

Central Bucks School District
School Board Briefs
July 27, 2021

At the July 27, 2021 School Board Meeting, the Central Bucks Board of School Directors:

Announced that the Board held an Informational Session on July 22, 2021 from 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. regarding virtual options, followed by Executive Session on July 22, 2021 from 7:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations. The Board met in Executive Session this evening, July 27, 2021 from 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations, real estate and personnel issues, and an informational briefing on the demographics study.

Approved the minutes of the June 22, 2021 School Board Meeting

Announced that live closed captioning has been enabled for this evening's meeting

Heard Public Comment:

Lisa Sciscio of Warrington Township addressed the Board regarding decisions about what is medically best for her family being no one else's responsibility, people in our community being afraid to speak, the Health and Safety Plan being clearly assembled, ESSER Funds, the Universal Screener that appears on the agenda, and playing politics with our children.

Debra Cannon of Warrington Township addressed the Board in agreement of the previous speaker's points, the damage that masking can cause to developing minds, youth suicide rates, and the Wolfe administration announcing that the governor will not require Pennsylvania students to wear masks despite CDC recommendations.

Erin Mazzoni of Buckingham Township read from an article that appeared in the Wall Street Journal regarding youth COVID statistics in England and spoke about children wearing masks being their parents' choice.

Mariann Davies of Doylestown Township suggested using a larger venue such as one of our schools for future meetings, suggested that the Board allow district residents to speak first and speakers outside the district to speak last during Public Comment, and then ceded the remainder of her time to the next speaker.

Marion Mass, MD, of New Britain addressed the Board regarding data from the CDC and peer-reviewed studies that she sent to the Superintendent and board members. Dr. Mass spoke about preserving the mental and physical health of our children, special needs children, teen anxiety, and Dr. Damsker's professional advice. Dr. Mass spoke about the proposed Health and Safety Plan and about moving forward.

Jamie Walker of Chalfont thanked Dr. Lucabaugh, CB administration, Bucks County Health Department, and our Commissioners for the plan that our district will be following. Ms. Walker spoke about coming to meetings twice per month pleading with the Board to listen to Dr. Damsker, and spoke about going back to normal without masks.

Patricia Doeblor of Chalfont thanked Dr. Lucabaugh and the Board for showing true leadership and helping the district move forward with the draft Health and Safety Plan and thanked the Board in advance for passing the Health and Safety Plan and spoke about following the county health director and the governor.

Trish Murphy of Doylestown (Chalfont listed on sign-up sheet) addressed the Board regarding respecting her authority to make decisions for her children and sending her children to school unmasked after the board voted face mask wearing optional.

Howard Schargel of Plumstead read from his Opinion Editorial that was recently published in a local newspaper regarding face masks, COVID cases, embarking on a new school year and a chance to return to normal, Director Smith voting no to the BCIU Health and Safety Plan at a recent BCIU meeting, and Dr. Damsker's advice.

Laura Roller of Warwick addressed the board regarding her family's experience with face masks and their experience during lockdown, her child's experience with virtual learning and asked the board not to go backwards.

Ben Goldthorpe of Chalfont suggested that the language in the Health and Safety Plan be modified to be more flexible in order to follow the data.

Jeanette Keenan of Warwick spoke to safety measures that parents practice and asked the board to choose the safer option. Ms. Keenan spoke of the current Health and Safety Plan being no plan at all.

Rebecca DeMalta of Doylestown Township thanked the board for voting for masks to be optional, and spoke about Critical Race Theory, Social-Emotional Learning, equity, and inclusion having no place in our school or our community and asked the board not to teach divisiveness, and to teach inclusion but not in CRT form.

Jon DeMalta of Doylestown Township spoke about masking being our decision as parents, voting to put masks in place would be 3 years of putting students behind a wall, discussed amendments and freedom and asked the board to stop this rhetoric and get our kids back to school.

Tanya Kovacs of Buckingham spoke about the Health and Safety Plan guidance, following the law first, and our local sovereign governing body having the power to override guidance when it is dangerous to our community. Ms. Kovacs submitted a notice titled "Children's Health Defense Notice for Employers, Universities and Other Institutions Mandating COVID-19 Masks" (attached to official minutes) and stated that if the board votes to mandate masks they have been served that they are violating federal law.

Lise Dietz of Warrington thanked the board for voting mask optional in June, spoke about parents being the experts regarding their children, spoke about the proposed Health and Safety Plan, and asked the board to pass this Health and Safety Plan.

