

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PUEBLO SCHOOL DISTRICT 60 Tuesday, March 1, 2022 (5:00 PM)

1.0 CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Board Chair Dr. Margaret Wright called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

UPON THE ROLL BEING CALLED, THE FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Barbara Clementi

Matthew Cranswick

Kathy DeNiro

Thomas Farrell (participated via audio conference call)

Margaret Wright

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Richard E. Bump, Attorney (participated via audio conference call)

2.0 CORRECTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no corrections or modifications to the agenda at this time.

3.0 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Adoption of Agenda

Recommendation: It is requested that the Board of Education adopts the agenda for March 1, 2022 as presented and/or modified.

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member **(Barbara Clementi)** Moved, Member **(Kathy DeNiro)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'It is requested that the Board of Education adopts the agenda for March 1, 2022 as presented'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

9.0 REPORTS

District 60 COVID-19 Management and Mitigation Plan Update

Executive Director Andy Burns reported that information, guidance and metrics from the Center for Disease Control was based on new COVID hospitalizations, hospital capacity, and new COVID cases to determine a local community's COVID-19 level (low, medium and high). As of last week, Pueblo County was in the high category. Prior to this guidance, CDC recommended universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors regardless of vaccination status in all transmission levels. Since coming out with the new standards, universal masking is no longer required.

Mr. Burns stated that nationally, the United States is now averaging 66,000 new COVID cases, a figure that has plummeted from a pike of more than 800,000 in mid-January to a level comparable of July 2020. As of February 28, Pueblo County's seven case rate is 55 per 100,000. At last week's Board meeting, this figure was 210 per 100,000 (a 74% decrease). This places Pueblo County in the Colorado Department of Public Health and

Environment moderate category for transmission. As of March 1, the County's one week's positivity rate is 2.5%. At last week's Board meeting, this figure was 6.2% and the state was 7%. This represents a 60% decrease.

On February 25, Colorado Governor Jared Polis unveiled a four prong roadmap to prepare for the state's future in dealing with COVID. The Governor stated that Coloradoans are up-to-date on COVID vaccinations and can return to life as normal. Nationally, New York's statewide school mask mandate for schools ends on March 2 and California, Oregon, and Washington will end their statewide school mask mandates on March 12, 2022. On February 28, the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment removed its mask mandate for staff, clients, and visitors. Effective March 7, Colorado State University-Pueblo will remove the mask mandate.

Assistant Superintendent DeCesaro highlighted the changes to the updated COVID Management & Mitigation Plan. The plan and strategies are flexible and information may be changed or updated upon receiving new or additional public health or community information. The plan is subject to change by the superintendent or designee based on new public health information.

Board Member Cranswick asked a question regarding the ICU hospitalization beds currently occupied. Mr. Burns stated that 20 patients were currently hospitalized. Board Member Cranswick expressed a concern with the 15% or high category as designed by CDC COVID-19 community level. Dr. Cranswick stated the vaccination rate in Pueblo for 5-11 year old children is poor and moving too quickly puts the youngest population at risk. He also stated a concern that, as of last week, 22 District schools were in outbreak status based on the new community definition of five cases per school and asked how the district would limit this number as we move forward should masks be removed at this time. Dr. Cranswick asked how the transmissibility would be determined in a decreasing testing environment or when public testing goes away. Assistant Superintendent DeCesaro responded that metrics will continue to evolve and the District will monitor absentee rates and the amount of illnesses in consultation with PDPHE. Dr. Cranswick asked for reassurance that the Pueblo community is being look after. He expressed disappointment that a response plan had not been presented. He stated that if there is no action taken at the community level, the action must occur at the district level.

Board Member DeNiro thanked the staff for real time data. She asked how the District would communicate with parents, specifically if a temporary masking situation arises. She noted that individuals who wish to continue to wear a mask do have the option and this should also be communicated. Superintendent Macaluso responded that a district level plan to communicate has been developed and is ready to be communicated. Board Member Farrell expressed appreciation for the flexibility articulated in the plan and the ability to 'spot check' the schools and take appropriate action when necessary. Board President Wright asked if the District would continue to provide masks should the District remove the mask mandate order, but strongly recommended the wearing of facial coverings. Superintendent Macaluso stated that surgical and N95 masks would be available to staff and students. Board Member Cranswick added that District 60 strongly recommends the wearing of facial coverings, especially for the unvaccinated and immune

comprised individuals. Superintendent Macaluso stated that the signage would reflect that facial coverings is no longer mandated, but strongly recommended.

