

MARCUM-ILLINOIS UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 1, 2021

1. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board President Alan Menigoz called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

2. ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Alan Menigoz, Jill Bramhill, Jeff Moore, Joshua Wanner

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Occasionally an item requiring attention will arrive in the office after the agenda is posted. Items may be added to the agenda with 2/3-majority approval of the board. Items to be added will be made available to the public at the meeting.

Alan Menigoz motioned to approve the agenda. Jill Bramhill seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote 4-0

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

“No action or discussion shall be undertaken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda except the Members of the Board or the Marcum-Illinois Union Elementary School District Staff may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed. As the Board discusses agenda items, audience participation is permitted. The president will recognize those members of the audience who wish to speak. If necessary, each person wishing to speak will be asked to identify himself prior to speaking. Individual speakers shall be allowed three minutes to address the Board on each agenda or non-agenda item. The president shall limit the total time for public input on each item to 20 minutes. With Board consent, the president may increase or decrease the time allowed for public presentation, depending on the topic and the number of persons wishing to be heard. Generally, the president will ask board members for their remarks prior to recognizing requests to speak from the audience. At the president’s discretion, agenda items may be considered in other than numerical order.” Board Policy (Bylaws) 9323.

Jeromy DeCecco thanked the Board and Mr. Eggers for inviting him to the Board meeting. He shared that this is important to him and he has been keeping track of what has been going on with Mr. Eggers. Jeromy shared that the staff has been wonderful and that the problem isn't the staff or the school, that they've gone above and beyond to make it safe. He shared that we know some schools locally are open and open in other states and he doesn't know of any real issues with kids getting Covid. He shared that he took his son out to play and after about 6-8 minutes he was tired. Jeromy is worried that his son is not getting enough physical activity without recess, people to play with, etc. Jeromy also shared that his daughter is starting to pick up her grades now but her grades have been affected by distance learning. He said he noticed things with his own kids and knows that distance learning is not good for them. He reiterated that he knows the school is doing everything they can. He also noted that he was thankful that the school was getting parent's voices and input.

Robin Kyle shared that she is excited and wants us to go back. She noted that during Zoom meetings having the video off helps internet issues that may arise. She reiterated that she wants to come back. She shared that as much as the teachers encourage students to do everything it is hard to make sure they are doing everything while distance learning. She said she is all for going back as soon as we can.

Lori Taylor shared that she agreed with what Jeromy said. She is a healthcare professional, a dietician, and shared that she has seen this and seen the affects of the inactivity, and how that can be harmful to kids' health. She shared that she even sees it in her own kids even though she encourages them to go out and play. She thinks it is essential for their health to be in school. Lori also noted that typing is difficult especially for the kids and that assignments virtually take longer for some kids. She thinks it's essential that these kids get back to school in person.

Daniel Pearson shared that he is happy to hear that we are talking about going back in person. He noted that he keeps hearing thank you for the school doing all that they can. Daniel shared that he agrees with that, but wants to frame it a little differently when thinking about Dr. Luu, the insurance agency and others with policy. He noted that procedures about distancing TK and having them wear masks don't make sense when statistically those kids are not at risk. Daniel said he wants the school to have the perspective to be doing all you can to get the kids what they need. He wants the school board to think about what is realistic and why you are doing it. Daniel requested that the Board please do all they can for the children, not for Dr. Luu, the insurance, and whoever is over your back.

Brad Lauppe shared that he agrees with everyone else. He wants the kids to go back with no masks. He said he thinks 90% of the people would go with it. He shared that he knows we're worried about getting sued, but that he doesn't see any lawsuits out there about this. Brad noted that he is seeing the other schools go back and one kid gets sick and then you close down the class again and it's even worse going back and forth. He shared that he would like to just go back. He thinks it is very low risk for the kids. Brad added that it is hurting the kids staying at home.

