

NORTHERN LEHIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
Special Meeting
Board Minutes

Slatington, PA
July 12, 2021

PURPOSE The special meeting of the Northern Lehigh Board of School Directors was called to order by the President, Mr. Gary S. Fedorcha, at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, July 12, 2021, in the Northern Lehigh Middle School Auditorium.

ROLL CALL Members present: Mr. Robin T. Distler, Mr. Mathias J. Green, Jr., Mrs. Michelle M. Heckman , Mrs. Gale N. Husack, Mr. Robert L, Kern, Jr., Mrs. Donna M. Kulp, and Mr. Gary S. Fedorcha (7)

Members absent: Mr. Robert J. Keegan, Jr. and Mrs. Michele L. Martineau (2)

Non-members present: Mr. Matthew Link, Mr. Greg Derr, Mrs. Michele Dotta, Mrs. Rhonda Frantz, Mr. David Hauser, Mr. Eric Hill, Mrs. Sherri Molitoris, Mr. Scott Pyne, Atty. Kristine Roddick, Mr. James Schnyderite, Mr. Michael Strohl, and Mr. Robert Vlasaty

VISITORS Approximately twenty-seven visitors attended the meeting and six hundred and forty-one viewed the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT Mr. Fedorcha stated that public comment will be recognized with the agenda items.

APPROVE MINUTES Mrs. Kulp made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Heckman, that the minutes of the regular board meeting held on June 14, 2021, be approved and ordered filed.

Roll Call.

YEA: Mr. Distler, Mr. Green, Mrs. Heckman, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Kern, Mrs. Kulp, and Mr. Fedorcha (7)

NAY: None

ABS: Mr. Keegan, Mrs. Martineau (2)
Motion carried.

SPECIAL BOARD REPORTS Solicitor's Report - Attorney Kristine Roddick reported on Act 66 that was recently passed. It permits students to attend an additional year if they meet certain qualifications. The qualifications vary depending on whether the student is a special education student or a regular education student. For students having a disability, they would be eligible for an additional school year if they turned age 21 during the 20-21 school year or between the 20-21 and the 21-22 school year. They had to be enrolled in the district in the 20-21 school year and parents must elect the additional year no later than July 15. The form is on PDE's website and they have to submit that form to the district. With regards to the regular education students, students who have graduated with a regular high school diploma, they would not be eligible. Students who are under the age of 18, their parent can choose to have them continue in the 21-22 year. If students are over the age of 18, those students can choose themselves. Based upon PDE guidance, this does include students who are in Kindergarten but it does not apply to preschoolers. With regards to coursework, grade, GPA calculation, etc., the districts should be following their standard policies for that.

Mr. Link commented that the form is also accessible on the district website.

Atty. Roddick also reported on the Mahanoy School District United States Supreme Court decision. The Supreme Court held that the school district in that case violated the student's First Amendment right by disciplining her for her off-campus speech. To give a little background, this was the cheerleader who was upset that she was not made a varsity cheerleader and would remain on the JV squad. At an off-campus location, using her personal phone, she and her friend made some obscene gestures and some obscene comments with regard to cheer, the school, etc. The school disciplined her by kicking her off the cheerleading squad for one school year but it did not suspend her, it did not expel her. In Pennsylvania, there are a split amongst the Third Circuit cases with regards to disciplining students for off-campus speech so it actually did go up to the

Supreme Court. The Third Circuit affirmed the district court's decision that the school district violated this student's First Amendment rights. The big analysis on the case is dealing with whether or not the Tinker standard applies. Tinker was the free speech case where the students wore a black armband in the 60's to protest the Vietnam War. Under the Tinker standard, there must be a substantial disruption to the school or an invasion of individuals rights in order for the school to be able to discipline. In short, the Third Circuit gave us a much clearer approach which was we can't discipline students for any off-campus speech unless it constitutes a true threat. The Supreme Court got rid of that and we are back to the analysis of whether or not the off-campus speech creates a substantial disruption in the school setting in order for us to be able to discipline for off-campus. So, it's back to a very specific, individualized determination.

Superintendent's Report - Mr. Link asked Mr. Timothy Weaber and Ms. Jennifer Butz to give an update on the 2021 Summer STEAM camp. Mr. Weaber thanked the school board for allowing them to present. One of the many great things that are happening this summer is the camp. This is the third year for the Summer STEAM camp. The goals of the STEAM camp are to engage students in learning opportunities related to STEAM, to interest them in opportunities and careers, and increase their knowledge and application of content related to STEAM camp. The camp is funded through an EITC grant, \$20,000 that was received from Neffs Bank and managed through the Northern Lehigh Education Foundation. Mr. Weaber thanked both the organizations for their funding and for continuing to organize and contribute to this worthy program. Two years ago, the goal was 60 campers which was an increase of 10 campers from the first year. This year the goal was 70 campers. 70 campers signed up for camp and 65 attended. 37 males and 28 females. The average attendance was 58 campers. A lot of the focus this year was on simple machines, learning how to use digital scales, 3D avatars, water filters, egg planters, catapults, making mayonnaise, rockets, meringue, geodes, studying how erosion affects streams, making race cars out of toilet paper rolls and learning how to power them, using Makey Makey kits which is a kit that has circuitry that you can hook up to a laptop and student create code to do different things like making musical instruments or making controllers. Students made parachutes for eggs and had an egg drop. They created and edited videos. Every year they try to purchase items for camp that can also be used for teachers and students during the school year. Two of the bigger purchases this year were the Makey Makey kits and digital scales. Ms. Butz reported that they try to focus on hands-on but sometimes the students don't see the connection to how these hands-on activities go towards career paths. Two years ago, they started bringing in presenters from local businesses around the area and this year there were eight presenters. Two of which were NLSA alumni, Rebecca Blocker and Frankie DeBilio. Others from local businesses included Ed Bechtel from Bechtel's Pharmacy, Maggie Edwards from Slobbery Dog Photography in downtown Slatington, Chad Schwartz from the Lehigh Gap Nature Center, and Steven Reimer from the Northern Lehigh Emergency Medical Services. Also had presenters that were associated with the district, Alyssa Wingenfield from McClure spoke to the students about mechanical engineering. It's always exciting when the kids actually see what these people do, what skills they need for the future, what educational path they need to take to get to those dreams. The presenters were given the option to present in-person, virtually, or a recording. Mr. Weaber reported that there were also some special guests during the week, Mr. Link, Dr. Stoker, Kevin Schmidt, President and Chief Executive Officer of Neffs National Bank, Mr. Fedorcha, and Christine Stafford, President of the Northern Lehigh Education Foundation. Mr. Weaber thanked the board for allowing them to have this camp every year. The children really seem to have a good time. It's a real benefit and hopefully they are piquing the interest of the kids to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Mr. Link congratulated them on another successful STEAM camp.

