

Members Present	Members Absent
Keith Adams	
Albert D. Marazus entered 07:07 PM	Michael M. Mistishen
Kevin Wigoda	Jessica M. McGrath
Cynthia Lubinsky entered 7:13 PM	Sarah R. Newton
Michael Kroznuskie	Christopher M. Bowers

A Special Meeting for General Purposes of the Minersville Area Board of Education was held in the Career & Counseling Center of the Junior-Senior High School and Zoom on Monday evening, February 14, 2022. The meeting was called to order by President Keith Adams at 7:00 PM.

On roll call, the following responded: Keith Adams, Kevin Wigoda, Michael Kroznuskie, Michael Mistishen, Jessica McGrath, Sarah Newton, and Christopher Bowers.

Others present: Dr. Carl G. McBreen, Superintendent; Stephen Bressi, High School Principal; Nannette Bentz, Elementary Principal; Jill Atkinson, Special Education Supervisor; Nicholas A. Quinn, District Solicitor; and Barbara Conville, Secretary to the Superintendent/Assistant to the Secretary.

This meeting was called to discuss the Health and Safety Plan by President Keith Adams. Adams opened up the discussion by stating this is a polarizing topic, and commended the community for their patience and input. Before allowing for public comment Adams stated that any participant wanting to speak would have three minutes to do so and reminded this was not a dialogue or question/answer session. Adams stated there were five people for public comment.

James Croley, 88 Low Road, Pottsville, PA spoke. Croley started by saying that COVID-19 is merely a cold for healthy students. He shared an electronic petition that he created online signed by community participants to end masking in school and also stated the District was not following the Sunshine Act. Mr. Croley submitted the petition to President Adams.

Jeff Tobin, 80 New Mines Road, Branchdale, PA was next to speak. He spoke to metrics from other schools, questioned data being used for Minersville. He continued on that Minersville should speak to Blue Mountain regarding quarantining students and Minersville should have the option of masking with a waiver parents could sign to not mask their children. Mr. Tobin handed a document to President Adams.

Next, Kenzie Tobin, daughter of Jeff Tobin and 7th grade student living at same address. She shared with the board and audience that she was quarantined for a total of 21 days, missed practices and five games due to exposure. Asked to end mask mandate.

Allison Mistishen, 26th Ave, Pottsville, PA, parent with admitted 20+ years of nursing experience asked the District to end the mask mandate. Children are not mentally or physically capable of masking for extended period of time. She also handed a document to President Adams.

Last, Abra Schultz, 110 Hill Terrace Drive, Pottsville, PA, a concerned parent, did not have anything prepared to say, but handed letters to board members stating that she and her husband should be making medical decision for masking their children, not the district.

Adams thanked all speakers and said that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss options and formulate a plan for change. Adams went through packets for the Board members that included valuable statistics for a decision making plan. Pages 1, 2, and 3 were relevant cases in Schuylkill County, along with graphs of related COVID-19 cases. Next in the packet was Mrs. Valentines report that was submitted each week to the Dept. of Health with cases and quarantines. The teacher surveys were included in the packets, the first being dated the 3rd week of January, and the second survey was February 14, 2022 which was to assess community opinions. He continued on with the documents which outlined all area districts and their masking and quarantine plans. Dr. McBreen stated some of the schools changed following CDC suggestions based on community pressure, but agreed we do need to progress and move forward.

Mistishen questioned the state percentage or number of students for the district to close and go virtual. McBreen said it was 5% of the bldg and the district was close, but did not meet the all qualifications to close, but on one occasion did have 6th grade students virtual for several days. He also said that the Dept. of Health

suggests looking at numbers and percentages of infections/quarantines over an extended period of time, not day to day since that is not beneficial and should consider an average over a 2 week period.

