning of this year, I asked one of you why we are mandating masks on buses but not in the buildings. I was informed that it was because of the money that comes from the government. Their money, their rules. Where does that stop? There is a lot of controversy and disagreement throughout our country now regarding who can use what bathroom and what should or shouldn't be taught in the schools? Where is the line between state control and local control? If the state starts to mandate positions on these issues, will you then push back? If so what is the difference? If not, then I have to seriously question whether or not we are actually a locally controlled school system.

We now have nearly two years of data to draw from and I would like to ask what percentage of students, who have been contract traced, have come to be diagnosed with COVID during their required quarantine? Do we even know? Have we even asked the question? Wouldn't that tell us as parents and you, as board members, if what we are doing is working or not?

One of my sons spent an entire weekend hanging out in a small cabin with five other boys. On the following Monday, one of the boys tested positive for COVID...none of the rest did. My son also has an auto-immune disorder for which he has to take an immuno-suppressant, yet he did not get sick. My brother-in-law drank from the same bottle as a friend who got sick with COVID the following day, yet he did not get sick. Actually, several people had a drink from the same bottle. Perhaps a good swig of alcohol is the answer to all of this. I would bet that all of you have heard these same kinds of stories yet we continue to contact trace and quarantine perfectly healthy kids.

I have also been told that we are doing this because of the Richland County Health Department requirements. Who is paying for the manpower to enforce this? Is this an unfunded mandate? Is this what our tax money is going to now? If they want this contact tracing done, why aren't they doing it? Are they overwhelmed? Aren't our administrators, teachers, and nurses also overwhelmed? If the Health Department, who issued the mandate, is able to say, "sorry, we are too busy to enforce it", then why can't our school say that we are too busy to enforce it as well?

It seems that every school district in the area is implementing their own policies and procedures around this. Some are at 100% masking and some are at no masking or contact tracing at all. Yet, people are still getting sick and getting better. If everyone is doing something different but getting the same results, shouldn't we choose the least restrictive and least detrimental option?

COVID will never go away 100%. Just like many other diseases that have varying degrees of threat to individual lives based on a number of factors. Given that fact, if these measures are warranted when 600 out of 72 million kids are dying then these are measures that will be warranted forever. Are you willing to do this forever? Also, this sets a precedent for any other disease that has the amount of impact, or worse. Does it not? Anything that kills over 600 children should deserve this much attention, correct?

I mentioned pneumonia numbers earlier. Will we do this for Pneumonia now? Will we do this for the flu? If not, why not? If the argument is that it protects the vulnerable, what have the vulnerable done all these years without government intervention?

In conclusion, most students don't support this policy. Most parents don't support this policy. (privately) Most administrators, teachers, and bus drivers don't support this policy. Eventually, we need to do what is right and best for the kids and not what is expedient for us personally or politically.

As I said in the beginning, I always taught my kids to think critically. In the interest of our kids, let's set a good example. Let's think critically.

Thank you.

Mr. Gary McCue thanked Mr. Hoskins and replied to his letter by stating "I wish I could hand you all the minutes from all of the meeting for the last 6 to 8 months because we have tackled every one of these issues." I'd love to have a conversation with you off the record, after this so we don't eat up a lot of time because we have addressed every one of these issues." "There are a lot of people in the room that agree with you and some that do not." "We in the Valley are doing very, very well. We have awesome numbers, knock on wood, whether we have divine intervention or what we are doing

correctly, scientifically, really is working here in the Valley.” “That is correct that some districts do some things differently. There are a couple of districts right up the street that are mask mandating and we are still parental discretion for the masks.” “We are going to press forward with that unless we need to do something otherwise.” He offered copies of the Richland Public Health Guidelines to the public and stated that we will follow the rules in the Valley and stated “we’ve done really well following those rules.” He further explained “we do the contact tracing because we don’t want Richland Public Health or any other entity doing the contact tracing because we do a much better job.” He stated that some people agree with what we are doing and some people don’t think that we are going far enough but we are doing the best we can do with what we are given. He explained the measures that are taken are “for the protection of the students, to keep them in school as safely as we can.” Further stating “this is the best way we can do it because we don’t want them out of school on-line.” He also explained that the teachers should have something in place for the students that are out for the 5-7 days.