12.0 ACTION ITEMS

COVID-19 Resolution

Board Member Clementi acknowledged that District 60 has been diligent in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. She reiterated that metrics change on a regular basis and there is flexibility in the Mitigation Plan. Board Member Clementi submitted an amendment to the Resolution to modify the effective date to March 2, 2022.

Board Member Cranswick stated that without the numbers and being in the moderate, he could not support the amendment. He stated that part of the CDC recommendations is that we adapt when we reach certain levels.

Board Vice President Farrell asked about the intent of the original date of March 2, 2022. Superintendent Macaluso stated the change in the effective date would not interfere with the District's ability to communicate the exemption from the PDPHE Mask Mandate Order.

Board President Wright acknowledged the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and thanked District 60 staff for their hard work and perseverance in assuring the safety of our staff and students.

AMENDMENT TO THE MOTION

Member **(Barbara Clementi)** Moved, Member **(Kathy DeNiro)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'The Resolution Opting out of Pueblo County Mask Mandate and Approving COVID-19 Mitigation Plan be amended to be effective March 2, 2022'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **(4)** Nay: **(1)**. The motion **(Carried)**. **(4-1)**; Ayes: Barbara Clementi, Kathy DeNiro, Thomas Farrell, Margaret Wright; No: Matthew Cranswick

The Board of Education was asked to adopt the COVID-19 Resolution Opting out of Pueblo County Mask Mandate and Approving COVID-19 Mitigation Plan.

PUEBLO SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 60 RESOLUTION

(Opting out of Pueblo County Mask Mandate and Approving COVID-19 Mitigation Plan)

WHEREAS, the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment (PDPHE) issued a Public Health Order on August 30, 2021 (PDPHE Mask Mandate) requiring all students ages two and older in any pre-kindergarten through 12th grade schools, and any district or school staff member, school visitors or contractors who are on-site at a school facility, to wear a Face Covering while inside any school building within Pueblo County; and

WHEREAS, Pueblo School District No. 60 has followed the PDPHE Mask Mandate requiring Face Coverings within its schools and extended the requirement to include all district buildings and facilities; and

WHEREAS, on January 26, 2022, the PDPHE issued its 1st Revised Public Health Order (1st Revised Order) modifying the PDPHE Mask Mandate by, among other things, allowing school districts by a formal vote of its governing board to elect one of two options in lieu of following the PDPHE Mask Mandate; and

WHEREAS, Option 2 under the 1st Revised Order allows a school district's board of education itself to manage the COVID pandemic and mitigation protocols within its respective schools and in school activities; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of Pueblo School District No. 60 has considered the data and guidance of the PDPHE, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and, being fully advised in the premises, desires to opt out of the PDPHE Mask Mandate by selecting Option 2 of the 1st Revised Order and adopting its own COVID management and mitigation protocols for its schools, facilities, and school activities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Education of Pueblo School District No. 60 as follows:

1. That the Board hereby elects to opt out of the PDPHE Mask Mandate and adopts Option 2 under the 1st Revised Public Health Order.

2. That the Board hereby adopts its own COVID Management and Mitigation Plan attached and incorporated into this Resolution as Exhibit A as presented at the March 1, 2022 meeting of the Board.

3. That the Board authorizes its President to prepare, sign, and deliver an official letter on behalf of the Board and Pueblo School District No. 60 to the PDPHE Board of Health and to the PDPHE Public Health Director confirming the Board's decision to opt out of the PDPHE Mask Mandate.

4. That the Board hereby delegates to the Superintendent of Schools or her designee the authority to make any modifications to the District's COVID Management and Mitigation Plan as she or her designee deem appropriate as well as any revisions that are necessary to obtain the approval of the Plan by the PDPHE for exemption from the PDPHE Mask Mandate Order.

5. That the District's COVID Management and Mitigation Plan and its exemption from the PDPHE Mask Mandate Order shall be effective as of March 2, 2022 and continue until further action by the Board or directive by the Superintendent of Schools or her designee.

Adopted this 1st day of March 2022.

Recommendation: The Board of Education adopts the Resolution Opting out of Pueblo County Mask Mandate and Approving COVID-19 Mitigation Plan as amended.

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member (**Barbara Clementi**) Moved, Member (**Kathy DeNiro**) Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'The Board of Education adopts the COVID-19 Resolution as presented in the March 1, 2022 Board materials'. Aye: **(4)** Nay: **(0)**. The motion (**Carried**). **(4-1)**;
Ayes: Barbara Clementi, Kathy DeNiro, Thomas Farrell, Margaret Wright; No: Matthew Cranswick

15.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm.