

Upper Arlington Board of Education
Video Conference (due to COVID-19 pandemic; live streamed on youtube.com)
February 12, 2021 – 3:00pm
Special Board Meeting

Exhibit V-2
April 13, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Members present: Ms. Nancy Drees, Ms. Jenny McKenna, Ms. Carol Mohr, Ms. Lori Trent and Mr. Scott McKenzie

Administrative officials present: Dr. Paul W. Imhoff, Superintendent; Mr. Andrew Geistfeld, Treasurer; Dr. Andy Hatton, Associate Superintendent; Mr. Matt Boaz, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Mr. Chris Potts, Chief Operating Officer; Ms. Karen Truett, Communications Director; Ms. Laura Mickens, Assistant Treasurer; Denise Lutz, Chief Technology Officer

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Mohr moved, Ms. McKenna seconded to approve the agenda **21-28**

AYES: Ms. Drees, Ms. McKenna, Ms. Mohr, Ms. Trent and Mr. McKenzie

NAYS: None

MEDICAL ADVISORY TEAM UPDATE

Dr. Ali, Chair of the Medical Advisory Team (MAT) gave an update from MAT’s meeting on February 11th. Dr. Ali shared that MAT believes in data guided decision-making and not a data driven or data determined decision-making grid. He shared that MAT was reviewing specific data, but more for level setting. Throughout this whole process, a single data point has not driven any recommendation or decision.

Dr. Ali reviewed the Learning Mode Guidance matrix and reiterated this matrix was to serve as a guide for discussions. He shared various comments made by MAT related to various sections of the matrix. Dr. Ali shared a grid of case rates in the community and rates within school age children since June 2020. Case rates within the UA community and student levels have decreased since December and trending in the right direction. However, he reminded the board that in order for the trend to continue students and the community must continue to adhere to the mitigation strategies.

Dr. Ali shared that as information is gathered it is believed that there have not been any cases that were acquired in school during the hybrid-learning model, which is reassuring and is in line with national data and CDC findings. This reassuring information has allowed discussions to be less tied to absolute thresholds. Dr. Ali shared there was not 100% consensus but there was a rising comfort level from the majority of the MAT that going to school all-in is safe. There was debate over specific numbers and specific dates and MAT did not come to a consensus around these items. Finally, there was a significant endorsement to understand and the implement the principles in the CDC guidance that was released today.

Ms. Drees asked Dr. Ali to share conversations held by MAT around the mental health and well-being of students. He reviewed what Dr. Ackerman shared concerning mental health and well-being of students, including the idea of consistent thoughtful predictive decision-making is probably less stressful than rapid changes in the mode of education. Dr. Ali shared the consensus of MAT is that the goal is to get everyone in school when medical and public health consensus on when it is safe to do so.

Ms. Trent asked follow up questions related to mental health and well-being.

Ms. Trent asked about decisions regarding each instructional level. Dr. Ali shared there is less comfort at the high school level as case counts are higher but there was less concern at the elementary level. He reiterated MAT did not have

discussion on a specific date for a transition to all-in.

Ms. Drees shared the case counts at the various levels that she obtained from Gina Rancitelli, Student COVID Coordinator.

Ms. Drees shared the district is not seeing COVID cases rising because students are in school and now that the teachers will be vaccinated that is an additional bonus.

Dr. Ali shared there was unanimous agreement across the MAT that mitigation procedures currently are safe and the classroom experience is not contributing to disease transmission.

Dr. Ali shared there is comfort among MAT at the 3-6 feet of social distancing and there is some comfort with potentially lower than that. However, MAT wants to review the new CDC guidelines that were released today.

Dr. Imhoff shared the district will work to ensure 6 feet of distancing during lunch which is crucial when students have their masks off. However, outside of lunch, the district will strive for 3 feet of distancing but many times that will not be possible and it will be less than 3 feet in some classrooms.

Dr. Ali shared MAT is talking through risks and benefits, but they are here to support the board and make sure whatever the board decides MAT will help make it as safe as possible.

Ms. McKenna asked about the additional amount of risk that exists between starting March 1 versus March 15. Dr. Ali shared the risk of increased community spread over the additional 2 weeks is relatively small but small compared to what.

Mr. McKenzie asked if MAT talked about staff safety related to the vaccine. Ms. Drees shared that most teachers will have their second vaccination shot before March 1st and that teachers will be much safer than they are now. Mr. McKenzie shared he is concerned for teachers who received their second vaccination on February 27th may not be feeling well by March 1.

Ms. McKenna shared that this would be an issue whether the district is in current hybrid learning model or the all-in model.

Ms. McKenna verified the reason of block schedule in the secondary level is to help lessen exposure with less transitioning of students throughout the day.

Ms. Mohr reiterated the fact that part of the reason we are able to have discussions of all-in is due to the mitigating safety factors the district has developed which includes contact tracing. It is imperative that parents and community members keep reporting when a student had a known contact to the virus. Dr. Ali agreed.