Mr. Hoskins responded by stating “that the numbers don’t make sense” Stating that data is what is driving these decisions. Mr. McCue replied that the district’s policies are being driven by guidance and the district in requiring “the least that we have to do to keep the kids in schools.” He stated “for the Board, we are following the rules, absolutely following the rules and locally here are those rules” referring to the Richland County Health Department guidelines. He also stated that “nationally, really the only rules we are following are what involve our buses, because of the funding. Because I am to protect the Board and the district.” He further explained himself by stating that not following the rules could expose the district to possibility of litigation and he is not willing to “allow our district to be dragged into something like that when it could have been avoided” by following the rules given to us.

Mr. Gonzalez asked for some clarification on the students being directed to move every 14 minutes and thirty seconds. Mr. Hoskins stated he didn’t know, replying “I’m not saying they were instructed by staff, I’m saying that the kids are figuring out how to get around these draconian rules, these ridiculous rules that we have implemented and placed on them.” Mr. Gonzalez then replied that he could assure Mr. Hoskins the Board will use measured responses to whatever they come up with.

Mr. Adam Brokaw of 568 Honeycreek Road Bellville spoke asking about the rules and where he could find the literature on the rules that we have to go by. Mr. McCue referred to the guidelines from the Richland County Health Department. Mr. Brokaw asked if it was the same as the K-12 guidance on their website. Ms. Wyckoff stated that the district receives separate guidance from Richland Public Health and she wasn’t sure if it was on their website. Mr. Brokaw then asked “who runs the school, the six people up there?” Mr. McCue answered “we are the Board.” Mr. Brokaw then asked “who ultimately has the decision in all this, you six people up there, or is it Richland County Health?” Mr. McCue stated “districts are given the autonomy to do what they want for their district. Lexington school district has a mask mandate until they get their numbers down. You must wear a mask going to Lexington.” He stated that the Superintendent makes those recommendations and the Board monitors the Superintendent. He stated “our business up here is not to run the district, think of the hawk on the wire.” Mr. Brokaw asked if it was the Boards’ business to do what is best for the kids?” Mr. McCue’s reply was “absolutely.” Mr. Brokaw replied “everybody in the room has had time to get vaccinated if they want to and wear a mask if they want

to". He stated that everything he found on the district's website in the past couple of days is a guideline and his understanding of a guideline is that it is not mandatory. He stated that it is all guidance and recommended precautions, that none of this is mandated from what he is reading.

Mr. McCue answered "our goal, based on the Superintendent's input, is to get through this with the minimum amount of rules to keep the numbers down." "It has proven out that to do these measures, to do the distancing, to do the tracing, and to do the quarantining it absolutely brought our numbers down and we can prove it, it works." Mr. Brokaw then asked "what the time frame was, is it two more weeks to flatten the curve or is it five more years, where are we at, what is our end game?" Mr. McCue stated "we are doing really well on numbers that is why we are going to hold in place with what we have to keep the kids in school." He stated "it is working, we want to keep the numbers as low as we can to keep everybody in the buildings and that is where we have arrived." There was further discussion about other districts having to mandate masks in order to bring their numbers down.

Mr. Brokaw stated that his kids are done wearing masks and that is his family's choice. Ms. Wyckoff stated that masking is the parents' choice but the quarantine part comes from Richland Public Health and it is in law. Mr. Brokaw asked how often Richland Public Health comes to the district to police their rules. He stated that Richland Public Health "guidelines say that they are responsible for all the quarantining so why don't we put our foot down and not help them?" Ms. Wyckoff answered that stating that other districts took that stance and those districts ended up being closed for several days. Mr. McCue stated that we don't want to take the control out of our hands and give it to RPH, "we want to keep it in house because we are doing really well doing our own contact tracing". He stated "I know the oversight, the videos, watching kids, I get it, it's uncomfortable and it's not where we want to be and we hope to be done with it soon. Our numbers are low."

Mr. Brokaw then asked how many kids have died from COVID in Ohio. He suggested since more kids die from auto accidents not wearing their seatbelts, and since state law is to wear a seatbelt, the district should start surveilling students in the parking lot to see if they are wearing their seatbelts because students get a parking permit from the school. He stated "if my child gets contact trace quarantined and is not sick, I'm going to drive them to school and they are going to get out at the Junior High. I'm going to leave and go to work and if there is a problem, have them call me. What the school does with my kid at that time, whether it is for one day or for five days in a row, you guys do what you got to do." Mr. Brokaw continued with questions and points that supported his perspective on quarantining for a several more minutes until Mr. McCue stated the meeting would be moving on.

Mr. Derek Fisher, principal representing the Knox County Career Center, stated that "they are hearing the same things in Knox County." "All of your anger, all of your frustration, I think probably there are some people in this room that share that. I will say as a parent myself, a lot of your anger is misplaced, taking it out on the Board and the school. If you are that upset and you want this to change then you do need to go to your local health department. They are the only ones who are going to make this change. They (referring to the Board) cannot alter the quarantines, they don't have the authority, they cannot. As Janice said, they can shut the school down, the Health Department can come in and shut your district down. They are the ones who are making these rules that the schools have to follow. Have to follow. I don't agree with a

lot of it myself, I'm with you. But if you truly want change during this time, that anger, those points need to be taken to the Richland County Health Department." "If you're

angry and you're not seeing change, it's because they (referring to the Board) cannot do it. They're controlling what they can to keep you in business right now to keep your kids in school, but they are at the mercy of the Health Department. I've heard our Health Department also play the game of saying this a recommendation. Well if you don't follow the recommendation and something goes south they can say, well we recommended it. If you do follow it and people are upset they can say, well it was only a recommendation." "I feel for what you they going through, we're going through it down there, all over, every district is going through it and if you truly want this to change, take these arguments, take these points, go to the Health Department." Mr. McCue added "for us to sit up here and say, it's the Health Department, it's the Health Department, it sounds like we're kicking the can and we're not. We've gleaned all of the information, whittled it down to these few rules that we're sticking to, to keep the schools open and keep the kids in the classrooms."

Mr. Trent Wine of 243 Markey Street, Bellville asked the Board and the Superintendent, if the guidelines were set and there is a 15 minute trace, without a mask if the district could ring a bell every 14 minutes and have the students shuffle/scramble. Mr. McCue answered that he knows there are groups of kids that just get up and leave at certain times.

2021-254 **Upon Motion** by Mr. Knuckles and seconded by Mrs. Weekley, the Board approved the minutes of the September 20, 2021 Regular Meeting as written.

The vote was:	Mrs. McKee	Yes	Mr. Gonzalez	Yes
	Mr. Knuckles	Yes	Mr. McCue	Yes
	Mrs. Weekley	Yes		

TREASURER'S REPORT

Upon Motion by Mrs. McKee and seconded by Mr. Knuckles, the Board:

2021-255 Approved the September 2021 Financial Report.

Accepted the following donations:

2021-256

\$50.00 from Megan Hill to the Middle School Student Council

\$180.00 from Adam Brokaw Construction LLC to the Middle School to the 6th Grade Outdoor School

\$100.00 from Pleasant Hill Golf Course to the Middle School 6th Grade Outdoor School

\$30.00 from Stoodt's to the Middle School 6th Grade Outdoor School

\$40.00 from Barbara Hendrix to the Bellville Elementary Military Lunch Bunch

\$100.00 from John and Carolyn Parrott to the Bellville Elementary Military Lunch Bunch

2021-257 Approved a premium moratorium for the January 2022 accrual payment for the Jefferson Health Plan.

2021-258 Approved the following transfers:

From Permanent Improvement Fund (003) to Maintenance Fund (034) in the amount of \$105,837.00 per OFCC agreement.

From the Capital Improvement Fund (070) to Bond Fund (002) in the amount of \$250,000.00 for debt repayment of Elementary Facility project construction bond.

From the General Fund (001) to Bond Fund (002) in the amount of \$511,887.50 for debt repayment of Elementary Facility project construction bond.

2021-259 Accepted the quotes received on October 8, 2021 for snow plowing / salt spreading for the 2021-2022 school year and awards a contract to Liberty Lawn Care.

2021-260 Acknowledged that on October 12, 2021 a notice was sent to the media soliciting input for use of ARP IDEA funds for Fiscal Year 2022 and that no input had been received by October 21, 2021.

The vote was:	Mrs. McKee	Yes	Mr. Gonzalez	Yes
	Mr. Knuckles	Yes	Mr. McCue	Yes
	Mrs. Weekley	Yes		

2021-261 **Upon Motion** by Mr. McCue and seconded by Mr. Gonzalez the Board accepted the following donations:

\$100.00 from Weekley Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram Co. to the Middle School 6th Grade Outdoor School

The vote was:	Mrs. McKee	Yes	Mr. Gonzalez	Yes
	Mr. Knuckles	Yes	Mr. McCue	Yes
	Mrs. Weekley	Abstain		

Upon Motion by Mr. Knuckles and seconded by Mrs. Weekley, the Board:

2021-262 Accepted the following supplemental resignation:

Gabriel Dannemiller Butler Student Council

2021-263 Accepted the following resignation:

Taylor Cremeans – Cafeteria Worker – effective 10/1/2021

2021-264 Employed the following classified personnel on a one year limited contract beginning with the 2021-2022 school year per the adopted salary schedule, pending completion of requirements:

Jennifer Bebout Cafeteria Worker – effective 10/4/2021
Tammi Means Aide – effective 10/4/2021
Donita Robison Bus Driver – effective 10/18/2021

2021-265 Employed the following certified personnel on a one (1) year supplemental contract for the 2021-2022 school year:

Tyler Hunter 8th Grade Girls Basketball
Sydney Moore Butler Student Council

2021-266 In accordance with 3319.22 ORC the Clear Fork Board of Education affirmed that the following positions have been offered to the certified employees of the Clear Fork Valley Local School District and no qualified employee has been selected for the position(s). Furthermore, the Board affirmed that the position(s) had been advertised on the Clear Fork website on March 22, 2021 or July 16, 2021 to those who may be qualified and that the following personnel be employed on a one (1) year supplemental contract for the 2021-2022 school year per the adopted salary schedule:

Jeff Layne JV Girls Basketball
Chris Spencer 7th Grade Boys Basketball

The vote was:	Mrs. McKee	Yes	Mr. Gonzalez	Yes
	Mr. Knuckles	Yes	Mr. McCue	Yes
	Mrs. Weekley	Yes		

Upon Motion by Mrs. Weekley and seconded by Mr. McCue, the Board:

2021-267 Approved the 2021-2022 Gifted Identification and Service Plan.

Adopted the following resolution:

2021-268 1. Whereas, the deduction of funds from the School District by the Ohio Department of Education and payment of those funds to private schools (Educational Choice, voucher funds) diminishes the amount of funding and the levels of educational opportunity for the education of the pupils in the district and

2. Whereas, the deduction of school voucher funds from the School District further reduces the funding available to support the additional needs of district minority pupils, pupils in poverty and pupils with disabilities, and,

3. Whereas, the deduction of school voucher funds from the School District can result in the involuntary transfer of district local tax revenue, approved by the voters of the District for the support of the District's operating expenses, to private religious schools for the support of those schools' programs in violation of the rights of the District taxpayers, and,

4. Whereas, the deduction of school voucher funds from the School District increases reliance on local tax revenue to maintain school operations in violation of the Ohio Constitution and clear directives of the Ohio Supreme Court.

Section 1. Now, Therefore, The Board of Education finds and determines that the deduction of school voucher funds from the School District is harmful to the district, its

pupils, taxpayers, voters and staff.

Section 2. The Board of Education authorizes and directs the School District's joinder of the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding (Coalition) and directs the District Treasurer to pay Coalition dues as set forth in Section 3.

Section 3. Coalition dues for the 2021-2022 school year are the sum of \$2.00 per district pupil (enrollment listed on most recent report card), except that for ESC boards of education the dues shall be the sum of \$.20 cents per pupil (ADM as of the latest Report Card) or \$3,000, whichever is less. Dues shall be allocated by the Coalition as follows: 1) \$.50 per pupil shall be initially allocated to the payment of Coalition operating expenses, and, 2) \$1.50 per pupil shall be allocated to the support of the Coalition's efforts in opposition to the deduction of school voucher funds from this, and other school districts. Coalition dues are payable upon passage of this resolution.

The vote was:	Mrs. McKee	Yes	Mr. Gonzalez	Abstain
	Mr. Knuckles	Yes	Mr. McCue	Yes
	Mrs. Weekley	Yes		

Ms. Wyckoff shared with the Board that the district's FFA animal stock judging team when to Kansas City to compete nationally and they came home with a fifth place in the nation win, congratulating them on a great job. She also shared with the Board a newspaper article that will be coming out where the Treasurer department was interviewed about the impact of COVID on the district's finances. Mr. McCue then thanked Janice for doing the CEO you should know interview. Mrs. Weekely stated that Ms. Wyckoff represented Clear Fork very well. Ms. Wyckoff stated "From the heart, Clear Fork is a special place. On a Friday night, almost 100% of the High School is there, on the field, in the band, on the Football team, Cheerleading, there are little kids playing football on the hill, people have special chairs, the sun is setting, the lights are on, it's a magical place."

2021-269 Upon Motion by Mrs. Weekley and seconded by Mr. Knuckles, the Board adjourned from Regular Session at 7:23 PM.

The vote was:	Mrs. McKee	Yes	Mr. Gonzalez	Yes
	Mr. Knuckles	Yes	Mr. McCue	Yes
	Mrs. Weekley	Yes		

Gary McCue, Board President

Bradd Stevens, Treasurer