Dr. McBreen told the board that he is still in contact and has been in weekly contact throughout the pandemic with area Superintendents. Mistishen inquired as to data pertaining to inside vs outside exposures that resulted in positive school cases. This data cannot be determined, added Lubinsky, however the Board was provided with quarantined school exposures resulting in 36.3% of students becoming symptomatic or testing positive.

Adams explained Minersville will continue to follow trends then be on board to go to mask optional. Lubinsky said county numbers are up/down, but overall trend is down. Adams stated the position of the Pandemic Team was Option 2 on the handout in the packets but added to consider March 7th to reconvene for another meeting or put in a trend comment. That if trends show an increase to pivot back to masks in the motion.

Kroznuskie said if we are in good shape on that date remove masking and if not continue masking. Walsh likes Option 3 except household exposure wording. The need to move forward has come, but need time to implement the changes was stated by McBreen. Adams followed by stating that Mrs. Valentine tracking and contact tracing changes should be full weeks, changing measures in between a week will muddy data. And suggested Option 2 with a February 22nd implementation date of asymptomatic cases not to quarantine them move to no masking March 8th, following a meeting March 7th to review trends.

Bowers asked to renegotiate the implementation dates. He likes the options, just not the dates. Walsh said all household exposure quarantine should be the same for all regardless of vaccination status. Mistishen followed stating too many scenarios, they can't cover all. Household contacts have been very forthcoming. Wigoda said if the Pandemic Team is recommending Option 2 then transition, that is what we should do. He asked the administration what they thought. Bress and Bentz both recommended Option 2, Atkinson said the general consensus of the Pandemic Team was Option 2, that some were in agreement, some not, but majority decided Option 2.

Adams asked each member the Option they were considering.

- Walsh - Option 3, symptomatic quarantines only
- Kroznuskie - Option 2, looking at trending
- Lubinsky - Option 2
- Marazas - Option 2
- Wigoda - Option 2
- Mistishen - Option 2 with out vaccination status
- Newton - Option 3
- Bowers - Option 3
- Adams - Option 2 with dates for changes

Adams concluded most in agreement for Option 2 and added if the quarantine policy changes to household exposure only, February 22, 2022 with a target date of mask optional March 8 after a follow up meeting on March 7th. MOTION - by Kroznuskie, seconded by Marazas to place this item for vote on the Agenda. McGrath, Newton and Bowers voted against, all others in favor.

On the question, public participation was again considered. Tobin following up with a mask optional consideration for parents. Have a document to not wear a mask to be more helpful. Dr. McBreen did say that option would be too hard to police. He further asked if the Pandemic Team had any parents of students on the team and is that a consideration.

Croley, spoke a second time. He wanted to be clear that other schools are not making decisions on public pressure, this district is not doing due diligence. Talk to other schools, end this all. Enough is enough.

Chanda Muldowney, 1220 Bunting Street, Pottsville, turned in a letter to Adams. With that, Adams ended public comment.

Mistishen added that household quarantine is still separated by vaccinated and unvaccinated/ All should quarantine with or without vaccine. All can spread the virus. Adams concluded the majority of members to go mask optional following the February 22, 2022 implementation of quarantine changes. Bowers wants to start

mask optional tomorrow. Discussion continued regarding household exposures should wear a mask to have an extra layer, no quarantine unless symptomatic. Mask upon return for 5 days.

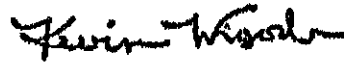
MOTION - by Kroznuskie, seconded by Marazas to approve Option 2 but concluded no household quarantine unless symptomatic and quarantine for 5 days followed by 5 days of masking upon return to school.

On roll call, McGrath, Newton and Bowers all voted against, the rest of members in favor. Motion carried.

Adams concluded that another meeting will be advertised for March 7, 2022 at 7:00 PM.

There being no further business to report or discuss, the meeting adjourned on MOTION by McGrath seconded by Kroznuskie at 8:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Wigoda, Secretary



Barbara J. Conville, Assistant to the Secretary