Mr. Scott Pyne gave an update on Summer Learning Academy. The program was available for all students. This summer we welcomed 112 students, grades K through 8. The program was called Open Horizons. We are halfway through the program and have 93 students remaining. The entire summer program was designed around a lot of research about what works in summer programs. Emphasizing the entire child, not just the academic areas. Attendance has been a success with a 92% rate. Students in grades K through 6 are receiving academic instructions aligned with the standards, as well as special topics such as mindfulness, digital citizenship, phys. ed., social and emotional learning and coding throughout the course of the day. Each week, on a Thursday,

students participate in an awards ceremony where they're honored for following all of the school rules; being safe, proud, respectful and responsible as well as for their academic growth. They are using their typical PBIS system. Students are enjoying the gamified learning environment with Imagine Learning which was recently acquired. Hands-on learning with a program called Mango Math which includes a lot of manipulatives and math games for kids to play. Differentiated small group reading instruction with a program called Reading A-Z and ELA content from Scholastics. The middle school students are also participating and engaging in units that are designed by our teachers. Many of them are there for credit recovery. On July 29, which is the last of the program, we will celebrate the completion of Open Horizons with a carnival. Students are earning tickets throughout the course of the program which they will then use at the carnival. We are currently soliciting and accepting donations to support this. They've already received \$100 from Neffs Bank and \$500 from King Spry.

Mr. Link shared the components of the draft of the 2021-2022 NLSD Health and Safety Plan which is required by all school districts in the Commonwealth this school year. The template has been provided through PDE.

Mr. Fedorcha opened the floor to public comment on the NLSD Health and Safety Plan.

Ms. Heather Royer, 7170 Walnut Street - Ms. Royer commented that she has a 6th grade daughter. She did notice that the masks were technically optional. She did notice this summer that kids went to camp, they went to church, they went on vacation, they played sports. There was no social distancing, there were no masks. Item B in this plan talks about physical and social distancing. At lunch, are we still going to have the kids face one way and not be able to talk and have six feet? She doesn't understand this. All summer if you look around town and your kids went to camp. Her daughter went to camp, church, and on vacation. She played softball and they were in the dugout together. There was no social distancing and you didn't hear of any of these spikes in cases. The other thing that concerns her is Item E which is contact tracing. All those emails that we got last year, which she understands is helpful, but they caused a lot of fear and anxiety in parents because every time you got an email, you're waiting on are we closing again. There's a possibility that can happen again this year. She had to resign last year to stay home with her child. She's planning on going back to work but if the school shuts down, she will have to be home again. Daycares weren't providing schooling for our children, so a lot of parents got left in the lurch. She can guarantee that there were a lot of students left at home by themselves with no parent supervision. She understands that this is in place for the health and safety of our children and staff, but when is enough, enough. These kids suffered so much last year, her daughter included who was an honor roll, and a principal's list student who did not even make honor roll until the last quarter when she was finally in school four days a week. Being at home was horrible, emotionally it was horrible, socially it was horrible. She was grateful when they didn't cancel softball again this year. She had fun with her friends. They were able to have bible school in church. If all these things could have no masks and no social distancing, she doesn't understand why we can't have the same.

Ms. Pauline Grady, 333 Oak Street - Ms. Grady commented that she is attending the meeting tonight to express some of her concerns with the Health and Safety Plan for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year. Her first concern is why we even have a health and safety plan in place for Covid at all. We are no longer under an emergency declaration and all mitigation practices have been lifted. Who are we doing this plan for? Do we have a health and safety plan for the flu? Do we have a health and safety plan for the stomach virus which typically wipes out our kids more than Covid did this past year and a half? Her next concern: why has normally our school board granted Mr. Link the authority to alter this plan without the approval of the board? Isn't this why the board is in place? You are supposed to make sure that one person, specifically the superintendent, does not have sole power to make changes without a governing body keeping him or her in check, similar to our situation of our state of Pennsylvania. Our governor went unchecked for over a year and a half. If Mr. Link is able to change this plan, the board should be involved in all changes in decision making. Her next concern is the wording in the Health and Safety Plan. It is very one-sided, and when she says one-sided, she means it caters to little, if

any parental choice. As of now there are absolutely no orders in place for the state of Pennsylvania or the country. Only guidance and recommendations at this time. Guidance is not a mandate, it is not a binding order. It is just guidance, you are not bound to an attestation or an emergency declaration anymore. The only standing mandate at this time are masks on the school buses because it's public transportation. Once the kids step off the bus, if a parent doesn't want their child to wear a mask, they don't have to whether or not they are vaccinated. Vaccines are not mandated. You cannot ask a family of the children if they are vaccinated. Even the children under 12, who do not have the option to even get vaccinated at this point shouldn't be forced to wear a mask. Mask wearing should be a personal choice and not for the school to decide. That needs to be noted somewhere in this plan. Her next concern is the quarantine measures. She's curious to know where these outlandish numbers came from. At some point a student could be out of school for 24 days because of exposure or illness and not even be sick. How in the world, as a school, can we let that happen? How is this okay? Why is the school dictating when a student can come back to school? Isn't that our family doctor's job to tell us when our kids can come back to school after an illness? She doesn't believe that any of the board has a PhD at the end of their name and if they do, it's a PhD of education, not medicine. Public education is going down a very slippery slope and in situations like this that are accelerating that slope to where parents are going to pull their children from public schools in droves and continue to fight for parental choice in education.

Mr. Fedorcha stated that the purpose of tonight's meeting is because the state requires the plan.