Ms. Trent shared she feels the next logical step in the process is to move to a 5-day model, even though it will be uncomfortable and add lot of uncertainty but she has faith in our students to make good choices.

The board members thanked Dr. Ali and the MAT for their assistance and time in working through this pandemic and the impact on the district

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON RETURN TO ALL-IN LEARNING

Mr. Potts shared changes to lunch period when the district goes all-in. He also reiterated lunch would not be the same as pre-pandemic as the district will enforce 6 feet distancing and students will have assigned areas to help with contact tracing. Tents are not anticipated in the elementary schools but may be used at the secondary level to spread students out over lunch. Dr. Imhoff shared lunch will also require additional supervision and the district will use federal stimulus funds to offset the costs.

Mr. McKenzie asked if everything operationally could be ready by March 1. Mr. Potts stated that once the board

determines a date for all-in, the district will be ready.

Dr. Imhoff reviewed the rules regarding quarantine and shared new information that came out today from the CDC. The district and MAT will review this new information and make any necessary changes to its protocols.

Ms. McKenna asked if athletes need something to return to practice when they have tested positive to COVID. Dr. Imhoff shared, similar to injuries; the district must receive a note from a doctor before an athlete can return to practice.

Ms. Trent asked if the district was considering testing staff or students on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis. Dr. Imhoff stated that administration would review the new CDC guidelines and talk with the MAT regarding any testing requirements.

Dr. Hatton shared the process the district is working on for students and families choosing to transition between learning pathways (i.e. On-line Academy and school based pathway or vice versa). He also shared this process will be much shorter than in the past due to the quick turnaround.

Ms. Mohr asked about block schedules and the benefits versus costs once students are all-in. Dr. Hatton shared the secondary level will stay with block schedules for various reasons including to prevent another change and to help reduce the amount of movement within the building for the safety of students.

Ms. Mohr asked about the challenges of switching between learning pathways during a quarter versus the end of a quarter. Mr. Hatton shared in general it can be tough to transition between pathways in all grades as the year goes on as the material is similar but the pacing can be very different.

Dr. Imhoff shared the communication plan for staff and families based on whatever the board decides today.

Ms. Drees shared that she understands whatever the board decides today is going to be a lot of work to get every child back in and there are a lot of moving parts but she also knows staff and administration can really do anything and have proven it in the past. She believes that for the well-being of students it is important to return all grade levels as soon as possible to all-in and proposed March 1.

Mr. McKenzie commented on potentially starting the secondary level in all-in a week or two later to eliminate some of the educational challenges.

Ms. McKenna shared she feels very strongly on grades K-8 returning to school as the benefits outweigh risks that are being mitigated. She feels it is in the best interest of kids to get back to school and the 10 days of classes starting March 1 is significant. Ms. McKenna shared she is not as resolute with grades 9-12 as numbers are a little higher but all things being equal it would be better for families and parents to start at the same time.

Ms. Mohr shared when the district was working toward a March 23rd all-in date she was comfortable especially with the natural break of the end of the 3rd quarter. However, she stated she could be persuaded to start earlier as more days of all-in would be helpful to kids.

Ms. Trent shared she believes March 1 for all-in is the right thing to do for all kids. She believes the students and staff will be incredible and it will give some normalcy to all of the chaos.

Ms. Trent asked about the additional financial burden with tents, hiring of additional staff, and other items. Mr. Geistfeld shared there should be little impact on the general operating fund as the majority of these costs can be covered with the second round of federal ESSERS funding.

Ms. Drees reiterated her thoughts, including starting March 1 for students K-12 which would allow all students to feel as normal as normal can be right now and help with the wellness aspect.

Board members shared preferences of when to start all-in and whether grades 9-12 should start a week later.

Ms. Trent moved, Ms. Drees seconded to have K-12 students back to 5 days a week as of March 1, 2021.

AYES: Ms. Trent, Ms. Drees, Ms. Mohr, Ms. McKenna and Mr. McKenzie

NAYS: None

UPDATED RESPONSIBLE RESTART PLAN

Dr. Imhoff reminded the board of the updated Restart Plan that was reviewed at the last board meeting. In order to be ready for the March 1 start date, the district will need to file this plan with Franklin County Public Health.

Dr. Imhoff also reminded the board that a resolution passed back in September gave the superintendent the ability, if there are any recommendations from the public health department or the MAT with safety protocols, to make adjustments.

Ms. Drees moved, Ms. Trent to approve the updated Responsible Restart Plan, including adding any new COVID quarantine guidance from the Franklin County Public Health.

21-30

AYES: Ms. Drees, Ms. McKenna, Ms. Mohr, Ms. Trent and Mr. McKenzie

NAYS: None

ADJOURNMENT

At 5:10pm Ms. Trent moved, Ms. Mohr seconded to adjourn

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AYES: Ms. Trent, Ms. Mohr, Ms. McKenna, Ms. Drees and Mr. McKenzie

NAYS: None

Treasurer

Board President