Donna Shannen of Doylestown spoke about the media, face masks, board members denying at the June 22 School Board Meeting that CRT was being taught and introduced in our schools, read some questions included in a student equity and inclusion survey that 504 students participated in, and spoke about having school visitors photographed without their face masks when they enter school buildings.

Peder Cox of Doylestown signed up but did not speak.

Vonna DeArmond of Plumsteadville submitted a petition titled "Petition to End Masking of Students in Central Bucks School District" (attached to official minutes). Ms. DeArmond spoke about it being the parents' responsibility to protect their children, and about the majority of parents wanting masks to be optional.

Jamie Weikel of Plumstead Township signed up but did not speak.

Jennifer Bish of Furlong submitted a petition titled “Request for Masked Classrooms” (attached to official minutes). Ms. Bish spoke about the AAP, CDC, and Department of Education recommending masks in school this fall and spoke about repercussions for not following AAP and CDC recommendations and this not being the time to make cuts to academics.

Anu Viswanathan of Buckingham shared information from the Imperial College of London regarding the creation of a COVID-19 orphan calculator for many countries. Ms. Viswanathan spoke about the numbers of children who have faced the deaths of parents, grandparents, and grandparents who take care of them. Ms. Viswanathan read from a letter written by a Central Bucks resident regarding her experience as custodial grandparent of her grandson, the Health and Safety plan’s power to impact her family, and masks and mitigation measures being important parts of our toolkit.

Mariam Mahmud of Chalfont addressed the board regarding the importance of a safe and in-person school experience, anti-science rhetoric affecting our children’s safety and education, the American Academy of Pediatrics being leaders in their field, masks keeping the vulnerable safe, and keeping our kids safe.

Susan Lipson of Plumstead submitted a petition titled “Bucks Medical Professionals for COVID School Safety” (attached to official minutes). Ms. Lipson spoke about mandatory masking until those under age 12 have vaccines available to them, COVID cases in schools, the Delta variant, and keeping schools open.

Mary Margaret Briggs of Chalfont addressed the board regarding face masks, the recent rise in COVID cases in Bucks County, vaccinations, the district following CDC recommendations, and the district offering mask mandatory and mask optional classrooms.

Paree Pasi of Furlong reviewed the timeline of her initiative to add the holiday Diwali to the school district’s holiday calendar, the agenda including a draft calendar including Diwali, and named some of the Hindu students who will be celebrating Diwali.

Anu Pasi of Furlong addressed the board in favor of the Diwali initiative and asked the board to reevaluate the mask policy.

Marlene Pray of Doylestown acknowledged Paree Pasi for raising awareness about Diwali, spoke about the Health and Safety plan and ESSER grants, moving board meetings to larger venues at schools, and thanked CB support staff for being the backbone of the district.

Kevin Leven of Bucks County Anti-Racism Coalition (Kevin Eleven of Doylestown listed on sign-up sheet) spoke about Diwali being recognized as a school holiday, diversity, inclusion, and culturally responsible teaching, following medical experts and preventable sickness and deaths.

Swarna Alcorn of Jamison addressed the board in support of Paree’s Diwali initiative, masking, and ceded the remainder of her time to the next speaker

Disha Dhananjay, CB student, (not listed on speaker sign-in sheet) addressed the board regarding respecting her religion and celebrating Diwali by adding it to the school holiday and including it in our curriculum.

Andrew Burgess, CBEA member, addressed the board in support Paree Pasi’s initiative to add Diwali to the school holiday calendar.

Nithya Bhatt of Jamison addressed the board in support of adding Diwali to the school calendar and yielded the remainder of her time to the next speaker.

Elena Bhatt, CB student (not listed on speaker sign-in sheet) addressed the board regarding the Diwali holiday.

Arya Haridas, CB student, (not listed on speaker sign-in sheet) addressed the board regarding the Diwali holiday.

Silvi Haldipur of Doylestown addressed the board regarding community members supporting the addition of Diwali to the school holiday calendar. Ms. Haldipur spoke to several school districts to ask why they added Diwali to their school calendars; they reported that they wanted to be leaders regarding inclusion. Ms. Haldipur spoke about the Health and Safety plan, vaccines, and face masks.

Leah Barnhardt of Doylestown signed up but did not speak.

Sue Benzie of Doylestown Township (Warwick Township written on sign-up sheet) asked the board to vote yes for the guidelines in the Health and Safety plan and spoke about the negative health consequences associated with face masks. Ms. Benzie left a list of studies which was given to the board president.