Ms. Natalie Snyder, 7747 Harbor Ct - Ms. Snyder commented that she did reach out to Representative Zach Mako and she asked him the question, if my school district is receiving extra funds, can they lose funds if they change their health and safety policy to make the mask wearing and vaccines optional. Her understanding is that PDE tells them to follow CDC recommendations. If the CDC continues to say that unvaccinated have to continue to wear masks but vaccinated can stop wearing them, the school district will follow that guidance and say that they are just following protocol. They answered her email and it was lengthy. The key words that they noted to her were that Secretary Ortega stated that the Pennsylvania Department of Education will neither approve or disapprove health and safety plans submitted by LEA's. Pennsylvania Department of Education is only required to collect the plans and ensure the plans are posted publicly. The plan and any revisions must include a minimum of what is included in the health and safety plan at this point. PDE has confused the situation by emailing LEA's on 6/11 with the following: After the order ends for universal face coverings, LEA's will have the authority to determine their own masking policies. So, it is now to the school district to decide what their masking policies are. LEA's should review the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control prevention when making these decisions. The Department of Health and Education will continue to closely monitor CDC guidance and provide additional information as it becomes available. Her feeling is that since LEA's do have the authority to determine their own masking policies and health and safety plans and any revisions must include at a minimum a description of how it will meet the categories, she would like to take the time to provide the school board with her concerns, suggestions and input that has been gathered from parents and concerned residents of the Northern Lehigh School District. She would also like to mention that at this time, they have collected 187 signatures to date on a petition to end masking of students in the Northern Lehigh School District. She knows our plan is saying that we are going to make this optional at this time, but it doesn't state that you guys will go backwards with that should any guidance change. What they are really concerned with is that we follow mandated, binding law, not just this guidance that is changing day to day. CDC just changed guidance and it's basically saying that people who are vaccinated wouldn't need to wear masks. People who are unvaccinated would need to continue to wear masks. That's a big concern to her. She went on to indicate all her concerns for each category of the health and safety plan. She is a little concerned with where in Item #1 it states that the Northern Lehigh School Board of Directors grants the superintendent the authority to alter this plan without board approval to adhere to the release, orders or guidance of federal, state and local authorities and in consideration of the number of cases in the district and overall community. If you're mandated or ordered to do it, it's a different story. But, when you're just doing guidance, you're giving Mr. Link all the authority to make any changes as he sees fit. Not that we don't trust his judgement, but she feels that we have a board for a reason. She has suggested wording that she can read or pass out copies of for review. Should you use wording that she is suggesting here, it might impact changes to the

second item which indicates your return. Ms. Snyder had one minute left so she will submit the items in writing to the board. One item with the masking she was concerned with was that it doesn't indicate that you're following binding orders and that there is wording that says should there be guidance that suggests or your calling local and state data that can change what's going on. She will pass out her concerns to the board for review.

Mr. Chad Chrstiman, 7340 Route 873 - Mr. Christman commented that he's shooting from the hip, he doesn't have nearly as good a note as the two fine ladies before him that pretty much covered everything. This is his first school board meeting. He felt it was an important topic regardless of what your position is on either side. He wants to make sure that they are not losing touch in choices. Making sure the school board respects parents to make choices for their children that they see fit. Regardless of what the plan is and how you plan to proceed, he just wants to make sure that our kids are given the choice to mask, not mask regardless of their vaccination status and have them not be discriminated against in either direction. He knows that some people have some strong feelings in either direction about it, and that's okay. That's a great thing about this country, we don't have to agree with everything. There's been a lot of bloodshed since 1774 to make sure that we keep it that way. And, it starts here at our local government because if we lose it here at the local level, we're definitely going to lose it at the national level. He's here basically echoing everything that has been said. We hope that you don't follow blindly of guidelines and understand that enough is enough. We've got to eventually move on. These kids have been all over the place in the summertime. We're ready to resume normalcy, not new normalcy.

Mr. Justin Jachowicz, 6465 Woodbury Drive - Mr. Jachowicz commented that he'd like to echo some of the things that have been said to make a point in them. As far as he knows, we're here because ESSER funding this plan is mandatory. He doesn't believe the school district should take it. We're doing alright without it. We've done alright without it before. He sees it as strings-attached block funding which typically goes away. So, any programs we put in place, they're going to last two to three years and then they're gone. We're not going to receive any additional funding. Although he knows we have to submit a plan to the state, he would recommend not because we're doing alright without it. Or, put a very generic one in place or whatever and not really accept the funds. He doesn't think that as a local school district we need strings that come along with that funding. The state of emergency is over so as he reads this plan it only talks about Covid-19. We don't talk about the flu. We don't talk about pneumonia. The state of emergency is gone so why is there one plan. He knows the state is requiring it, but there's no mention of anything else. The flu and pneumonia impacts school-aged children more than Covid-19. That's factual. We know that again in 2021 versus 2020. As you look at this plan and he reads through it, it's kind of silly to him because it's an emphasis on one virus and not all viruses, particularly viruses that have more of an impact on students such as flu and pneumonia. As far as the masks go, it's mentioned that they should be worn on transportation. He's not sure if that's coming from the school, that decision, or if it's from Brandywine Transportation. Atty. Roddick commented that it's legally required. When he called Representative Mako's office and Tom Wolf's office, Department of Education and Department of Health, it's up to the local school districts. That's what he gets from all of them. So, to him, it's up to the school board on making that decision. It's not a law. It didn't go through any kind of committee at the state level, so it's up to the school board. He doesn't think masks should be required anywhere. The children are less susceptible to Covid-19 than most other viruses out there. The absurd part of it is they're going to wear a mask while they're on the bus but then they're going to be sitting next to their neighbor. They're going to sit next to them in the classroom 20 minutes later. We want them to get back to normal. Going into last year, he thought they were going to get back to normal. This year, he was like there's no doubt where kids would go back and resume their normal lives. Here we are again. We have to wear a mask on the bus to go sit next to friends in the class without a mask on. It just doesn't make any sense. He would ask that it be removed from the plan. As far as the contact tracing and everything else, again, the state of emergency is over. To have a student out of school for 10 days because they were exposed to a virus is absurd as well. Are we going to do the same for the flu? Are we going to do the same for pneumonia? He doesn't see it in the plan anywhere so we should be doing it for Covid-19 especially since there's no state requirement to do so. There's not an emergency at this point. It was removed. We need to do what's best for the

children. Again, this virus does not impact the children so we need to let them go to school as normal and live their lives as normal. As far as the survey goes, he did not fill out the survey because there should be an option that says school five days a week as normal without any type of mitigation efforts. He would urge that we return to a real normal school year and forget about all of the Covid-19 restrictions because there's no state emergency.