Alan Menigoz shared that it is really important that we are putting the onus on the parents. The school needs parents to keep kids who are sick at home. He knows kids are going to be around each other, but it is important that we keep them healthy before they come to school. He added that he knows it is uncomfortable to take the day off of work, but we have to do it.

Anthony Taylor shared that he agrees with kids going back. He noted that the kids are missing things that they need. He said he would be willing to sign something in case their kids got sick that we wouldn't sue the school, etc. Anthony asked if there was a possibility that that could be done.

Alan Menigoz shared that the school is not allowed to have them sign their life away. He added that we are going to have to follow some rules, but we are working to get back to normal, not the new normal, but normal. Alan noted that we want kids to be playing and just being kids, but we have to do it one step at a time.

Melissa Davis shared that she always goes against the grain and does the opposite, but she wants to share her opinion. She noted that from a personal standpoint, with her kids, she's very structured and has a routine. She asked what happens if we go back on Wednesday then we get closed again two weeks later? She said the adjustment is difficult. She understands the need to go back, but wants to know if there is a chance that we would go back to distance learning. She is hesitant about the back and forth.

Alan Menigoz responded that we know there will be some setbacks as we get back to normal. He noted that we don't get back without trying. We've been doing a ton of work to get the kids back to school the right way. We did the waiver. We did the work. He added that it is unfortunate if one class has to go home but at least the other classes can stay. He agrees it is better if it is staying the same and routine, but we know these things will happen and we will have setbacks. This is how we move forward.

Jarrett McAllister shared that it is hard to speak without getting emotional. He said he wants to preface with saying thank you. He said he knows it is a legality issue, but there is a 99.9% survival rate. He added that kids are least at risk and that there is no science showing that kids are dying like flies anywhere. Jarrett said he wants to know if the kids go back can they stay back? No more yo-yo games. He shared that he has a 12 year old daughter whose parent teacher conferences are usually boring because they just discuss how great she's doing. He shared that with distance learning, however, she is depressed, she doesn't leave her room, and he feels like he is losing his daughter. He is very worried. He asked what is the end game? Forced vaccination? He noted that this is insane, shutting down the country and world over something with a 99.9 % survival rate.

Ryan McAllister added that when the kids got to go back for 3 weeks she saw a huge difference. She said her daughter was happy and engaging with them again. Ryan noted that her daughter's grades came up but went back down after returning to distance learning.

Alan Menigoz thanked them for sharing and reminded them that they're not alone. There are a lot of students experiencing this. This is going to end. Alan reiterated that they are going to go back and we are going to be able to get them back to the point were they're experiencing the positives. He noted that we don't have all of the answers. We are going to open, we are going to do what we can to keep everyone healthy. Alan again thanked parents for sharing.

Kay Palmer shared that she is a resource specialist for Sutter County. She noted that she works at Marcum and another school that has already reopened. She shared that once they return kids come in happier and healthier after recess. Mentally the kids are better in person. She said that in her experience when kids are online for 50 minutes they are really giving about 10-15 minutes of good work. She noted that students need to be in school and be engaged. They need to be able to go to recess and interact with their peers. The quality of the education is better in-person also and she feels that the other teachers will likely agree.

Tami Ortega wanted to reiterate what the McAllisters were saying. She said this is happening to a lot of our kids right now. She has five kids that are failing every class. They aren't getting online or doing their assignments, they feel like they can't do it because it doesn't matter; they feel like they are so far gone. They need to be in class. She noted that the teachers are

frustrated too and shared that their hearts are broken and they are worried about our kids who are struggling. She said the teachers miss our kids and want them back.

