

January 16, 2021

The Board of Education, Community High School District 99, met in Special Session with Action Item at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 16, 2021. Pursuant to Public Act 101-0640, the Board President determined that an in-person meeting or a meeting conducted under the Open Meetings Act is not practical or prudent because of the disaster.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, the following Board members answered present: Nancy Kupka, President; Mike Davenport, Vice President; and Members Sherell Fuller, Dan Nicholas, Terry Pavesich and Rick Pavinato. Member Joanna Vazquez Drexler arrived at 9:03 a.m. Member Sherell Fuller left at 10:02 a.m.

Also present were Hank Thiele, Superintendent; Gina Ziccardi, Associate Superintendent for Student Learning; Scott Wuggazer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Mark Staehlin, District Controller; Janice Schwarze, North High Principal; Ed Schwartz, South High Principal; Student Board Member Sam Bull; and Juli Gniadek, Secretary.

The following was physically present at the Administrative Service Center: Hank Thiele, Superintendent.

There were two visitors. A copy of the Visitor Roster is attached.

1. RECEPTION OF VISITORS – PUBLIC COMMENT

Val Hardy, DGEA President, South High teacher, Community member and parent of a North High freshman addressed the Board about the proposed change in metrics and when the decision for the following week, whether students would be In-Person or Fully Remote, is made. She stated the DGEA fundamentally opposes the change, as proposed, and urges the Board to vote against this Action.

Dr. Thiele stated the Public Comments submitted via the online Public Comment Form were mixed, with most being in support of changing the metrics. The comments are attached.

2. RETURN TO IN-PERSON LEARNING

Dr. Thiele stated safety is the first responsibility of the District, with the District acting in loco parentis for students from the time they leave home each day for school until they return home. He shared, as more information is learned and data gathered, the District is better able to assess under what conditions students can be kept safe at school and currently administration believes students will be safe when there is a community positivity rate of less than 10%. He noted, as more is learned, this number may go up or down.

Scott Wuggazer and Gina Ziccardi are working on a testing program that will be presented to the Board on January 25, and the District is developing a vaccination plan, according to Dr. Thiele.

Board members expressed their views on the change in the metrics, other metrics that could be used to determine if it is safe to have students in school in-person, and on what day the decision about In-Person Learning should be made.

Dr. Thiele noted families always have the option of choosing to go to Fully Remote Learning.

3. **SET THE COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION THRESHOLD FOR OPERATING THE 2021 HYBRID SCHEDULE IN-PERSON AT 10% POSITIVITY OR 200 CASES PER 100,000 PERSONS BASED ON THE MOST RECENT 14-DAY ROLLING AVERAGE AVAILABLE AT 3PM EACH MONDAY.**

Member Pavinato moved and Member Nicholas seconded the motion for the Board of Education to accept the 10% number for Hybrid Learning.

Member Pavinato Amended the Motion and Member Nicholas seconded the Amended Motion for the Board of Education to set the community transmission threshold for operating the 2021 Hybrid Schedule In-Person at 10% positivity OR 200 cases per 100,000 persons based on the most recent 14-day rolling average available at 3 p.m. each Monday.

Member Pavinato Amended the Amended Motion and Member Nicholas seconded the Amended Amended Motion for the Board of Education to set the community transmission threshold for operating the 2021 Hybrid Schedule In-Person at 10% positivity OR 200 cases per 100,000 persons based on the most recent 14-day rolling average available no later than 3 p.m. each Monday.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Pavinato, Nicholas and Davenport voted AYE. Members Pavesich, Vazquez Drexler and Kupka voted NAY. The President declared the vote is 3 to 3 and the motion does not pass.

Member Pavesich moved and Member Davenport seconded the motion for the Board of Education to approve Board of Education to set the community transmission threshold for operating the 2021 Hybrid Schedule In-Person at 10% positivity rate OR 200 cases per 100,000 persons based on the most recent 14-day rolling average available for the Friday prior to the next week of instruction.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Pavesich, Davenport, Nicholas and Pavinato voted AYE. Members Vazquez Drexler and Kupka voted NAY. The President declared the motion carried.