Ms. Katja Bender, 1067 Pine Tree Drive - Ms. Bender commented that she currently has three children who attend the Northern Lehigh School District. She began by thanking the school board for everything they did this year. She realizes that their job is extremely thankless and there's not a whole lot of people volunteering to do it. She would also like them to keep in mind that you are elected officials by a community whose children attend the schools that you represent. And, as a parent, her first obligation to her children and to the children in her community, not every child has somebody who is willing to stand up to them and speak for them, so she does not only represent her own children, but she represents all children. As far as her family is concerned, we really shouldn't have anything to worry about because we could make it work. We could enroll our children in a charter if we didn't like what was going on. We could find a way to enroll them in private school or if she really wanted to, she could even homeschool them. The fact is, they've chosen public education for their children because they love public education. They feel that public education is the right thing for our society. But it can lead her to believe that there is a potential for discrimination against students who are either not able to be vaccinated or who are not willing to be vaccinated by forcing them to wear a mask and this way, labeling them to other children and members of society as being not vaccinated. This will lead to bullying. This will lead to discrimination. In addition, it separates students into a class system. Those that are the good and the vaccinated get the privilege of not wearing the mask. Those who are not good and not vaccinated do not have that privilege. However, an 8 year old is not able to make the choice of whether or not to get vaccinated for themselves so this is an unfair situation to put a child into. In addition, the masking of children seems to be irrelevant if the adult population who is the ones extremely at risk of Covid-19 has the ability to be vaccinated. As others have stated, in Item #1 of the Health and Safety Plan where it gives Mr. Link the sole authority to make any changes to this plan, she personally feels that it is not public or democratic. The families in this community, the people in this community have elected a school board to make decisions for us and our children and our schools as a whole. Not for one individual to have the sole power to adjust a health and safety plan as he personally may choose throughout the year. In closing, she would like to say that she actually met with their family doctor today, who is a board-certified physician who works for St. Luke's Health Network and I asked him what his opinion was and his thoughts were on making elementary age children because that is what applies to her children. He stated that he, as well as many other doctors and colleagues that he works with do not feel that masking children is an effective strategy at this point due to the readily available vaccine for adults who are at risk. He also stated that there are many studies coming out showing learning and developmental delays in children due to masking, especially for the younger children who are just learning things like speech, spelling, phonics. They are unable to see the mouths and faces of others which is causing delays in learning. When children were asked to draw pictures of faces, they were drawing people with masks. They do not even realize what people's faces look like. They cannot draw expressions like anger or happiness. This is a concern to her and it needs to be taken into consideration by the board when making all of your decisions.

Mr. Eric King, 336 1st Street - Mr. King commented that as many others have already stated, he thinks one of the biggest concerns is the language that's used in our safety plan. One person should not have the sole authority to make decisions based off of their recommendations. If the teachers came to them and said hey we think all the students should have the masks again, you shouldn't get to make that decision or should anybody else. It should be a board decision that makes that decision. A couple of other things, the masks on bus, he doesn't know necessarily if the legality of that if it is true that it's a local decision that can be made. We need to look into that closely because we didn't take temperatures last year getting onto the bus due to safety concerns with students on the side of the road trying to take temperatures. If a student in second or third grade or so forgets a mask and now we have a bus driver sitting there saying what do I do, are the buses going to keep a pile of extra masks just in case. That's something safety wise we do need to look into. He thinks it's silly to have them on. We've all seen the guidance. Masks physically

don't do what they're supposed to be doing. So, he thinks we should take a stand and say no masks at all. The language that's used is very specific and narrow. He thinks that when we write the safety plan, we should write it more broad. They've looked at other districts in the area. They've narrowed down on certain things that then we can be held to. We need to make it broad and loose interpretation so that way we're not stuck doing one thing for the entire 9 months. For instance, the up to 24 days out of school. If guidance should change on that and we write down specifically 24 days in September, and in December or October something changes, are we going to have to go by the 24 days for the entire school year because that's what we wrote on our safety plan or should we write it more broad so that way we can make adjustments as needed throughout the entire year. Social distancing, like somebody else had mentioned, in lunches is kind of ridiculous to have kids all facing one direction when the entire summer they're out playing doing whatever they want to do, talking to their friends. That is something that should have gone into more detail. We went really detailed in some sections and really broad in other sections. One of the other things that wasn't brought up at all is are we going to go back to using school lockers this year. Kids were carrying 20-30 pounds of books around last year because they weren't allowed to use lockers. That's again, something that we really went detailed in some sections but didn't look into that during the safety plan. It may seem silly but that's one thing we should actually look into a little bit more.

