

AUGUST 5, 2020

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL STUDY SESSION
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF SOUTH LYON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
DISTRICT #63-240 COUNTIES OF
OAKLAND, LIVINGSTON AND WASHTENAW**

CALL TO ORDER

President Hanshaw called the August 5, 2020 study session to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Anthony Abbate, Randy Clark, Craig Dashner, Carrie Hanshaw, Eric Kennedy, Jennifer Urtel,
Dan Schwegler

Absent: None

Administration Present: Steven Archibald, Superintendent
Lisa Kudwa, Assistant Superintendent
Kelley Engblom, Curriculum Coordinator
Kristen Weber, Curriculum Coordinator
Susan Toth, Director of Special Education
Stacy Witt, Assistant Superintendent

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Hanshaw offered an opportunity for public comments. The following community members addressed the Board.

- *Angela Harvey* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Harvey was concerned with the disruption of children if there is a positive case of Covid and they need to be out of school for 14 days. She hoped Administration and the Board will consider how the inconsistencies will impact the emotional health of the students. Families could use some additional information and understanding of different scenarios that could happen with positive cases.
- *Dana O'Connor* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. O'Connor was concerned as to how the district will address the need to clean the classrooms according to the CDC guidelines given that the SLCS budget only allows for a cleaning every other day.
- *Virginia* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Virginia was concerned that the current virtual model in the district will not work for working parents. She asked the district to consider working parents before a decision is made regarding a remote start or virtual only learning process.
- *Rebecca Terry* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Terry wants to start the year 100% virtual and protect the teachers and students.
- *Susie Steele* – Ms. Steele shared her concerns with Edgenuity courses and transcript grades and asked the Board to support a revision of this policy.
- *Andrew Stoller* – Mr. Stoller spoke on his concerns regarding school reopening.

- *Michael Rzyzi* – Mr. Rzyzi shared his concerns with online learning. He felt elementary students need in person instruction to do well. Also, children with special needs are not getting an appropriate education with online studies.
- *Erin Wilson* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Wilson would like the district to offer an option for in person school, five days a week. She is very happy with the proposed Return to School Plan and does not want any delays to face to face instruction.
- *Scott Destrampe* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Mr. Destrampe’s questions for the district if they intend to go virtual like the Canton School District.
- *Andrea Wilkins* shared her concerns with a remote start. She is an advocate for in person learning 5 days a week.
- *Brian Wilt* - Ms. Hanshaw shared a question posed by Mr. Wilt that if the school delays the opening and goes fully online, will a separate virtual option still be offered if face-to-face instruction resumes.
- *Nick Novak* – Mr. Novak shared the concern of the health and safety of his wife who is a preschool teacher in the district. There is a sub shortage, and she may be pressured to come in if there is no sub.
- *Sue Young* – Ms. Hanshaw shared an open letter from Ms. Young that was sent to the Northville School Board with input by a pediatrician. Ms. Young felt South Lyon Community Schools should consider getting kids back in school.
- *Michelle Pratt* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Pratt wanted to know how many students and staff will get sick before the district switches to virtual learning.
- *Jacqueline Cherry* – was not available to speak at this time.
- *Sarah Athey* stated that she misses her students but does not feel safe returning face to face teaching in the schools. The Back to School Plan does not allow for social distancing and other school logistics. She asked the Board not to endanger the students, teachers and their families.
- *Andrew Sanders* – Ms. Hanshaw shared that Mr. Sanders supports opening the schools for in person instruction with proper safeguards put in place.
- *Jim Mikola* spoke to the Board regarding his concerns and questions regarding online/virtual learning.
- *Jonathan Weinraub* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Mr. Weinraub mentioned that Monroe has a learning lab and remote curriculum. He felt it was a blend of the best of everything.
- *Elizabeth Ilitch* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Ms. Ilitch’s concerns on lower elementary and virtual learning. Ms. Ilitch also questioned why we are going back to virtual when 80% of our community had voted that they would prefer in-person learning.
- *Cassie* – Ms. Hanshaw noted that Cassie works in a hospital and sees death every day. She stated that South Lyon has a huge spike in Covid cases right now. Cassie needed to pause before sending her kids to school. Cassie asked that in person learning be delayed.

