

FINNEYTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Special Meeting
Secondary Campus Media Center
8916 Fontainebleau Terrace
Cincinnati, OH 45231
March 8, 2022
5:30pm

The Finneytown Board of Education met in special session on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, in the Secondary Campus Media Center, 8916 Fontainebleau Terrace, Cincinnati, OH 45231. Mr. Gast, Ms. Lee, Ms. McMullen, Mr. Reeb and Mr. Rea were present. The President called the meeting to order at 5:33pm.

21-22 Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Ms. McMullen, that the Board dispense with the opening ceremony and approval of minutes from February 22, 2022. The President declared the motion passed.

22-22 Ms. Lee moved, seconded by Mr. Rea, that the Board move to Executive Session, in accordance with ORC 121.22(G)(3), to consult with an attorney for the Board of Education concerning disputes involving the Board of Education that are the subject of pending or imminent court action

and

in accordance with ORC 121.22(G)(4), in order to prepare for negotiations or bargaining sessions with employees concerning compensation and other terms and conditions of employment

RC: Ms. Lee, yes; Ms. McMullen, yes; Mr. Rea, yes; Mr. Reeb, yes; Mr. Gast, yes. The president declared the motion passed.

The Board entered Executive Session at 5:34pm.

The Board returned to Regular Session at 7:47pm.

23-22 Mr. Reeb moved, seconded by Mr. Rea, that the Board approve a mask optional plan.

Mask Policy Discussion

Mr. Reeb

General Mask Optional Comments

- I'm okay with moving to mask optional.
- My school is mask optional, CPS just moved to mask optional, the State of the Union address was mask optional and pretty much maskless.

- There is some concern for kids who have not been vaccinated, but the majority are vaccinated.
- The CDC is no longer recommending the requirements.

Mask Optional Timing

- My preference is for a transition to mask optional effective tomorrow. If a later predefined date is needed for others, I can accept that.

Reinstatement of the Mask Mandate

- I prefer an emergency meeting be called rather than automatic reinstatement of the mask mandate based upon pre-set metrics, so that our hands are not tied.

Final Comment

- Let the record reflect that I will be voting for the mask optional plan, but I rather that our hands were not tied with automatic return to the mask mandate.

Ms. Lee

General Mask Optional Comments

- I contacted Cincinnati Children's Hospital for clarification on the CDC recommendation. The CDC still recommends everyone wear masks, even though they're putting the responsibility on someone else. Their recommendation has not changed what they recommend. The change is in who is required to do what.
- I am about protecting students, all of them.
- It's not just our students, but the community, we need to protect. As one of the emails we received on this issue said, "We are more than a school."
- I don't know our number for immunocompromised, but we also have a lot of younger kids who are not eligible for vaccines. Some of them will likely be in our schools during kindergarten registration. There are some risks to them.
- The COVID numbers from other mask optional schools are showing that the risks are not as concerning. Not being the first really does help us see where that's trending. The reality is, while there is some risk, it's looking less and less.
- School is not a choice, which makes it different. There are still several people only sending their kids to school and not doing any of those choice things in less restrictive environments. Those people are no longer going to get the protection that the school is offering by requiring masks.

Mask Optional Timing

- A delayed transition to mask optional gives parents some time to decide for themselves now that they're going to have that choice.

- The bigger concern on timing for me is spring break. A lot of people travel. Right now, we look great, but not everywhere looks great. There is concern that those traveling could bring it back to our community.

Reinstatement of the Mask Mandate

- I prefer automatic reinstatement of the mask mandate so we don't have to schedule a meeting and lose time.

Mr. Rea

General Mask Optional Comments

- Why were the mandates lifted? Yes, it was numbers, but also it was that the organization doesn't want to step out and say it anymore. So many people are saying that they're just not doing it anyway. Part of it is that they gave up fighting it.
- CPS went mask optional last night. Anti-bullying language was written directly into the new masking policy, clearly stating bullying or harassment issues surrounding masks will be subject to the bullying policy.
- I would like to make sure that we address bullying. It needs to be called out in our transition communication that harassment or bullying based on masks will be subject to the already existing bullying policy.

Mask Optional Timing

- I would not like to start it tomorrow. Delaying it a bit, whatever that timeframe is, gives parents and students a chance to prepare.
- I'd like to delay till after spring break, because of travel outside our area.