Mr. Link reported that the board members have the plan in front of them in paper copy. The plan is also available for guests in the back. It's also posted on the school district website. Many of the comments tonight walked us through the components of the plan already. He thanked all for reading the plan. It is tentatively set to be approved for tomorrow. That will be based on the outcome of this evening's discussions, as well as last review date would be this evening. If you look through the first section, the narrative, it does say that our goal is to keep schools open. That's our goal, five days a week. We need to work together to be able to make that happen which means that we are going to have to have some protective strategies in place. Right now, he wants nothing more than our children to be in our schools and on our campus without masks. Our guidance from PDE and from our legal counsel is that on school buses, masks are required. In schools they are not, we are making them optional. One of our speakers this evening said we don't want to discriminate one group over the other of what the expectations are and he agrees with that. If we're going to make them optional, that means they're optional and that works both ways. If somebody's being told you need to put a mask on and it's optional, that's where administratively we need to step in. But if somebody is, he believes the word was also used, ridiculing someone who chooses to wear a mask, then we need to step in. It kind of works both ways and he thinks we can all support that. As far as the superintendent being able to make decisions without first taking it back to a public school board meeting that was also written in both ways. If it gets to the point where maybe we can scale back some things, we don't have to wait until the next school board meeting. However, if it also gets to the point where for some reason the cases have spiked to the level where he doesn't have enough to operate schools, he needs to be able to say we need to go online. That can still happen. If we get to the point where the virus were to rapidly increase again to the point where now we are talking about orders and laws, he has to obey that. His goal, our goal is to keep schools open five days a week. That means some things are going to look different yet. We are not putting numbers on social distancing. We need to make good decisions about we want our kids to be able to enjoy each other, interact with each other. We want them to see their teachers' faces and we want our teachers to see their faces, that's important. It inhibits instruction especially in the English Language Arts area, especially for our youngest learners. It's going to be a balancing act. Some things we're going to have to keep in place. You're going to see the stickers and reminders around the building. This morning we had a conversation about we don't need to have those every 6 feet. At this point it's more of a visual cue. Around our lavatories, bathrooms, kitchens, you're still going to see signage about handwashing. You're still going to see signage about if you're not feeling well, let your mom or dad know. Mom and dad, please call the school nurse or consult with your family physician, the pediatrician. You're still going to see those reminders. He agrees, you probably should have been doing that every winter for the history of public education. We knew enough about the flu at that time to say, hey, a lot of the things that we put in place this last school year, we probably should have been doing for a long time. Now it was put under the microscope, amplified. It was magnified and here we are. We've learned a lot. There's a reason why the flu cases plummeted

because we were practicing universal precautions. Precautions that are protecting all viruses. We need to continue to do some of that. Administratively, we are requesting the board to give him the permission to say, listen either he's been ordered to do something or we need to take action. Or, we can start to decrease things that we don't have to wait until the next school board meeting. The topic will be discussed at the next school board meeting which is usually approximately 30 days later. Mr. Fedorcha commented that he knows that Mr. Link would not make anything drastically done without addressing the board on those issues. What he is saying, which is very important to us, is that we don't want to call special meetings to change the plan every time something changes. We want to be able to have that time and giving to the superintendent to make those changes without formal board approval. He believes at no time would Mr. Link do anything drastic without consulting the board. Mr. Link continued with Section 2 of the plan. Section 2 talks about the different types of services we are putting in place. One of those requirements for the ESSER funding is that we have 20% of the funds available to be dedicated for students that are most at risk. Students that are learning the English language, students with special needs, students that are homeless, students that are in foster care placements. We have to do that. That's why some of these things are listed in here and those groups of students are specifically called out. We talked about social, emotional learning, and mental health. Ways that we can ensure that families have access to resources whether within the building, not just talking academics. Talking academic, social, emotional, mental health and in some cases support with things like access to basic life necessities, shelter, transportation to school. We need to make sure they are aware of resources like the Safe2Say something app. He's not going to say that we saw a huge uptick in that, but the reports that were coming in from Safe2Say shifted away from we think this student may have a controlled substance on them or this student threatened to beat up another student after school to mental health concerns. We are all aware of the mental health needs of our students, families, and staff have escalated over the last 20 months. So, we're calling those programs out. We're calling out a program specifically available to our employees. We are going to continue with programs that we have an amazingly strong foundation in like our multi-tiered system of supports addressing academic and social needs. That all has to be in there. Yes, there are dollars linked to them. Mr. Link reviewed the table/grid section of the plan. On buses, his position that he's presenting to the school board under legal guidance, is that they have to be worn on buses and vans. Modifying facilities--you're going to continue to see signage around the buildings. As recently as this morning, the long-awaited bottle filling stations are being installed. There will continue to be handwashing and etiquette signs around the buildings. There will continue to be hand sanitizing stations around all the buildings, stadium, fieldhouse. We will continue to clean and sanitize and utilize the Halo machines and fog rooms as needed. Under the contact tracing, the guidance has come directly from the PA Department of Health and it has not yet changed. We went back to them after receiving feedback from community members about their doctors and pediatricians were telling them differently. So, we spent the better part of a week working through this with the Department of Health and they came back and said we could now reduce these and we did reduce them by the length of time that children or employees would have to be out if they were exposed. If they come out and they say that's reduced, we will reduce it again. We know that if somebody's vaccinated, whether it's a child or age or adult, they do not have to quarantine. We're going to abide by that. Under the diagnostic, we are going to continue to ask the help of not only our students, but their parents and guardians. If your son or daughter or grandchild or whomever it is that you care for that attends our school, says to you in the morning, I'm not feeling well, have that conversation with them and please err on the side of caution. Keep them home and contact their pediatrician. The screening tool, the postcard that was sent out last year, will be accessible on the website. Our school nurses are always a resource as well. Vaccinations to the school community--we held a successful vaccination clinic at the NLMS. Currently, we are not planning on hosting another one unless the community says they would like to have us host another one. We decided to put local places that community members can call to schedule an appointment to get a vaccine. We will continue to follow the appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities following the guidance under the IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act and in some cases, under Chapter 15 of state code. We will also continue to communicate with our local health and safety agencies. We have a direct contact to an epidemiologist team out of the State Department of Health. There's a local person in the Lehigh Valley, in fact she's planning to do a site visit in the upcoming weeks to learn more about the needs of our community. Those are the sections of the health and safety plan.