Meghan Burkins of Buckingham Township asked the board to consider separate masked classrooms in elementary schools and spoke about her child's experience in school in June when wearing face masks became optional. Ms. Burkins spoke about in-person learning in a safe environment.

Melissa Smith of Doylestown addressed the board children under 12 not having the choice to vaccinate, unvaccinated people wearing masks, and yielded the rest of her time to the next speaker.

Dawn Haaz of Plumstead addressed the board regarding her family's experience with virtual school followed by the return to in-person school, the district's Health and Safety plan, vaccines, handwashing, and asked the board to vote based on science, CDC and AAP recommendations, and in the best interest of children.

Heidi Tarshis of Warwick addressed the board regarding what will be done for immunocompromised students who cannot yet receive a vaccine, offering a virtual option to receive an education while also feeling safe.

Heather Reynolds of Buckingham Township addressed the board regarding COVID cases being on the rise and the 2021-2022 Health and Safety Plan having less safeguards than last year's plan. Ms. Reynolds asked what statistics the board is using to make decisions and considering a round-table with local health experts.

Lauren Max of Chalfont addressed the board regarding indoor masking, following expert advice from the CDC and AAP, the proposed Health and Safety Plan, and the Boomerang Award and its related assets.

Melissa P. Smith of Chalfont addressed the board in support of Diwali on the school calendar and in support of better compensation for support staff. Ms. Smith spoke about in-person school, and the proposed Health and Safety Plan.

Kim Shaheen of Chalfont addressed the board regarding standing behind Dr. Damsker's advice and supporting optional masking in schools.

April Winco of Chalfont addressed the board regarding masking not being an option. Ms. Winco spoke about wearing masks being the biggest mistake made over the last 1 ½ years.

Jillian LeBaron of Doylestown addressed the board regarding the burden of protecting oneself never being given to anyone else and spoke about her child's experience last year in school with masks.

Theodore Kosin of Warwick addressed the board regarding board members working for their constituents, trusting science, and stopping fear mongering. Mr. Kosin spoke about students being able to decide if they want to wear masks or not, discussed a child being denied some services included in their IEP, and asked the board to allow our children to return to pre-pandemic conditions.

Nicole Rufe of Doylestown Township signed up but did not speak.

Jim del Rio of Buckingham signed up but did not speak.

Millie Herring, CB student, (Milly Herring listed on sign-up sheet) addressed the board regarding masks keeping us safe and protecting other people.

Evi Casey, CB student, addressed the board regarding COVID still being around, students wearing face masks, and listening to real science.

Bridgette Thompson of Springhill Circle addressed the board regarding the Health and Safety Plan being against expert advice, and about offering one class for each grade that will be mask mandatory for unvaccinated students.

Santosh Yadav of Golden Rod Court signed up but did not speak.

Nick DePaulis of Staffordshire Road yielded his speaking time to the next speaker.

Carolyn DePaulis of Staffordshire Road addressed the board regarding COVID co-morbidities, health care not being one size fits all, and quoted from some masking statistics. Ms. DePaulis spoke about natural immunity, low flu counts, viral load, face masks, and vaccines and children wearing masks being the parents' decision.

Jayd McFerson of Buckingham addressed the board in support of CB support staff, Diwali, letting parents choose how to mitigate risks.

Candance Biofore of Buckingham addressed the board regarding the increases in overdose deaths, face masks, the influenza pandemic of 1918, and the Nuremberg code.

Katrina Filiatrault of New Britain Township addressed the board regarding the school board representing all of us and the Health and Safety Plan disregarding layered mitigation measures.

Mike Filiatrault of New Britain Township addressed the board regarding rewriting the Health and Safety Plan to be in alignment with CDC guidelines. Mr. Filiatrault spoke about his children having a right to a safe school.

Damien Bucci of Chalfont addressed the board regarding teaching and learning while wearing face masks, spoke in support of CB support staff and in support of observing Diwali. Mr. Bucci spoke about optional mask-mandatory classrooms and making a better Health and Safety Plan.

Misty Watson of Plumstead thanked CB support staff. Ms. Watson addressed the board regarding optional mask-required classrooms and adding contact tracing back into the Health and Safety Plan.

Jessica Jones of Plumstead addressed the board regarding a communication problem in this district, discussed superintendent communication in the district she works for, and spoke about flexibility in the Health and Safety Plan.