Reinstatement of the Mask Mandate

- I am in favor of automatic reinstatement tied to our indicators without having to call a special meeting. If the county goes high, an email goes out that day, and the masks are on the next day, without having to call a meeting.

Mr. Gast

General Mask Optional Comments

- We already had lowered mask wearing in the general population with the trend going down. For me to say that the school is the one place which is keeping you from getting it, is just not really true.

Mask Optional Timing

- I don't know that waiting is going to change anything. I do believe we have diminished educational experience. I don't believe there is a benefit to delaying the removal of those impediments. Delay is not at no cost. We already had a lesser education, that's what we're balancing against, not against nothing.

- A PhD I know and trust, who's done lab research on the Coronavirus and studied it in scientific journals, is telling me, even with N95 masks, everyone complying, everyone wearing masks perfectly, there is no protection against the virus past an hour. Even prior to the CDC decision, the facemasks were to some degree more about people wanting an action to take versus feeling defenseless. Based on his research and scientific journal readings, the masks haven't been effective for a while. Therefore, I am not for waiting.

Reinstatement of the Mask Mandate

- The policy is not explicit, it says the board decides but it doesn't say we have to convene a meeting to have a vote. We can have as a decision that trigger point without having to have a meeting.

Ms. McMullen

General Mask Optional Comments

- From my understanding, the CDC has removed the mandate and there's no mandate on the bus. I thought about it the other day - we're going to the grocery stores, we went to a hockey game the other day, and were the only ones wearing a mask. There are all those other people that are unprotected. So how is the situation really any different in our schools?
- I just don't know what grounds we have to continue requiring masks if all those mandates have been lifted.
- I feel mask optional is the best of both worlds. If you feel like your family needs to continue to wear it, then wear it. If you don't, discontinue it.

Mask Optional Timing

- I'm okay with removing the mask mandate immediately.

Reinstatement of the Mask Mandate

- I'm okay with automatic return to the mask mandate.

Dr. Banks summarized the Board's Mask Optional Plan details as follows:

- The district will move to mask-optional starting tomorrow (3/9/22).
- The district will continue to monitor and report any positive cases of COVID-19 to Hamilton County Public Health.
- The district will continue to follow the Mask to Stay guidelines recommended by Hamilton County Public Health and the Ohio Department of Health.
- The district will monitor internally for classroom clustering (positive cases >2%) as originally defined by Hamilton County Public Health. If clustering is identified, masks would be required for that classroom.

- If the county designation moves to High, as determined by Hamilton County Public Health, the district will return to a mask mandate immediately.
- Students, staff, and visitors can choose to continue to wear masks.
- Notice of board action will be communicated via the Community Update and email communications.
- If any student, staff member, or visitor sees an individual being bullied as the result of wearing a mask, this action will be subject to the enforcement of our bullying policy. This will be communicated in all notifications.

RC: Ms. McMullen, Yes; Mr. Rea, Yes; Mr. Reeb, Yes; Mr. Gast, Yes; Ms. Lee, Yes. The president declared the motion passed.

Mr. Reeb left the meeting at 8:15pm.

24-22 Ms. Lee moved, seconded by Mr. Rea, that the Board accept furniture bids for the Finneytown Elementary new building construction project as follows:

- 1) A bid for the purchase of Finneytown Elementary furniture package A from the low bidder, **RJE Business Interiors**, at a cost of \$299,675.35 and authorize the issuance of a purchase order in the amount of \$299,675.35 plus the cost of delivery and installation.
- 2) A bid for the purchase of Finneytown Elementary furniture package B from the low bidder, **Martin Public Seating**, at a cost of \$164,006.00 and authorize the issuance of a purchase order in the amount of \$164,006.00 plus the cost of delivery and installation.
- 3) A bid for the purchase of Finneytown Elementary furniture package C from the low bidder, **Martin Public Seating**, at a cost of \$127,375.05 and authorize the issuance of a purchase order in the amount of \$127,375.05 plus the cost of delivery and installation.
- 4) A bid for the purchase of Finneytown Elementary furniture package D from the low bidder, **RJE Business Interiors**, at a cost of \$123,072.90 and authorize the issuance of a purchase order in the amount of \$123,072.90 plus the cost of delivery and installation.