Mrs. Kulp commented regarding wearing masks on the bus. Someone indicated they contacted local congressional officials and got a different answer than what our attorney is telling us. Can we reach out to Zach Mako and find out why he said what he did to the parents? A member of the audience commented that we are the only school district that has the masks on transportation. They looked at other school district plans and they're very generic, ours is very specific. So, why are we the only one following that guidance and other school districts don't. Mr. Link commented that we can't speak for other school districts as to what they put in their plan but he'll look to Attorney Roddick if she wants to offer any clarification on the legality of that clause. Attorney Roddick commented that it is pursuant to the CDC's order requiring masks to be worn on public transportation conveyances. So, that includes schools, buses, planes, things like that and it's an order, it's not guidelines. So at some point in time they may lift that order and then the plan can be revised. This is also a moving target. The guidelines have been changing over the last 20 months. So, if it changes again, this can be revised but that is currently an order that is in effect, it's a federal order. A member of the audience commented that he didn't understand why it is being followed if the state of emergency is over. Mr. Green commented that someone alluded to the fact that if you're not vaccinated, you have to wear a mask and if you are you don't and he's trying to find that in the plan. Mr. Link commented that it is not in the plan. We do not require vaccinations unless we are ordered to and it becomes like any other part of the vaccination battery that students have to have to enter school. Mr. Green commented that there seems to be some disagreement on whether this is a state law, federal law, or whatever. If we pass this tonight, we're still going to have an August meeting at which time, if we are incorrect, we can do some research and we can always change that at the August meeting. It will affect some of the summer classes perhaps but we could certainly modify that in August for the opening of school in fall, correct? Attorney Roddick commented you can and she anticipates different guidance coming down because CDC just revised it this past weekend. Mr. Fedorcha asked Mr. Link to contact Zach Mako's office to get clarification of what was said. Mrs. Husack commented on the contact tracing and isolation. There was a comment made that if somebody was vaccinated, they do not need to quarantine. Mr. Link commented that's correct. Mrs. Husack commented that it says even if the employee or students is fully vaccinated they develop symptoms, the individual must isolate 10 days. Mr. Link commented if they become symptomatic. Again, that's coming right from the Department of Health. Mrs. Husack asked if they'll have to test. Mr. Link commented they would have to test negative. It's possible for someone with a vaccination to still contract Covid 19. Mrs. Husack commented it's also possible for somebody who's not vaccinated to be asymptomatic as well. Mrs. Husack commented we're not asking people if they're vaccinated or not. We're not mandating it or requiring it. It's a choice that people are making. She's conflicted in the way the wording is on that one. Mr. Link asked Mrs. Husack if she had suggestions for it. Mrs. Husack commented to take it out, she's not sure. It seems like either our nurses or our administration is going to have to make a choice to ask somebody if they're vaccinated or not or tell them that they have to be quarantined or not. She feels it puts our administration and our nurses and even our teachers at some level in a really tough position to ask that student or that teacher, are you vaccinated or not. Mr. Link commented that yes, we've been in that tough situation the entirety of last school year. A lot of difficult conversations were had. We're coming at it through the lens of trying to keep schools open as long as possible. He's confident we can do that much longer than we did last year if not the entire year if we all work together. If we say, listen you've been exposed, please go consult with our family physician and have them get back to us. Mrs. Husack commented that she's almost at the fact that it doesn't matter if you're vaccinated or not because you can still have it, you can still get it, you can still pass it along, vaccinated or not. She feels we're putting our administration and district in a tough spot by not saying both have to quarantine. Mrs. Kulp commented that she's agreeing with Mrs. Husack. Mrs. Kulp commented that she thinks it's an extra step that we put in here that really it doesn't matter because like she said, we're not going to ask if you're vaccinated or not. It's just that one section in here even if the employee or student is fully vaccinated that person must quarantine. She thinks if we just take that part out if you say someone has symptoms, that's what we're talking about, whether they are vaccinated or not. So why don't we let it go as a student and not be specific. Audience member was speaking. Mr. Link shared with the school board and the audience again that this language was specifically drafted from the Department of Health, a team of epidemiologists as guidance. They know much more about this than he does. If the school board wants to open the conversation about changing that part of the language, he would make the suggestion that the child or the employee is not able

to return until they're cleared by their family physician or pediatrician. There has to be a medical professional making that recommendation to us. Mrs. Husack commented but what if it's the flu. She's had employees at work that got tested because they had symptoms and both times, three, four, five times tested negative. So, now we're going to ask for a student or a staff member whomever, if you have the sniffles stay out of school and go get a test. Mr. Link is recommending that if the board is looking to change the language in the plan, that part of the guidance to the school district comes from a medical professional being that family member of that child or that employee, either a pediatrician or primary care physician. If it is the flu, that person can come back to us and say it's not Covid, they need to follow the typical intervention for someone when somebody has the flu. Either way, that medical professional is going to be giving feedback, a doctor's note, to the parents/guardians to share with the school. Audience member speaking. Mr. Link commented we put a plan in place for that last year. Audience member speaking. What the primary care physician or the pediatrician says this is allergy, we've accepted that, we've changed that. Audience member speaking. We did change that protocol last year. Audience member asked what if it happens every other week, who's paying the co-pay. Mr. Link commented that no, it was a one and done. We did change that protocol last year. Audience member commented you're gonna keep getting everybody tested, you're not going to have anybody in school. Mr. Link commented that he believes we will have a lot more this year than we did last year. We got to a point last year where some classrooms had a handful of kids. Some classrooms didn't have teachers, the teachers were instructing from home because they were on quarantine or had it directly. Right now, everything is trending towards, but we're not there. We still have to keep our guard up. Mr. Link commented to the school board that if we're going to change the bottom of page 5, we have it cleared by their family doctor. Mrs. Heckman commented about vaccinated versus unvaccinated and quarantined if you develop systems. This implies if you are vaccinated and you do not have symptoms, you do not need to quarantine even if you would technically be a person who was exposed. Are you suggesting that we don't ask people if they are vaccinated or not vaccinated and that would mean that everyone needs to do what is in Section E. no matter what? Mr. Link commented, that no, they share with us that they're vaccinated. Mrs. Heckman commented that she thought the conversation was, does it matter if we ask if they're vaccinated or not and then if we don't do that, then everyone has to do the most extreme of Section E. Mr. Link commented that it's not his interpretation of it. His interpretation of it is we're not. If they tell us we're vaccinated, we'll take them at face value. We have to have people be honest with us. We're not collecting vaccination cards. But, if they are continuing to have severe symptoms, we want them to stay home anyway and go get checked by their doctor. If they're vaccinated, they've been exposed, share with us they've been vaccinated but they're exposed, we're not asking for proof of vaccination. They're going to be able to continue to go to school until they start to show symptoms, if they start to show symptoms. Mrs. Kulp commented that she thinks it's just the one paragraph at the bottom of page 5 where it talks about even if the employee or student is fully vaccinated. You're talking about before if any employee didn't test positive for something that that's where they get to stay home. Do we need that other one? Is it covered in a paragraph before or after? Mr. Link commented the paragraph above refers to someone if they are not vaccinated but now we're talking about someone who is vaccinated but is symptomatic. Mrs. Kulp commented does it matter. Can't we just make that a general statement instead of whether you are or not vaccinated. Mrs. Husack commented that the paragraph above it doesn't say anything about vaccinated or not. It just says if an employee or student tests positive. It doesn't go into vaccinated or not. Now the question is if someone becomes symptomatic but has been vaccinated. Mr. Link commented that the number of days quarantined have been reduced because at one point, it was possible that someone would have had to quarantine up to 27 days and this has backed it down to potentially being as little as 7 days through exposure not testing positive. Audience members speaking. Audience member remarked about the attendance policy and getting letters and keeping their child home for sniffles. Mr. Link commented that the attendance policy is still in place. Audience member commented that if you're modifying the plan you might want to modify the attendance policy. Mr. Link commented that there will not be livestreaming for kids this year if they are at home. They will have contact with their teachers and they will have time, upon return, to make up any work that was missed that the teacher deems necessary. Audience member speaking. Mr. Link commented to the school board that this plan was developed for us. The component of the plan by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, this

