

<i>Date</i>	<i>August 4, 2020</i>	<i>Committee of the Whole Meeting</i>	<i>High School Career Center</i>	<i>Angela M. DeMario</i>
		<i>Kind of Meeting</i>	<i>Where Held</i>	<i>Presiding Officer</i>
<i>Members Present</i>		<i>Angela M. DeMario</i>	<i>Members Absent</i>	
<i>Todd Rizzardi</i>		<i>Albert D. Marazas</i>		
<i>Christopher G. Bentz</i>		<i>Michael M. Mistishen</i>		
<i>Keith Adams</i>		<i>Michael Kroznuskie</i>		
<i>Cynthia Lubinsky</i>		<i>Kevin Wigoda</i>		

A Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Minersville Area Board of Education was held in the Career & Counseling Center of the Junior-Senior High School on Tuesday evening, August 4, 2020. The meeting was called to order by President, Angela M. DeMario at 7:00 PM. This meeting was publically held on ZOOM.

On roll call, the following responded: Angela M. DeMario, Albert D. Marazas, Todd Rizzardi, Christopher G. Bentz, Kevin Wigoda, Cynfhia Lubinsky, Keith Adams, Michael M. Mistishen and Michael Kroznuskie.

Others present: Dr. Carl G. McBreen, Superintendent; Stephen Bressi, High School Principal; Nannette Bentz, Elementary Principal, Lucas McMurtrie, Assistant Principal, Mary Ann Wynosky, Special Education Supervisor, and Barbara Conville, Secretary to the Superintendent/Assistant to the Secretary.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Dr. McBreen began the evening conversation with 3 options for the District to choose from for the reopening model of Minersville Area School District: Full Reopen, Hybrid Model or total Virtual Open. The Minersville Area Virtual Academy, MAVA, was explained to all members of the Board while Dr. McBreen mentioned that cyber/charter schools are not free, school districts must pay for residents of the District who chose cyber/charter schools.

Reopening Plan discussion

Adams questioned the cost. Dr. McBreen responded a regular education student costs between \$11,000 and \$14,000 and a Special Education student could range from \$30,000 to \$35,000 per student. MAVA will be a great alternative.

The costs for MAVA platforms was questioned by Adams. Dr. McBreen said that Blackboard platform was \$13,500 and \$7,000 maintenance in upcoming years. SeeSaw is \$5 per student. The savings to the District is unlimited since the membership allocation would go to the District instead of another cyber charter school.

Marazas asked several questions beginning with asking about the Hybrid model. Would all assignments be platform based? Spotts indicated that in the hybrid model AP courses would be able to use the platforms, however, the MAVA model does not allow for AP courses, but all would be basic courses. The cafeterias are not large enough for the full opening option, complete prevention is unattainable and cohorting of students in the cafeteria will be beneficial. What will happen if students or staff do not wear a mask? Dr. McBreen stated students and staff will be sent home since this is mandated by the Governor. A student with medical condition must have documentation on file to remove mask at any point in the school day. Pregnant teachers? Accommodations will be made to the best of our ability. Students testing positive for COVID-19? Contact tracing will be attempted and we will contact the Dept. of Health and we will rely heavily on their direction for exclusion and quarantine instructions.

Dr. McBreen stated that Dr. Lubinsky was part of the Pandemic Team that was devoted to complete the Health & Safety Plan for reopening. A resolution requiring the District to educate students for 180 days, including a minimum of 900 hours for elementary students and 990 for high school students will also need Board approval. If approved by the Board, both the plan and a resolution will be sent to the Dept. of Education for their final approval.

DeMario asked for some background on the hybrid model. Dr. McBreen gave information on this model for students as it addresses guidelines and was better than some other options. There is a greater chance to mitigate with less students in the buildings since we don't have a lot of extra space. There is a concern for students and staff with underlying health concerns, so the hybrid model will benefit those individuals. Smaller class sizes may significantly reduce the chances of contracting this virus. Medical advice has come from medical doctor recommendations and our school nurse, Kelly Valentine. Wednesdays will be online instruction for all students and the buildings will be deep cleaned.