Jackie Cleary shared that she agrees with a lot of what others are saying. She noted that she is in the childcare business and this has affected how she runs her business since she's licensed by the state. She shared that for the younger kids the mental stuff isn't as bad, but for the older kids the mental piece is hard. Jackie said that Marcum is doing more than any of the other schools that she knows of, that her son Logan is online more, the teachers are interacting more, there are more activities, etc. She noted that mentally her boys are doing fine but she has had a lot of people reach out to her that their children aren't doing well. Jackie asked if when the classes close, if they have a sibling, does that class have to close too? She noted that kids aren't dying and it's not affecting them like the other groups. She said it should be the parent's choice if they want the kids to return. She noted that with 8th graders there are milestones that they are missing that they might not get back. She added that to her the consequences are outweighing the benefits of staying home. Jackie said she realizes the school has people they have to listen to and can't just do what we want to do, that they have to follow guidelines, but she noted that she will support doing what is best for the kids. She also added that Logan would be happy to speak at a meeting if needed. She asked the Board to please think about the kids and the big picture and how all of this will affect the kids in ten years even.

Daniela Velasquez shared that she is an 8th grader who attended Marcum since preschool. She noted that in all of these years, she has been looking forward to 8th grade but now because of Covid a lot of that hasn't been able to happen. She said she has been dealing with things mentally and it has been hard. She knows that other kids her age have been dealing with that as well.

Alan Menigoz thanked Daniela for coming to the meeting and sharing her thoughts. Alan encouraged her and other 8th graders to become a part of the peer advising group that we will need once we get back on campus and to keep coming to the School Board meetings to keep the Board informed.

Heather Brooks shared that she is a licensed therapist. She noted that she has been working through the pandemic in the front lines. She said she has seen affects in the youth population, elderly population, and across the board. She noted that she was happy to hear that there will be peer advisory and other outlets available for the kids. She shared that she had heard that kids that are as young as 9 years old are leaving this world. Being isolated, not with friends, not having any outlets that we normally have are affecting us all, but especially our kids. Those things are important. Heather added that she supports our kids being back in school. She noted that her daughter has speech services and that it's difficult to keep her engaged and get her what she needs, which isn't typical for her, she usually loves school. She needs to be back in school. Heather shared that she understands that there need to be protocols. Friends in Pumas Lake let them know that they were having a lot of cases. Whatever Marcum was doing was working when it was open because Marcum had far fewer cases. Heather added that she supports the school and will do whatever we need to in order to bring the kids back.

Shayna Borges thanked Marcum staff and the school for everything that they are doing. She shared that there were positive cases in her home and that although they tried to isolate from her

son they weren't really able to and that he never tested positive. She shared that she really wants the kids to be back in school and feels that it is important for their well being.

Tiffany DeAlba thanked the Board for having this meeting. She noted that Preschool has been back at school for two weeks and it has been smooth sailing. She shared that she is looking forward to having the other kids back and that she is really happy that it is going to be sooner than later.

Jason Davis sent Mrs. Ortega a message via chat that she shared with the Board. Jason noted that he feels that we shouldn't go back just yet, or at least until the vaccine is available. He said he knows that it's not true for everyone but his grades have improved compared to the last few years. He said his grades have improved and he is thriving on distance learning.

Jeromy DeCecco again thanked the Board and the school. He shared that he knows everyone works really hard. He added that it sounds like we have a lot of patriotic parents and he loves that. He reiterated that he can't wait for the kids to come back.

5. ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Discussion and Vote on Marcum-Illinois Plan for School In-Person and Distance Learning for Grades TK-8th

Alan Menigoz made a motion to follow the guidelines from Dr. Luu regarding the reopening of Marcum-Illinois; Return to campus on February 8th for TK-5th and February 16th for 6th-8th. Jeff Moore seconded. Roll Call Vote 4-0.

6. NEXT BOARD MEETING

- February 8, 2021 at 6:00pm in the Cafeteria

Open Session Adjourned at 7:47 pm

7. CLOSED SESSION

- *Government Code Section 54957.6
Conference with labor negotiator
Name of negotiator: Jimmie Eggers
Unrepresented employees: Certificated Employees*
- *Government Code 54957 – Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Complaint*

8. REPORT OUT FROM CLOSED SESSION

Nothing to report

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.