- *Jennifer* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Jennifer supports virtual learning in the fall.
- *Cathy* – Ms. Hanshaw indicated that Cathy stated that if all surrounding district schools around us are beginning with remote learning, why should South Lyon start with in-person learning.
- *A Concerned South Lyon Teacher* – Ms. Hanshaw shared that as a veteran educator in the district, the beginning of the school year is always an exciting time full of new faces ready to learn and welcome into our classrooms. She would love to get back to our normal routine, but the reality is whether a school returns to school in person or remotely this fall, neither will showcase our “normal.” Given the current status of the Covid 19 virus is rising, in-person learning is too much of a risk. She asked that administration and the Board to put the health and safety of our students, staff and families at the forefront by committing to a remote learning plan.
- *Lisa Sadikot* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that this parent has concerns regarding middle school crowds on the bus and at passing time.
- *Jason Scott* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Mr. Scott, as a parent of an elementary and middle school student would like to see the kids back in school in September.
- *Anonymous Student* – Ms. Hanshaw shared that as a senior in high school, the student wanted to return to school in person rather than virtually.
- *Lynn Henry* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Lynn was not available to speak at this time.

RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN DISCUSSION

Superintendent Archibald began by thanking those who called in or sent their comments. He believes that many of the topics that were brought up are legitimate and valid points that they have been debating and processing for several weeks. He commended those who articulated in such a clear way on such an emotional topic and in a respectful manner.

Mr. Archibald stated that the team started with the July 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap presentation. This evening they will share highlights of the presentation that were either updated or revised since that first July 20 presentation, and more specifically to spend some time on the complications that administration will continue to work through daily. Mr. Archibald (Superintendent), Ms. Lisa Kudwa (Asst. Supt. for Curriculum & Instruction), Ms. Kristen Weber (Secondary Curriculum Coordinator), Ms. Sue Toth (Director of Special Education), Ms. Stacy Witt (Asst. Supt. of Business & Finance and Ms. Kelley Engblom (Elementary Curriculum Coordinator) will act as narrators.

Mr. Archibald stated that if he were making a recommendation today, we would be in a fully remote start, and for a minimum of six weeks we would continue monitoring our community health data. We need to continue to monitor and work with the districts around us and continue to work to mitigate the complications with Phase 4 for in person instruction. He would anticipate moving to full instruction in phases. Mr. Archibald reiterated that he is fully committed to in-person instruction. It is what they do best and is what we know is best.

Two instructional models for the fall 2020-21 were shared with the Board.

- JK-12 Fully Remote Start
- SLCS Virtual Learning Pathway

Additional information is available in the district's Return to School FAQ which is posted on our website. The entire presentation can be found on the district website.

There were questions and comments from the Board.

- **Mr. Clark** asked if there was any consideration to looking at a hybrid model which would be a better opportunity for social distancing if we return in person.

Mr. Archibald noted that it was possible, but not with respect to a September 8 start. It would require our teachers to teach in a remote and virtual environment at the same time.

- **Mr. Clark** also asked if Mr. Archibald had any type of professional expectations of how many defections or losses, we can expect in enrollment with families seeking alternatives if we choose just the virtual option.

Mr. Archibald indicated that he did not have an answer for him. He believes that he has a greater responsibility to run a district effectively. He is moved right now for the safety of the staff and students.

- **Ms. Urtel** asked if Mr. Archibald was familiar with learning labs at school and if that was something he has looked at.

Mr. Archibald has not looked at that particular model, but certainly could with respect with the phase in.

- **Ms. Urtel** asked Mr. Archibald if he has looked at phasing and what it might look like coming back to school in person after 6-8 weeks.

Mr. Archibald indicated that he does not have a solid phase-in plan at this point but may start with a certain number of grade levels and build from there.

- **Mr. Dashner** stated that if we go back full time, teachers are at risk with no social distancing. If we go remote, we are putting a tremendous hardship on working parents to help student at home. We may need to start the school year in person and figure it out or we may not have a school year in person at all. What are triggers for us to go back and start school and handle the challenges at that time?
- **Mr. Kennedy** did not have any question but noted that he does not want to risk his family's health. There are still too many unknowns. What is safe for students, staff and the community? He thanked Mr. Archibald and the gang for all their hard work.
- **Mr. Clark** indicated that there are risks in everyday life. The Board will have to jump in at some point. They should take practical precautions and look at hybrid or go totally virtual.
- **Mr. Abbate** stated that the Board needs to start school at some point and should start remote. The hybrid model is more conversation. Possibly try with K-5 grades.
- **Mr. Schwegler** asked if students could have dual enrollment at community colleges to meet their needs if the classes can't be taken through Edgenuity. He also asked if a student tests positive for Covid, would their siblings automatically be quarantined? He indicated that he would like a phased in approach and to make sure that it starts with the kids who need the most help.