The projected delivery date for all furniture is June 29th, with a July installation.

RC: Ms. McMullen, Yes; Mr. Rea, Yes; Mr. Gast, Yes; Ms. Lee, Yes. The president declared the motion passed.

25-22 Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Ms. Lee, that the Board approve a \$3 million transfer from the General Fund to the Building Construction Fund

The Board approved the following transfers of funds:

004-5100-9022	Building Construction Fund	\$3,000,000.00
001-7200-910	General Fund	(\$3,000,000.00)

The Building Construction Fund transfer represents a projected shortfall in the funding required to complete district master plan initiatives associated with and related to the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) co-funded project and locally funded initiatives, resulting from significant and sustained inflationary increases in OFCC construction cost sets due to the global pandemic, and the funded K-12 square footage reduction projected to be made by the OFCC as a result of a decrease in the district's OFCC enrollment projection, in addition to other unfunded accessory projects. The district's unrestricted state funding received in the 2021-22 fiscal year exceeds the \$3 million transfer amount.

RC: Ms. McMullen, Yes; Mr. Rea, Yes; Mr. Gast, Yes; Ms. Lee, Yes. The president declared the motion passed.

Administrative Report

Use of ESSER Funds

Dr. Banks, Superintendent – provided the following update

The district is hoping to use some of its ESSER funds for renovation work at the existing Secondary Campus gymnasium. We are investigating its possible use for either HVAC/air conditioning or a new roof. As a federal project, there are many legal requirements. We are working with legal counsel to ensure compliance.

A survey will be going out to our staff and community to collect additional input on the spending of ESSER dollars.

ESSER I dollars have been spent.

ESSER II dollars are to be used this year.

ARP ESSER dollars, in the amount of \$2.7 million, need to be spent by September 30, 2024. A roof or HVAC/air conditioning would use a substantial amount of the ARP ESSER funds.

As a federally funded project, these renovations would be subject to prevailing wage requirements (paying union contracted rates). The HVAC project market rates are already very close to prevailing wage rates. We are told that supply chain issues and rampant inflation are contributing to exponential increases in the cost of nearly all construction projects. So we're trying to get better cost points for the work.

Summer Program Options

Dr. Banks, Superintendent – provided the following update

Based upon conversations with Ms. McMullen and Ms. McNair, our district social worker, a one question survey, that includes next year's school calendar, has been developed to go out to our school community. The survey asks if our 2021-2022 calendar will be challenging for their family. It also collects contact information for the opportunity to follow up and dive a bit deeper. It will be sent with our community update and the principal's newsletter. We'll see how many initial responses we get, and work on a solution based upon numbers and needs.

Dr. Banks will forward the survey to Ms. Lee for inclusion of a QR code to be used on a flyer handed out in Thursday folders.

Transportation

Mr. Wagner, Director of Operations – provided the following update

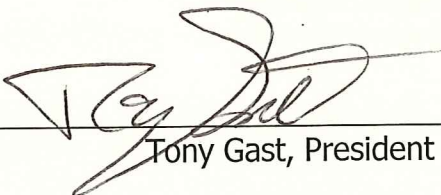
Our current outsourced student transportation contract ends this year. Over the last several months, we've been discussing options. Should we put it out for bid? Should we bring it back in house?

My background is in school transportation, for over 15 years. I ran a department of 35 buses before I came here. Based upon administrative team discussions and review, we think there is a lot of room for improvement in the current operation. We believe we can improve service, increase safety, and reduce costs, once the program is up and running.

There is also a lot more that we can do with technology. Route finders allow secretaries and principals to find a student immediately on their phone. Parent apps allows them to track where their kid's bus is. The school dispatcher can also use it to text families if a bus is running late. We would purchase these programs if run inhouse.

Currently there is a widespread bus driver shortage. If brought back inhouse, we will explore CDL training for our grounds and maintenance employees, part-time bus mechanic, and other employees interested in earning some extra money before or after school. We would also like to develop a campaign to target and recruit residents from inside the school community, who love our schools and might be looking for some additional income, to become drivers.

26-22 There being no further business, Ms. Lee moved, seconded by Mr. Gast, that the meeting be adjourned. The president declared the meeting adjourned at 8:50pm



Tony Gast, President

ATTEST:



David Oliverio, Treasurer