



## **CASS SCHOOL DISTRICT 63**

8502 Bailey Road • Darien, Illinois 60561-5333

# **Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

**Minutes of The Regular Meeting Of The Board Of Education Of School District 63, DuPage County, Illinois; Held At Cass School District 63 At 7:30 P.M. on the 15th Day of September, 2020.**

### **Open Session**

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 p.m. Upon roll being called, the following members answered present: President Shelly Camden, Vice President Kent Absalonsen, Secretary Esposito, Member Brad Carrino, Member Lana Johnson, Member McCollian and Member Michael Ockrim.

Also in attendance:

Mark R. Cross, Superintendent of Schools

Laura Anderson, Concord Elementary School Principal

Christine Marcinkewicz, Cass Junior High School Principal

Gayle Wilson, Recording Secretary and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Approval of Regular Meeting Agenda**

Superintendent Cross requested that the Board approve the Regular Meeting Agenda as presented.

*Secretary Esposito moved and Member McCollian seconded a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Agenda as presented. Voice Vote. All Ayes. Motion carried 7 to 0.*

### **Recognition of Audience, Announcements and Correspondence**

President Camden welcomed:

Krista Jamrose  
Courtney Barry  
Katie Summers  
Nisha Garcia  
Katie Summers

Peg Mateja  
Sarah Dusek  
Katie Fujiura  
Carey Ockrim  
Carole Porro

Jay Mateja  
Karen Hyder  
Sapna Parikh  
Karen Hyder  
Frank Porro



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Secretary Esposito stated that the Board of Education received one FOIA Request that was fulfilled.

### **Public Comments**

There was no public comment.

### **Consent Agenda**

- A. Approval of August 25, 2020 Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. Approval of Budget, Cash Flow and Investment Reports
- C. Approval of Payroll Reports
- D. Approval of District Bills
- E. Approval of Employee Request for Leave of Absence

*Member Ockrim moved and Secretary Esposito seconded a motion to approve the Consent Agenda to include Additional Bills as presented.*

Roll call

Aye

Nay

President Camden

Vice President Absalonsen

Secretary Esposito

Member Carrino

Member Johnson

Member McCollian

Member Ockrim

Motion carried, 7 to 0.

### **Public Presentation and Hearing for the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget**

President Camden opened the Public Hearing.

Superintendent Cross presented the fiscal year 2021 budget which is a balanced budget. There were no changes from the tentative budget presented in June.



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President Camden opened the floor to Public Comment on the Budget. There were no comments and the Public Hearing was closed.

### **Reports, Updates and Informational Items**

#### **A. Administrative Report**

Superintendent Cross gave a quick overview of what has been taking place with the staff these first few weeks in school to help making remote learning as successful as possible.

#### **B. CARE Reports and Updates**

Lana Johnson stated that CARE had a meeting this past Monday. The BBQ Bash is scheduled for October 7 and the CARE Run/Walk is coming up on October 10.

#### **C. 2020-21 School Year Enrollment Update**

Superintendent Cross presented the 2020-21 Enrollment Report which shows that the District's enrollment has only dipped slightly, despite the pandemic and other options parents may consider during this time.

#### **D. Annual Report of Contracts Exceeding \$25,000**

Superintendent Cross reviewed the contracts exceeding \$25,000.

#### **E. Annual Reports of Salary, Compensation and Benefits**

Superintendent Cross reviewed the salary compensation and benefits reports.

#### **F. Presentation of Recommended Board Policy Updates – Second Reading**

Chairperson Camden presented the recommended updated policies stating that most of the policies are driven by changes in law and pertain to Title IX.



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#### G. Update Regarding Health Guidance, Remote Learning and Return to Learn

Superintendent Cross stated that the staff has done an amazing job with remote learning. He then reviewed with Board members and guests the Return to Learn plan which, due to recent easing of IDPH guidelines, allows the District to gradually bring students back to in-person learning. Students will return according to the following schedule:

PreK, Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Students - Wednesday, September 30

2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students - Tuesday, October 13

All but Kindergarten will be attending school on a blended in-person/remote schedule. Kindergarten will be attending four days a week in person for half days with either a morning or afternoon schedule.

Plans are underway to bring Cass Junior High School students back to in-person learning soon. A specific timeline is still being determined, while work is done with the schedule to limit mixing of students as much as possible in the junior high setting.

Dr. Anderson reviewed the plan for the return to school of Kindergarten students. The District is offering a four day a week, half day hybrid program focusing on reading, writing and math along with some science and social studies while in school and then on the other half of the day work with art, music, and PE remotely.

First grade teacher Karen Hyder spoke about the preparedness of the teachers. She stated that at this age, if she could have her kids in the classroom for even two weeks she would be able to make a connection and get to know her students and students will feel more comfortable.