- **Ms. Hanshaw** stated that Covid does spread fast and easy among teenagers. One of the reasons with starting remotely is that you are teaching the entire district out of the gate how to do it remotely. Everyone will be trained. We need more time to learn to mitigate risks. We need to start remotely and use that time to come up with a more solid plan.

The Board took a 10-minute break from 9:30 – 9:40 p.m.

When the Board returned, Ms. Hanshaw announced that there would not be a vote tonight on a district plan. The vote will take place at the special meeting scheduled on Monday, August 10 at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Hanshaw offered a second opportunity for public comments. The following individuals addressed the Board.

- *Mary Peza* spoke to the virtual learning benefits and shortcomings.
- *Jill Manoogian* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Manoogian is supporting a return to in person learning.
- *Cherrie Wilde* – Ms. Hanshaw shared that Ms. Wilde has concerns with the in-person plan for bus drivers.
- *Jacqueline Cherry* shared her concerns with returning to school.
- *Leann* – Ms. Hanshaw shared that Leann is in favor of an in-school education and it should be made available for those who want it.
- *Concerned Teacher* – Ms. Hanshaw read the statement of the concerned teacher that parents don't understand face to face school. Virtual is the best choice right now.
- *Working Parent* – Ms. Hanshaw shared that the working parent wanted an in-person plan in place for students as well as a virtual option.
- *Kristy Mietelka* suggested using science as a basis for decision making.
- *Kindergarten Mom* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that this mom felt younger kids can't learn in front of a computer 4-5 hours a day. Young kids should be in school.
- *Robyn Carmer* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Carmer doesn't want students to start face to face in school and then have to return to virtual. It is not good. We need to start with virtual and keep students safe.
- *Kaitlyn Pyles* shared her concerns as a teacher about returning in person.
- *Morgan Lecrone* – Ms. Hanshaw indicated that Mr. Lecrone had some concerns about staying engaged for 5 hours of video based learning every day and not having a chance to interact or have a discussion with the instructor. He also asked if there was a plan for students to be able to take Spanish 4 and Band since these are not an option through Edgenuity.

- *Evelyn Krieger* stated that she felt that the best way to start school was to be fully virtual.
- *Jordan Dashner* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Mr. Dashner explained the benefits of in person schooling.
- *Nichole Abermanis* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Ms. Abermanis' concerns with students eating in the classroom.
- *Steven Bohannon* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Mr. Bohannon's comments on returning to school.
- *High School Parent* – Ms. Hanshaw shared this parent's comment that the schools do not have enough staff or money to support in-person learning at this time.
- *Lynn Russell* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that this parent has a daughter with special needs, and she did not do well with online instruction.
- *Katherine Duncan* shared her concerns with the number of students enrolled in her physical education class.
- *Allison Boiler* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Ms. Boiler's question as to why there is a separation between the virtual "classes" and the remote "classes".
- *Michael Rzyzi* questioned that based on the lack of funding, how much money is being saved by remote learning, and how long would it have to occur to make up that lack of funding?
- *Student* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that the student thanked Mr. Archibald for thinking of the safety of the students and supports him on the remote start.
- *Meredith McNamara* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Ms. McNamara's question if there will be a difference in the two options for classes that are offered in the district.
- *Heather Dashner* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Ms. Dashner's concern that parents in the district are making bad choices. The best learning for kids is when they are in school. Kids are better at adapting than adults.
- *Ralph Cortese* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Mr. Cortese's concerns with the kids not being in schools. When will things ever be perfect enough?
- *Amanda Wilt* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Ms. Wilt's thoughts that the district should consider phasing back from remote learning to in-person learning at natural breaks in the year such as the semester break. This would enable the parents to have the option of going to virtual at that point or going back in person.
- *Leann Sanders* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that she represents the students, parents and taxpayers.
- *Anonymous* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that this person wants their child to start the school year in person but is concerned for the mental as well as physical effects of in person learning will have on our elementary students.
- *Jennifer Colosimo* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Colosimo thanked the Board for putting the safety of staff and student at the forefront of their discussion this evening.