Member Pavesich moved and Member Pavinato seconded the motion for the Board of Education to approve to set the time the data will be retrieved and decision made for the next week based on the most recent 14-day rolling average available at 3 p.m. each Friday.

Dr. Thiele clarified this motion sets the official time the District will use data to make the determination if the following week will be In-Person or Fully Remote Learning and does not pertain to positivity rate.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Pavesich, Pavinato, Vazquez Drexler, Davenport, Nicholas and Kupka voted AYE. The President declared the motion carried.

President Kupka stated at the next Board meeting there will be discussion on setting up a standing weekly meeting.

Dr. Thiele stated, based on the 10% metric, students will be In-Person next week.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Member Davenport moved and Member Pavesich seconded a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Upon the unanimous voice vote of the six members in attendance, the President declared the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

DocuSigned by:

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Nancy Kupka, President

DocuSigned by:

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Juli Oniadek, Secretary



BOARD OF EDUCATION

JANUARY 16, 2021

VISITOR ROSTER

NAME

Jacob Giblin
Valerie Hardy

Public Comments Submitted via Google Form

January 16, 2021 Board Meeting

Christina Konieczka	<p>D99 has been doing such a good job of mitigating the COVID risks, please do not raise the community transmission threshold to 10%. Ten percent is the top of the range set forth by the CDC, and this is the wrong time to take additional risks. PLEASE stay with the 9% threshold. Additionally, please make the decision on hybrid vs full remote on the Friday prior to the school week impacted. Getting a decision Monday evening that impacts the very next day is not enough time for working parents to make the needed arrangements and schedule changes.</p> <p>Please read my comment at your meeting.</p>
New freshman	<p>"When I dreamed about high school, I dreamed about playing under those Friday night lights! Friday nights across America use to illuminate!! Entire cities would shut down as everyone gathers at the local high school to watch football. Players and coaches would pound it on the field as the cheerleaders and band would hype up the packed stands of our family, friends, neighbors and former alumni. Everyone got along no matter what side you were on as there has always been a genuine love and desire just to watch a good football game.</p> <p>Now Friday nights have been replaced with those famous words 'Are you still watching?'"</p> <p>I feel like I have lost of year of school and friendships that I will never get back while my cousins in other states are playing sports, sharing their photos and videos with me and having the best year of their lives while I just sit here and watch life go by me. This is depressing.....</p> <p>I really find it irresponsible for the board to even be considering raising the positivity rate at which both students and staff return to in person learning when approximately a month ago the board already raised to 9%. Either the board sets numbers and rules and lives by them or not. How is it we are now safer to return to in person learning at a higher positivity rate especially when the new more transmissible covid variant has been confirmed in the state? Finally, I would like to know why activity buses are not being provided if the school is allowing students to participate in after school activities? Seems like the school district is prejudice to families whom both parents work. Maybe this would make make for a good news story on racial inequality at District 99.</p>
Jenny Kay	
Amy Lavery	<p>We are now one of the last districts in our area that have held out on offering an In Person learning option and we really need to consider WHY?? Why are we holding our kids back?? The remote option is in place and the number of students that are ready and willing to be In Person would be able to be accommodated in our school space very safely and appropriately. Please look at the decline in state numbers and as always the case rate for those under age 20 is low, the fatalities from Covid age 20 and under is minute! Please redirect your focus on common sense metrics and mitigation protocols. Thank you for attention in this matter!</p>

Public Comments Submitted via Google Form

January 16, 2021 Board Meeting

We appreciate that a board meeting has been scheduled so quickly to revisit the hybrid learning plan. We also appreciate that the proposed changes might help our students chances to spend more time in the classroom this semester. In fact, they have a real chance of being back next week. Great news!

However, in reality, the underlying issues remain the same. Dr. Thiele is proposing using a community metric as a hard cut-off in determining if/when school can be in-person. There is nothing in the CDC guidance that advocates for this type of policy and in fact, medical experts have cautioned AGAINST using the positivity metric as a measure of school safety. To some degree, the positivity metric reflects community burden, but it does not reflect burden within the school setting, and it is subject to all kinds of error. The purpose of the metric is to determine if enough testing is being completed, but somehow this message has been lost in translation.