Kindergarten teacher Krista Jamrose added that she feels that the younger kids will have no problem adhering to health and safety guidelines and wearing masks while at school and everyone is working together to help make this successful.



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The floor was opened to public comment and the following questions were posed:

- Is the District planning to re-survey parents regarding how many days a week the parents would like their children in school?  
Superintendent Cross responded that the District plans to keep the hybrid schedule that was originally proposed to ensure that the district can follow health guidelines during the pandemic.
- Is the District considering offering sports?  
Superintendent Cross stated that the area districts have decided together not to offer in person sports right now in compliance with current health guidelines, but this will be reviewed each season. The District is currently offering a virtual running club and will work toward offering more activities as guidance allows.
- A parent noted that she works in a preschool and the kids are wearing masks and playing together and wanted to know why the District cannot do the same?  
Superintendent Cross responded that if that is the case the school is not following current IDPH guidelines, which require the wearing of masks and socially distancing as much as possible.
- What are some of the schools in the area doing differently than Cass School District 63?  
Superintendent Cross commended all districts for their responses and stated that each school environment is unique. He also stated that what the district is offering in terms of the full curriculum is very strong and that the in-person blended plan will be implemented successfully. He encouraged parents to judge the performance of Cass 63 over the course of the entire school year, rather than the first two weeks of school, as successful remote learning needs to be part of the plan if the needs of all students are going to be reached.
- How are we making sure our kids are not regressing?  
The District is utilizing NWEA testing to monitor this and we are not showing much regression from the spring so far. Academic growth is a huge concern of the school district which is why the goal is to offer the full curriculum with full days as much as possible for students throughout the year.



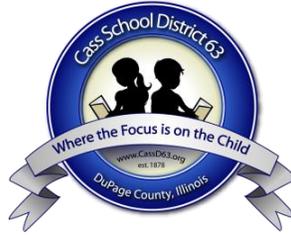
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- There is concern about the mental health of the students with school and sports being shut down. He thinks it would be helpful to have a return date to look forward to for students.  
Superintendent Cross responded that the social emotional health of students and staff has been at the forefront of all the discussions that we have been having and he will continue to communicate with parents on plans to return to school.
- Member Ockrim wondered what happens if DuPage County's numbers go up? Superintendent Cross responded that it is a possibility that the District would end up going back to full remote learning, but this could be avoided if the school district is managing well within the school district. School districts still have flexibility to make those decisions locally.
- Can the District create their own guidelines? Can we track our own numbers and do what works for our district if we do not have the numbers that suggest we need to close?  
Superintendent Cross responded that the health department really wants numbers to be considered by county not by town or zip code. However, school districts can look at their own data including positivity, close contacts, absence rates and other metrics to make these determinations.
- Is there a possibility that first grade students could come back for four ½ days like Kindergarten is doing?  
Not at this time. For older students who have more options such as reading intervention or high math class, it is difficult to make that work within a half day of in school instruction and the goal will be consistency for parents as well.
- How will remote learning work once students are in person?  
Superintendent Cross stated that it will not be easy but staff is preparing for that to ensure that all students are receiving a good education.

President Camden stated that she appreciates all the questions and comments from staff and audience members and thanked all the teachers, administrators and staff for all that they are doing to bring students back for in person learning.



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## **Recommended Action Items**

A. Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget

*Secretary Esposito moved and Member Johnson seconded a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget as presented.*

Roll call

Aye

Nay

President Camden

Vice President Absalonsen

Secretary Esposito

Member Carrino

Member Johnson

Member McCollian

Member Ockrim

Motion carried, 7 to 0.

B. Approval of Recommended Board Policy Updates

*Vice President Absalonsen moved and Member Johnson seconded a motion to approve the recommended board policy updates as presented.*

Roll call

Aye

Nay

President Camden

Vice President Absalonsen

Secretary Esposito

Member Carrino

Member Johnson

Member McCollian

Member Ockrim

Motion carried, 7 to 0.



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#### **Conclusion**

##### A. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

#### **Board Member Remarks**

- Member Johnson stated that she thinks this has been really good dialogue and appreciates everyone's perspective. There is no perfect solution to any of this.
- Member Carrino announced that he is resigning from his position on the Board of Education effective September 21 as he and his family are moving out of the District. Superintendent Cross along with Board Members thanked Mr. Carrino for his service to the Board, District and Cass 63 community.
- Secretary Esposito stated that the next Regular Board of Education Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

#### **Adjournment**

*Member Johnson moved and Vice President Absalonsen seconded a motion to adjourn this Regular Board of Education Meeting of September 15, 2020 at 8:52 p.m. Voice vote; All Ayes. Motion Carried, 7 to 0.*

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Shelly Camden, Board of Education President

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alice Esposito, Board of Education Secretary