- *Michelle S.* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. S. shared a question for Ms. Kudwa regarding virtual instructions at the elementary level where there is a chance that students will not have school teachers teach their own students within their schools and students being mixed up with students from other schools to form a virtual classroom.
- *John Martyka* – Ms. Hanshaw stated the Mr. Martyka was concerned that the district is allowing group sport and the practices to happen but are not considering opening in person schooling.
- *Craig Skalski* – Ms. Hanshaw shared a question from Mr. Skalski regarding the commitment date for online vs. in person schooling. Will it be delayed since the district is moving to a 6-week remote learning phase to start? How can parents decide which option is best for their children if the return to in person plan is not finalized?
- *Michael Belcher* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Mr. Belcher offered his congratulations to the district on the bond passage. He also thanked Mr. Archibald and his team and the Board of Education for their unwavering dedication to the district and kids. He stated the community is with him and should continue to lead from the front.
- *Matt Blazck* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Mr. Blazck spoke on in person learning and that it is not going away. The district should not make our children suffer.
- *Andrea O’Keefe* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. O’Keefe shared her thoughts on the virtual path wondering if there would be uneven class sizes.
- *Sue* – Ms. Hanshaw shared her comments that it seems like all the roadblocks are inconveniences to going back the school face to face.
- *Brenda McCloskey* spoke on safety and learning. She supports virtual school to start and loves the transition with a six-week re-evaluation.
- *Andrea Wilkins* spoke regarding in-person instruction and would like more guidance.
- *Brenton Montie* spoke to the social emotional consideration and curriculum. He supports a remote start.
- *Caroline Mason* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Mason directed her questions to remote learning electives.
- *Jenna Setsuda* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Setsuda is curious why the district is steering away from the kids getting to choose a virtual versus in person learning model. It seems like a perfect way to “phase in” to the schooling that we had 12 months ago.
- *Parent* – Ms. Hanshaw shared a question that if the district decides to start remote or hybrid, has there been any thought to utilize the Early Childhood staff and para pros at the ECC who are certified teachers K12?
- *Another Working Parent* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that this parent would be happy with a hybrid plan with two full days in school.

- *Brian Anderson* – Ms. Hanshaw shared comments of Mr. Anderson that the state requirements for Phase 4 in-person instruction are financially untenable. Assuming the state requirements must be followed, the State has left school with only one realistic choice for Phase 4: virtual/remote which is very sad.
- *A Mom* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Mom’s question regarding what the plan is to accommodate the 28% of families without adequate technology?
- *Cathy* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Cathy thanked the Board for this new proposal to begin with six weeks of remote learning. She hoped all board members will support this proposal. She wants her children in school but worries about the schools not being able to proper distance and some have poor ventilation. She is an older parent and feels that now is not the right time to jump back into in person learning.
- *Lori Coppola* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Coppola thanked the Board for their service and dedication to our district. She didn’t want the Board to assume that families who preferred 5 day in-person instruction would not opt-in to a hybrid model of two days in person or three remote. The survey was over the hybrid or virtual option. If 5-day person is no longer an option, take another survey that includes a hybrid option.
- *Lawrence Baker* – Ms. Hanshaw indicated that Mr. Baker would like someone to explain the difference between remote learning and virtual. He also asked if the district has considered working with local day cares.
- *Lynn Russell* – Ms. Hanshaw explained the Ms. Russell’s daughter with special needs did not do well with online instruction. Both she and her husband work and cannot provide support during day learning.
- *Jennifer* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Jennifer wanted to talk about grades.
- *Amanda* – Ms. Hanshaw shared Ms. Amanda’s question to the Board if they had considered the idea of having grades 6-12 be online learning and grades K-5 be in the classroom. This could potentially allow all elementary age children to be spread out in the other buildings allowing for social distancing.
- *Jennifer* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Jennifer keeps hearing from our more affluent households that they are hiring nannies and full-time tutors. Where does it leave the lower income families? There will be a huge gap in grades because everyone does not have the people or resources to help them achieve good grades.
- *South Lyon Teacher* – Ms. Hanshaw stated the teacher thanked Mr. Archibald and the cabinet committee for hearing their thoughts and concerns and taking that into account for their updated reopening plan. They appreciate the Board putting the safety of our students, staff and community first.
- *High School Parent* - Ms. Hanshaw stated that one issue many of the children had in the previous online version related to multiple zoom classes scheduled at the same time. The parent asked if this issue could be considered when planning for the online options. Will students have the option to change their schedule to shift to classes favoring remote learning.
- *Gabrial Porcek* - Ms. Hanshaw indicated that she is leaning toward all year virtual learning but is not convinced that the current distance learning plan would work for them. She asked for more information on the Edgenuity option.