With the vaccines rolling out and new variants arriving, the positivity rate is likely to show great fluctuation over the next several months. Rather than continuing with a yo-yo policy that will have the kids in one week, out the next, we need to move to a different system for determining the safety of in-person learning. I like the mention of a transition to use of internal metrics because this will give us much more useful and relevant information. We would like to see Dr. Thiele and the board make a commitment to moving this plan forward in an expeditious manner.

Lastly, we are hearing about more and more school districts returning to FULL TIME in-person learning with use of internal metrics, including Glenbard North/South. This should also be the goal for District 99. The science confirming the safety of in-person learning is growing, and we need a plan to get back to full-time very soon.

Thank you.

Bob & Kate Benton
Parents of 3 district 99 students

Kate Benton

Public Comments Submitted via Google Form

January 16, 2021 Board Meeting

<p>Mary Beth Werner</p>	<p>I appreciate the Special Board Meeting taking place and support District 99 raising the community transmission threshold to 10% at a minimum. The metrics provided by the CDC are guides. No government official is keeping District 99's doors closed. I look forward to the implementation of internal metrics rather than community metrics. It is difficult to understand why it is safe (in terms of metrics) for our young people to be out in the community and working but it is not safe for them to be in school.</p> <p>District 99 leadership has done an outstanding job putting together a safe hybrid model but up to this time you have restricted yourself from implementing it. The students opting for in-person learning have had no opportunity to consistently attend school.</p> <p>Although I appreciate Superintendent Thiele's remarks about keeping people safe, I believe he is not giving enough credit to the thoughtful safety protocols that have been put in place. The hybrid protocols provide for a safe environment. Please trust the good work that you have done and give the hybrid model a chance to work. Although I have faith in District 99 leadership, I don't believe you are accurately assessing the actual physical and mental harm that being out of school since March 2020 is having on students' well-being.</p> <p>Dr. Daniel Johnson, the University of Chicago pediatric infectious diseases chief, states that chances of in-school transmission are very low no matter the level of community spread because of layered mitigation protocols at schools. When one piece fails, like a student taking off a mask for a few minutes, there's still social distancing, ventilation, hygiene and smaller class pods for protection, he said.</p> <p>"If you institute those and actually follow those mitigation steps, then you can operate schools safely, and that's what datasets have shown," Johnson said.</p> <p>As a parent, it is difficult to watch our young people suffer when we adults can make this situation better. In many instances, the void in their young lives is being filled with unhealthy choices. Please give your hybrid model an opportunity to work. Thank you!</p>
<p>Donald and Cathy Glass</p>	<p>The Board should not raise the Covid Positivity threshold without scientific evidence to support the decision, or explaining why the Board wants kids in school at all costs. The area positivity rate is currently trending downward. However, the CDC says the country is heading into the most deadly period. Add to that, the UK variant, which is 50% more infectious, is spreading rapidly throughout the country.</p> <p>Thank you for meeting today. As I mentioned to some of you, the amount of personal and uncompensated time, especially this year, you have volunteered should be commended. I hope you agree to pass the 10% increase, which is a small step in hearing these students and parents, allowing some competitiveness with surrounding districts, and offering a bit of hope to students that are so unmotivated, disengaged and struggling. I also hope there will be conversations today or in the future regarding the damaging effects of short bursts of inperson than shifting to remote then back again. I believe this why the numbers at DGS are 55/45%. It's horrible from conversations with community members, students and teachers. At this point, we have many with natural immunity paired with upcoming teacher vaccines, paired with testing opportunities. Let's look forward with positivity and the least restrictive model using inperson as default system, before pivoting so easily. I'm excited to see how successful the 99 district will be with these kids engaged and happy again. Offering a solid choice meets the needs of intergenerational homes, individual students, and those families that have been positive, simply can not learn this way, and overall meets the needs of everyone in the community, not just the smaller remote families where this model works. I am so happy to see most of the district 99 community needs being met (instead of only the one group) with more accessibility to in person learning with a 10% metric. Thank you.</p>
<p>Kristen Jeschke</p>	<p>While community metrics may provide an indication of the relative risk level of in person schooling, they should not be the only factor in the decision. There are elementary schools in our same community, who have been successful in keeping kids attending in person with little to no evidence of spread in the schools themselves. There are local high schools also following hybrid models which have been able to keep kids in the classroom the majority of the school year at reduced capacities with safety protocols in place. I encourage the board to discuss both the metrics and factors these neighboring schools are using in their decision making as well as the protocols they utilize. From there D99 could evaluate if we could follow similar approaches. Lastly, our number of reported cases as well as active quarantines for students and staff has been extremely low. This metric should also be considered in our decision making as it provides a data on the actual people who would be in our in person settings. Thank you for considering alternative approaches as the district moves forward in the challenging year.</p>

