**SOUTH PEKIN GRADE SCHOOL DISTRICT 137**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION EMERGENCY MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 6th, 2022**

**Mrs. Chambers, Board President called the Emergency Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.**

**ROLL CALL:** Mrs. Chambers, Mrs. Senecal, Mrs. Blanchard, Mrs. White, Mrs. Lamberson, Mr. Holloway

ABSENT: Mrs. Everhart

GUESTS: Balthazar Gonzalez

Audience Participation: None

**2021-2022 RETURN TO LEARN PLAN DISCUSSION**

Mr. Mingus started the meeting by reviewing the District’s current Return to Learn Plan. While doing so, Mr. Mingus reminded the Board that two of the major discussion points of the original plan were the wearing of masks by staff and students and the quarantining of asymptomatic individuals when they were considered a close contact to someone who tested positive to Covid. Mr. Mingus reminded the Board that the District had a plan ready to go for the beginning of the school year, but the plan had to be changed when the Governor required masking while in schools. Mr. Mingus then told the Board that plans had to be changed again when the State required staff to be vaccinated or submit to weekly testing. Mr. Mingus then told the Board that a judge out of Sangamon County issued a temporary restraining order against the Governor’s Covid-19 guidelines. Mr. Mingus told the Board that while South Pekin Grade School was not part of the lawsuit, it would have the option to change its Covid-19 mitigations due to it. Mr. Mingus told the Board that he shared an email from the District’s attorney, and he pointed out parts of the email that applied to our district. Mr. Mingus told the Board that there are districts that are removing their masks mandates for Monday, and he wanted to make sure that our district had the opportunity to make the same decision as other school districts. Mr. Mingus told the Board that the action item on the agenda was to have the Board direct the Superintendent to a) amend the Return to School Plan to provide that masks are recommended but not required (optional; and also provide for no quarantine period for asymptomatic close contacts) effective Monday, February 7 and; and b) provide notice to parents today of the Board’s decision, Mr. Mingus told the Board that after talking to Mrs. Chambers, he contacted the attorney about keeping masks optional until the Appellate Court makes a ruling, and the attorney advised that it was an option with very little risk. The Board and Mr. Mingus talked about the options the Governor had, as well as the options the District had. Mr. Mingus told the Board that he was asking the Board to make a decision about recommended masking as well as the quarantining of asymptomatic individuals. Mrs. Chambers told the Board that she had been contacted by parents who wanted to remove the mask mandate for students. Mrs. Senecal then told the Board that she had parents reach out to her regarding how the change could impact the students and teachers. Mr. Mingus then read emails that he had received emails from parents, and he read them to the Board. The Board asked questions about how the teachers and administration would handle students who wanted to continue to wear a mask, and Mr. Mingus addressed their questions. Mr. Mingus told the Board that other local districts would be going to optional masks as a result of special board meetings. The Board then discussed what would happen if the Appellate Court ruled in favor of the Governor’s appeal. The Board then discussed whether they were in favor of keeping masks optional until the Appellate Court rules even if a stay was issued, and each Board member gave their opinion. Two Board members stated that they were in favor of making masks optional, but they were not if favor of violating any rules. All Board members were in favor removing the quarantine requirement for asymptomatic students.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

Mrs. Chambers asked for a motion for the Board to direct the Superintendent to a) amend the Return to School Plan to provide that masks are recommended but not required (optional; and also provide for no quarantine period for asymptomatic close contacts) effective starting Monday, February 7 (with the exception of school buses). This will be in effect until the Appellate Court’s decision. At which point the Board will reevaluate and; and b) provide notice to parents today of the Board’s decision.

MOTION MADE BY MRS. SENECAL AND SECONDED BY MRS. LAMBERSON. ROLL CALL VOTE: YES-MRS. CHAMBERS, MRS. SENECAL, MR. HOLLOWAY, MRS. LAMBERSON NO-MRS. BLANCHARD, MRS. WHITE-MOTION PASSES.

**ADJOURN:**

Mrs. Blanchard made a MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 7:48. MRS. SENECAL SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL IN FAVOR-YES

Board President Board Secretary