Dr. McBreen reiterated that none of the plans are permanent. The goal is to get students back fully, however, that could change at any time as we receive guidance from the State. He understands the hardship this may cause to many of the families and we are trying to make the plan as effective as possible. Students need an education safely as we do not want to put them or staff in harms way.

Kroznuskie stated that 45 minutes in a classroom, who will clean? Dr. McBreen stated logistics are still pending, however, students may not move from class to class. Teachers may. If full or hybrid schedule the instructional time will be lessened. All specifics/logistics will be communicated in a timely fashion.

Mistishen continued that opening fully is unattainable, hybrid plan is better but still unattainable. He stated an understanding to get back fully as soon as possible. The situation is to be monitored week to week.

DeMario asked about training on the hybrid and virtual models. Spotts responded that all teachers grades 4 through 12 are working to complete a 20 hour training. Certificates of completion are necessary and teachers will be given Act 48 hours for participation. Teachers in grades 4K through 3 are completing SeeSaw training. Many of the teachers are already uploading lessons, assessments, and quizzes.

Dr. McBreen added that the faculty is doing a great job in preparing for 2020-2021 and also commended parents for being patient in this uncertain time.

Marazas asked for the faculty input regarding reopening. Kutsmeda responded that he polled 77 teachers, 47 or 67% wanted all virtual; 19 or 20% hybrid; and 11 or 14% full reopen.

Mistishen asked if MAVA will effect GPA. Dr. McBreen explained that it may. MASD does not accept weighted classes from other schools and this is no different. MAVA will not offer any weighted courses. It could possibly affect class rank.

Adams explained he would like to open fully. Can we meet all of the other recommendations except the 6 foot expectation? We can not satisfy that requirement.

Kutsmeda responded that a conference call the day prior with the Pandemic team and St. Lukes/Geisinger physicians. A physician on the meeting reviewed the plan and mentioned 25 students in any one area at any one time. Rizzardi stated that even with the hybrid model, we may still have 40- 6th grade students, 40- 5th grade students, that is 80 students in the hallway at one time. The safest way to open is virtual for the first month and work up to the hybrid plan to full waiting on a vaccine. We built the track for the community and we need to protect the community. If MASD starts with full virtual it would be a natural progression to reopening fully. We don't want to be responsible for students as carriers that may take home to make family or community members sick.

Bressi said that the Pandemic team took this role very seriously and objectively. They considered vaccine progress, teacher concerns, planning for parents, virtual education and social aspect for students. We should learn from other schools, start virtual and work up to full. He stated we have the platform and we are already planning for virtual instruction.

Dr. McBreen also commended the Pandemic team. Nothing was forced. It was a good team effort and LVHN complemented the District on the finished plan.

Adams acknowledged the individuals in the room and not to disregard or dismiss their opinions, but he was not in favor of virtual and would not be endangering the community. Wanted to see objective data against the 25/250 recommended by the CDC.

Valentine spoke on behalf of the Pandemic team stating that the team and a panel of doctors from LVHN in conjunction with Schuylkill, Lehigh and Carbon Counties met via ZOOM and did consider objective data to safely bring students back to class. The hybrid model does just that. We will be in a position to pivot to another plan should the need arise.

This is not a permanent plan, we will need to CDC, DOH and PDE guidelines to help us with those decisions.

Adams questioned how far in advance will teachers be required to have lesson plans done and to be accountable for. Motuk responded that 30-45 days need to be up and running prior to the start of school due to the pandemic in preparation for a shut down.

Bentz stated the 80-90 students at this time interested in MAVA, most likely 10-20% will migrate elsewhere. 40% of students will be easier to social distance for mitigation efforts.

Stephen said that large classrooms at the EC will hold 2-13 students. The smaller Special Education rooms will only hold about 8. At the HS, max 15 - 16 following 6 ft. guidelines. In cafeterias - EC 50 at the HS 75-80. We would need to use hallways and auditoriums for more space.

Kroznsukie questioned how cleaning would work to keep everyone safe and will teachers be available to students with questions or problems during the day. We wont be able to meet the guidelines or get immediate assistance from a teacher.