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Anonymous	Thank you to Rick and Dan for fighting for what the majority of the students and parents want last meeting which is a return to in-person learning based on school cases/spread, not a 5 zip code positivity rate. No other surrounding high school is using a positivity rate / line drawn in the sand. It's beyond ridiculous that the board allowed the administration to come up with this 9%. Follow what other schools are doing, follow the science and cases in school! Our kids deserve better. I'm so incredibly sad for all the seniors missing out on their senior year when they do not need to be. School is a not a spreader of Covid. If you are that worried, do saliva testing. Take the \$ for your online tutoring program which no one will utilize and use it for saliva testing. The admin and the board is so out of touch with the parents and students if they think spending \$170K on an online tutoring program is worth the money. The students are not going to use it. Please get rid of this positivity rate as a measure of if the kids can go back to school. Look around you and other schools. People are leaving D99! Fight for our kids, not your 85 year old neighbor. That is NOT your job here. Kids going to school will not affect your 85 year old neighbor. Drop the metric and use school cases / spread as an indicator please!
John Smith	I do not believe that it is appropriate for the metric to change for in-school consideration at this time. We are still at the same tier for our region.
Community Member	Please do not change the metric . Keep the students , staff and community safe . Certainly one week of data is not sufficient enough to determine safety .
Christie Nutt	Morning! I would like to thank Rick and Dan for their support on getting our students back into the school as it's so important for these kids and their mental health. I also would like to see this metric of 9% go away and truly focus on cases at the school as that would be a better indicator of if these kids should be in school or not. Saliva testing would be a great addition as well. Please do not wait for vaccinations to come out as these kids will not be getting them as they are 16. Thanks you.
Kristen Jeschke	While community metrics may provide an indication of the relative risk level of in person schooling, they should not be the only factor in the decision. There are elementary schools in our same community, who have been successful in keeping kids attending in person with little to no evidence of spread in the schools themselves. There are local high schools also following hybrid models which have been able to keep kids in the classroom the majority of the school year at reduced capacities with safety protocols in place. I encourage the board to discuss both the metrics and factors these neighboring schools are using in their decision making as well as the protocols they utilize. From there D99 could evaluate if we could follow similar approaches. Lastly, our number of reported cases as well as active quarantines for students and staff has been extremely low. This metric should also be considered in our decision making as it provides a data on the actual people who would be in our in person settings. Thank you for considering alternative approaches as the district moves forward in the challenging year.
Carrie swenson	Where is the 3 minute rule? Why is DEA allowed over 7 minutes?
Constance Vanni	My student is a senior who is essentially imploding due to the challenges of remote learning and the utter lack of actual social contact with teachers and peers. ANY kind of interpersonal interactions no matter how distanced might help her at least become more motivated to graduate and not suffer the stigma of not graduating. We are struggling to support her mental health. Despite our fears over covid, that risk is worth giving her a chance to choose to engage in learning and have the best chance at graduation.
Jennifer Hagstrom	The concern, I believe, is the inconsistency that is in place. Teachers, staff, students and families are tired of the roller coaster. The difference between our in person/hybrid week and this remote week was negligible. Why not make the call on Friday and go with 10%?
Anonymous	Why is this union member getting so much time for a public comment. The teachers just lost a lot of community support and many are commenting shame on them