Krista Szczypiorski of Plumstead spoke in support of CB support staff, advocating for students and making masks mandatory for elementary students. Ms. Szczypiorski spoke about wanting students back in school safely.

Emily Lieberman of Doylestown addressed the board regarding the Health and Safety Plan, mask-optional policy, wearing masks on buses, discontinuing contact tracing and notification, and supporting the addition of Diwali to the school calendar.

Mara Witsen of Chalfont addressed the board regarding schools never having required influenza vaccines and the burden is on the school district to prove the effectiveness of masks.

Anastasia Przybylski of Doylestown Borough addressed the board regarding the Health and Safety Plan that came out in June, hybrid and in-person instruction, getting back to normal, supporting no masks and following data.

Chloe Wientraub of Doylestown addressed the board regarding the Diwali initiative, lifting the mask mandate prior to herd immunity, and inclusivity and justice.

Meredith Ray, MD, of Warwick addressed the board regarding following the clear guidance of the CDC and AAP, wearing masks not being harmful, disappointment with the proposed Health and Safety Plan, and vaccines. Dr. Ray spoke about the Johnson & Johnson vaccine offered to district staff.

Michael Andris of Doylestown addressed the board regarding the adverse social, emotional, and physical effects caused by masking children and the COVID death rate for children.

Erika Zorn of York Road signed up but did not speak.

Jacqui Redner of Kuhn Drive addressed the board in support of giving CB support staff the money that they need.

Joe Pedrick of Palomino Drive addressed the board regarding the Health and Safety Plan not including quarantine or notification of cases, following the advice of professionals and experts to protect children, and doing what is most safe and sensible.

Michelle Harvey of Rolling Glen Drive addressed the board regarding her family's experience with COVID, wanting masks gone, COVID not affecting kids, and following the science.

John Keyburn of Stuckert Road signed up but did not speak.

Janet Santiago of David Road signed up but did not speak.

Vai Naridas of Adams Way signed up but did not speak.

Laura Henne of Bella Circle addressed the board regarding masks protecting other people, voluntary masking encouraging bullying, COVID case numbers going up, and masks being worn by everyone at school.

Reviewed the 2021-2022 CBSD Health and Safety Plan

Reviewed the School Board Reports:

- Curriculum Committee
- Finance Committee
- Operations Committee
- Policy Committee
- Bucks County Intermediate Unit
- Middle Bucks Institute of Technology

Approved Business Office Items:

- Treasurer's Report and Summary of Fund Disbursements
- Accounts Payable Check Disbursements
- Memorandum of Understanding between Buckingham Township and CBSD

Approved FEMO Department Items:

- Centica Business Solution exterior lighting upgrades district-wide proposal in the amount of \$606,010.00
- Tozour-Trance HVAC unit replacement at Holicong Middle School proposal in the amount of \$46,579.00
- T&T/Lanco, Inc. water tank removal at Unami Middle School low bid in the amount of \$22,500.00

Approved Special Education Department Items:

- Settlement and Waiver Agreement in the amount of \$19,500.00
- FAPE Waiver Agreement in the amount of \$237,543.00

Approved Curriculum Items:

- 2021-2022 District Calendar
- Emergency Instructional Time Template Section 520.1 Form for the 2021-2022 School Year
- Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center Agreement
- K-6 Academic Universal Screener: STAR Assessments by Renaissance in the amount of \$126,500.00
- Reading Horizons Digital Content Contract in the amount of \$140,010.00

Approved Policy Items:

- Remove from Table School Board Policy 216
- Approved School Board Policy 216
- Tables for First Read School Board Policies - 103.1, 113.1, 143 and 222

Approved the 2021-2022 Central Bucks School District Health and Safety Plan

Approved Personnel Items:

- Retirements, Resignations, and Terminations
- Leaves of Absence
- Appointments
- Assignment, Classification, and Status Changes

- Activity EDRs and Athletic Points
- Extended School Year Staff

Approved Student Items:

- Physician and Dentist Contracts for the 2021-2022 School Year
- Tohickon Middle School 9th-grade class field trip to Washington DC in April 2022
- CB East Cheerleaders field trip to Orlando, Florida in February 2022
- CB South 11th-grade tuition student for the 2021-2022 school year

Approved Staff Conferences/Workshops in the amount of \$612.00

Reviewed Reports and Information Items:

- Elementary and Secondary Semi-Annual Ratings
- Sabbaticals