Dr. McBreen stated we would attempt the hybrid format. It is more appropriate to follow the suggested guidelines from the CDC. We cannot comply if we return full. We need to attempt hybrid for the social and the emotional aspect and make every effort to mitigate. We have a health plan in place and parents should self monitor students daily.

Lubinsky prepared a brief comment regarding her professional opinion and stated the facts that were available to her. Hand washing is the biggest, most effective tool against the spread of this disease. A temperature does not always present in every positive case. She read aloud some statistics and reiterated that we cannot keep 100% of people well, we need to look at this objectively.

Dr. McBreen assured the Board that Kelly Valentine did a lot of research and the Pandemic teams made adjustments where needed, but the Health and Safety Plan must be adhered to.

Marazas asked if MAVA is in real-time? Spotts responded that instruction is not in real time. Many of the parents he spoke with liked the flexibility of a videoed platform. This way they can assist students with learning and homework when it is more convenient or re-watch a lesson, if needed. Since it is not a live class, how will students ask questions. Spotts indicated that students could email, use discussion boards and text on the See Saw platform.

Marazas questioned the busing situation. Dr. McBreen said that in the hybrid model, siblings would go to school on the same days and cohorting of family members will be acceptable. Parents will also be encouraged to drive their students each way to minimize the number of students on a bus.

Bentz stated that buses are not full normally. And asked about students learning with smart boards. Bressi stated the difference between a smart board and a white board. Blackboard allows white board interaction, but not smart board. There is a huge cost difference between the two. Special Education teachers do not have smart boards since they are mostly in co-taught classrooms. Hotspots will still be made available for students, but most should be able to download lessons on the days they are in the school. Will students receive physical therapy and speech virtually? Motuk stated his wife worked ESY virtually with the assistance of the parent.

Wigoda asked that are we prepared to get devices to parents of MAVA students. Motuk answered we are and all participants were asked if they had access to internet prior to enrollment.

DeMario questioned Kelly Valentine regarding the mental and physical health of students. Valentine responded that she contacted Schuylkill county Children & Youth services and there have been a large decrease in reported cases. This is due to the teachers not actually seeing and be confided in by students.

Mistishen stated many kids are afraid to come to school. Dr. McBreen explained safety is the number one priority.

Rizzardi asked to poll the individuals that made up the Pandemic team on their thoughts for reopening. The following responded in turn:

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| McBreen - Hybrid | Valentine - Hybrid |
| Bressi - Virtual, 1 month | Bentz - Hybrid |
| McMurtrie - Hybrid | Wynosky - Hybrid |
| Stephen - Virtual 6 weeks, then full or hybrid | Spotts - Virtual |
| DeMario - Hybrid | Cussat - Virtual |
| Dry - Virtual or hybrid | |

Tally: 5 Virtual; 8 Hybrid; and 1 Full. Rizzardi thanked team.

Dr. McBreen went on to comment why he is choosing the Hybrid plan along with splitting up students in group and progress to full reopening.

Lubinsky asked how we determine who is in each group. Dr. McBreen explained the split would be equal with siblings coming the same days.

Rizzardi asked if we would make the split based on bus runs. Dr. McBreen responded we could.

Wigoda asked about changing the start date of school if hybrid plan in effect. Dr. McBreen stated he has decided against that since it is late notice to parents. Wigoda further asked if we should change to a later start date and learn from other schools. Dr. McBreen responded that we will be staying with original start date of August 31st.

DeMario thanks the Pandemic team and recognizes their time and dedication to the students. Their efforts are commended and appreciated.

Dr. McBreen announced a new email as SchoolStart@battlinminers.com for any reopening related questions from the public. A public meeting for the final reopening plan is scheduled for August 5, 2020 at 7 PM and a link for a ZOOM meeting will be available prior to the meeting. He asked for an Executive Service relating to personnel following adjournment.

There being no further business to report or discuss, the meeting adjourned on MOTION by Marazas, seconded by Bentz at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Wigoda, Secretary



Barbara J. Conville, Assistant to the Secretary