is their recommended language. This is the language that was put in place last school year. If you are going to alter from this, he's asking the school board to change the language that the student's not allowed to return until there is a written note provided by a medical professional. This is a decision that should be made by medical professionals. We should follow their guidance. If you're not going to do what the Pennsylvania Department of Health/Epidemiologist team is advising us to do, he's asking the board to then ensure that the decision is made by a pediatrician or primary care physician, somebody who has medical training. Mrs. Husack asked if there could be a note in there to say to do that. Leave it the way it is, but if a parent chooses to take their student to a doctor, they're tested, they have this, and the doctor writes off and says they're okay to go back to school which isn't the 17 or 24 days, would that be acceptable. Or, are you saying that in that case, this is the policy, it doesn't matter because we're going to follow this no matter what their pediatrician or doctor would say. Mr. Link commented that what he's saying to the school board is, if you're going to alter from the language in here, please include language as a child can't return until they've been cleared by a medical professional. Mrs. Husack asked that language be added that says if a parent or administrator or teacher goes to a medically approved physician, and they received written notification that they are acceptable to return to school, that will supersede the current 17, 24 day plan. Mr. Link commented yes but again, this is a decision that the school board has to make. He's trying to arm the board with information. They ultimately have to make the decision. If that family decides they are not going to seek the advice of a pediatrician or primary care physician, then he urges them that we default back to the language that's coming to us from the Department of Health. Board members agreed. Mrs. Kulp asked if the statement could be put in. Audience member speaking.

Mr. Fedorcha asked the board if anyone on the board would like to make a motion to add that sentence to and then please state it as you would like it to be so that we can have it correct because at the end of this we're going to vote on this plan. Mr. Link asked if he could suggest language. If the employee or student is symptomatic, whether they are vaccinated or not, they may only return to school upon written clearance from a medical professional. In lieu of that written clearance, the district will enforce the recommended quarantine and isolation guidelines from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Attorney Roddick asked to add the word qualified before medical professional. Mr. Link amended his suggestion to add qualified medical professional. Audience member speaking. Mr. Link commented that the attestation form is no longer in existence. We are going to abide by this if it's approved this evening. The attestation form specifically addressed masking orders and closing the schools upon a certain number of cases. Audience member speaking. Mr. Fedorcha commented that it is one of the reasons why we are saying that the superintendent would be able to make those changes as needed without going through a formal board meeting to change them. Audience member speaking. Mr. Fedorcha commented that if those guidelines come down, Mr. Link can and he's sure he will make those changes as they come and we're not going to be held with it in spite of that. Mr. Link commented that if guidance comes out on a Tuesday, it's not going into effect on a Wednesday. Our team needs time to process and put a plan in place. Audience member speaking.

Mr. Green made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Kulp that Board of Education approves the following amendment to the NLSD Health and Safety Plan:

Amendment
NLSD Health
& Safety Plan
2021-2022

If employee or student is symptomatic, whether they are vaccinated or not, they may only return to school upon written clearance by a qualified medical professional. In lieu of medical coverage, the district will recommend following the then current isolated and quarantined guidance by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

Roll Call.

YEA: Mr. Distler, Mr. Green, Mrs. Heckman, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Kern, Mrs. Kulp,
and Mr. Fedorcha (7)

NAY: None

ABS: Mr. Keegan, Mrs. Martineau (2)
Motion carried.

Executive Session An executive session was held at 6:30 p.m. at the Middle School Library for personnel items.

PERSONNEL Mr. Distler made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Kern, that the Board of Education approves the following personnel items:

Resignation/ Retirement D. Rex Accept the resignation of Damon Rex from his position as Health & Physical Education Teacher, effective August 24, 2021.

K. Nunemacher Accept the resignation of Kimberly Nunemacher from her position as office paraprofessional, effective July 16, 2021.

Appointment Administrative Todd Breiner
Assignment: Slatington Elementary School Principal
Salary: \$108,000 (prorated)
Effective: Upon release from current employer

Appointment Instructional Katelyn Hugo
Assignment: Temporary Professional Employee
Elementary Teacher
Salary: \$51,850 (Step 2 Bachelor's on the 2021-2022 CBA Salary Schedule)
Effective: August 24, 2021

Amy Shonk*
Assignment: Temporary Professional Employee
Secondary Science Teacher
Salary: \$62,175 (Step 1 Master's+24 on the 2021-2022 CBA Salary Schedule)
Effective: August 24, 2021

***Pending Verification of Missing Personnel File Items**

Administrative Transfer Blasia Dunham
From: Middle School English Language Arts Teacher
To: Technology Integration Specialist
Salary: No change in salary
Effective: August 24, 2021

Tamara Stubits
From: Elementary Teacher
To: Technology Integration Specialist
Salary: No change in salary
Effective: August 24, 2021

Administrative Transfer Denise Minnich*
From: Non-Instructional Paraprofessional
Assignment: Instructional Paraprofessional
Salary: \$15.45/hour
Effective: August 24, 2021

***60 Working Day Probationary Period**

Summertime Maintenance/ Custodial Helper Motion to approve the following individual as Summertime Maintenance/Custodial helpers for the summer of 2021 at a salary of \$10.00 per hour:
Caleb Hineline

Roll Call.