- *Mom & Teacher* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that using disinfectant chemicals in the amount and frequency recommended in the return-to-school roadmap creates an extended exposure risk to teachers and students. This is a hazardous proposition, creating another problem for a whole group of people (staff and students). Even OSHA recommends protective clothing. Teachers are not trained in the use of these chemicals and proper ventilation has not been outlined at all in these plans. She asked to keep our students, staff and community safe by delivering on-line instruction.
- *Brad, a concerned parent* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Brad has two elementary children in the district. He said that he firmly believes that South Lyon Community Schools are making a poor choice to not allow in person education. The Board should consider strongly rejecting the superintendent’s recommendation. From the data tonight, approximately half of those who completed the survey are asking for in person instruction. Don’t underestimate the number of children that will be pulled into private education.
- *Christine Campo* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Kroger, Lowes, Home Depot etc. have all been working and open since this pandemic began. They have not shut down or closed for “deep cleaning”. They have gone about things as usual. Schools can learn from their processes.
- *Kelly Bingley* spoke to in school learning and what rules are in place.
- *Alex Magee* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that in a normal day a maintenance staff member already completes an 8-hour workday with many issues that come up during the day. With all the added cleaning necessary now, who is going to do this? The district can barely afford the staff they have as they have laid off people already.
- *Emily S.* – Ms. Hanshaw that Ms. S. thanked the Board for making the decision now to begin virtually and giving our teachers time to prepare.
- *Juliann Sleek* – Ms. Hanshaw conveyed that Ms. Sleek has named several factors to consider. She noted that there are too many questions right now to make a sound decision for an entire district. She implored the district to continue to do what is best for the health of teachers, staff, children and family member of the entire district. The district needs to offer the same level of education for all students in the district. She urged the Board to offer a remote start for the entire district to save lives in both our district and community.
- *Courtney Rose* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Rose asked the administration to not reopen in person instruction for the fall in our district. She is fearful for her children’s safety as well as the safety of their teachers and our adult school community. Even though in person learning is important, she is not willing to allow her children to be sick, or to sicken others or her family. She is not willing to put her children in a position where they could potentially sicken their teacher. She asked administration to be creative and work with our district’s educational leaders to make a comprehensive and appropriate distance learning plan for the upcoming school year.
- *Community Member* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that this community member felt the survey questions were not phrased in a way that they could answer them to reflect their actual feeling regarding sending their kids back to school. Comfortable is not a word they would use when it comes to sending the kids back to school. This person is not confident in the district’s plan or any district’s plan for relying on the Health Departments for guidance when cases arise.

- *Anonymous* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that this caller wanted to know how these teachers are going to be able to teach remotely with their own kids at home. What kids will they be teaching? The ones in their class or their own?
- *Mother of HS Student* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that this mother would like schooling put ahead of sports, especially in the high school. She is witnessing sports teams practicing every day, yet we still are debating whether our education is going to be in person?
- *Jenny Wertheimer* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Wertheimer asked if middle and high school students could stay in one classroom most of the day while teachers change rooms. When the students must change rooms, could the times be staggered to reduce the number of students in the hallways and the number of close interactions?
- *David P.* – Ms. Hanshaw stated the Mr. P. indicated it is not fair to compare schools and education to other industries, businesses or professions. Stores have much deeper pockets than we do, and they are much more able to provide PPE and manpower to fulfill necessary requirements to keep people safe and healthy. It is also unrealistic to compare teachers to other “essential” workers such as doctors and nurses because they have systems and processes in place that allow them to take necessary precautions between patients. If we have ability to delay the start of school and buy some extra time to learn more about the virus and discover new solutions to keep our community safe, then we should use it.
- *Christine Campo* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that it feels to Ms. Campo that some of the staff are overly concerned about doing the extras that go along with returning to school during this trying time. It’s time to step up and put our children first.
- *Michelle Makera* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that Ms. Makera thanked the Board for their dedication to the district and especially the issue at hand. She knows that whichever option is chosen, many will not be happy. However, we are in the middle of a pandemic and nothing is normal. Who are we willing to risk for face-to-face instruction? I support hybrid.
- *Mom of HS Student* – Ms. Hanshaw stated that this mom is asking why we are still debating for in-person and virtual. Why can’t the parents just decide whether they want to be virtual or in person, as we were able to before?

Ms. Hanshaw announced that the next board meeting is scheduled on Monday, August 10 at 7:00 p.m. Hopefully, the Board will be making a decision on a plan at that meeting.

ADJOURN

Moved by Mr. Abbate, supported by Mr. Dashner to adjourn the meeting at 11:06 p.m.

Roll Call: Ms. Hanshaw-yes, Mr. Kennedy-yes, Mr. Abbate-yes, Mr. Dashner-yes, Mr. Schwegler-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Mr. Clark-yes. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,



Anthony Abbate, Secretary
Board of Education