YEA: Mr. Green, Mrs. Heckman, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Kern, Mrs. Kulp, Mr. Distler, and Mr. Fedorcha (7)

NAY: None

ABS: Mr. Keegan, Mrs. Martineau (2)
Motion carried.

Mr. Link congratulated all of the new hires and recognized Mr. Todd Breiner, the new principal of Slatington Elementary.

Mr. Todd Breiner thanked the board, the administration, staff members, and the community for the wonderful opportunity. He's extremely excited to get started but even more excited to be able to serve the community in which he lives.

CONFERENCE

Mr. Green made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Distler, that the Board of Education approves the following conference item:

Tania Stoker - Imagine Learning Partnership Forum - September 29-October 1, 2021 - Provo, UT - Meals: \$120 - Total Approximate Cost: \$120 - Funding: Assistant Superintendent's Professional Development Budget

Roll Call.

YEA: Mr. Green, Mrs. Heckman, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Kern, Mrs. Kulp, Mr. Distler, and Mr. Fedorcha (7)

NAY: None

ABS: Mr. Keegan, Mrs. Martineau (2)
Motion carried.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Mrs. Kulp made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Husack, that the Board of Education approves the following curriculum and instruction items:

Head Start 2021-2022	As per the recommendation of the administration, authorize Community Services for Children to operate the Head Start Pre-K program at Peters Elementary School from August 1, 2021 through July 31, 2022. The only obligation to the district is to provide one classroom.
Institute for Teaching and Leading 2021-2022	As per the recommendation of the administration, approve to renew the Institute for Teaching and Leading (i4tl) service contract to provide consulting services in the area of learning model design and administrator coaching related to virtual teaching and learning. The cost for the 2021-2022 school year is \$39,780.00. Funding through ESSER grant.
LitCamp 2021-2022	As per the recommendation of the administration, approve Scholastic Education LitCamp for as a supplemental literacy program for the 2021-2022 school year. Funding through ESSER grant.
AR/STAR 2021-2022	As per the recommendation of the administration, approve to renew the Renaissance Accelerated Reader, Star Math and Star Reading contract for the 2021-2022 school year at a cost of \$12,123.00.
Unique Learning 2021-2022	As per the recommendation of the administration, approve to renew the Unique Learning System service contract for special needs students for the 2021-2022 school year at a cost of \$1,746.72. This is an increase of \$83.19 from last year. Funding through Medical Access.
Character Strong	As per the recommendation of the administration, approve Character Strong for Middle School SEL Lessons at a cost of \$2,898.40 for the 2021-2022 school year. Funding through Medical Access.

RISE
2021-2022 As per the recommendation of the administration, approve Scholastic RISE as a Tier II/III Intervention for Reading at a cost of \$4,169.25 for the 2021-2022 school year. Funding through ESSER III grant.

Induction Program Approve the following teachers as helping teachers in the Northern Lehigh School District Induction Program for the 2021-2022 school year:

Helping Teacher	Inductee	Stipend
Lori Middaugh	Katelyn Hugo	\$800.00
Julie Everett	Amy Shonk	\$200.00
Elizabeth Fleming	Amy Shonk	\$800.00

Roll Call.

YEA: Mr. Green, Mrs. Heckman, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Kern, Mrs. Kulp, Mr. Distler, and Mr. Fedorcha (7)

NAY: None

ABS: Mr. Keegan, Mrs. Martineau (2)

Motion carried.

FINANCIAL Mr. Kern made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Husack, that the Board of Education approves the following financial items:

PCG
ACCESS
Program
2021-2022 As per the recommendation of the administration, approve to authorize proper officials to enter into an agreement with Public Consulting Group (PCG), an approved contractor for the Department of Human Services, to administer the school-based ACCESS Program claims. There is no increase over last year's rate of \$.33/claim for direct service and \$.19/claim for transportation.

Roll Call.

YEA: Mr. Green, Mrs. Heckman, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Kern, Mrs. Kulp, Mr. Distler, and Mr. Fedorcha (7)

NAY: None

ABS: Mr. Keegan, Mrs. Martineau (2)

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS Mr. Green made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Husack, that the Board of Education approves the following new business items:

NLSD
Health &
Safety Plan As per the recommendation of the administration, approve the Northern Lehigh School District (NLSD) Health and Safety Plan for the 2021-2022 school year, as amended.

Mrs. Molitoris read aloud the amendment.

Bookkeeper II
AR Position As per the recommendation of the administration, approve an additional Bookkeeper II (Accounts Receivable) position in the Business Office for the 2021-2022 school year under the current Administrative Support Agreement.

Human
Resource
Generalist As per the recommendation of the administration, approve to create the confidential position of Human Resource Generalist in the Business Office for the 2021-2022 school year.

Roll Call.

YEA: Mr. Green, Mrs. Heckman, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Kern, Mrs. Kulp, Mr. Distler, and Mr. Fedorcha (7)

NAY: None

ABS: Mr. Keegan, Mrs. Martineau (2)

Motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Mr. Fedorcha asked if there was anyone in the audience, who has not spoken, who would like to address the board for any other reason that is not on the agenda.. No one in the audience wished to speak.

Mr. Link thanked all the work of the administration and the association officers for reviewing this plan and having input to this plan. He thanked the audience. He appreciated their input, thoughtfulness, and respectful interactions this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Husack made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Kulp, that the regular meeting of the Northern Lehigh School District Board of School Directors adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Roll Call.

YEA: Mr. Green, Mrs. Heckman, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Kern, Mrs. Kulp, Mr. Distler, and Mr. Fedorcha (7)

NAY: None

ABS: Mr. Keegan, Mrs. Martineau (2)
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Gale N. Husack
Secretary

ATTEST: _____ President
Gary S. Fedorcha

