

LEXINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE
Board Meeting Minutes
September 22, 2020

The Lexington County School District One Board of Trustees convened a special called Board meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 22, 2020, in the Lexington County School District One's Central Services Building One located at 100 Tarrar Springs Road in Lexington, South Carolina. The meeting was livestreamed on the Lexington One YouTube channel and a video of the meeting has been uploaded to the YouTube channel and LexOne video website. It is also on the Board Meeting Agendas and Minutes webpage.

Board Members: Chair Cynthia Smith, Vice Chair Anne Marie Green, Secretary Brent Powers, Tim Oswald, and Jada Garris. Dr. Kyle Guyton was not present.

1.0 Call to Order 6:00 p.m.

Chair Smith called the meeting to order and called for a motion to open the special called meeting. A motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Motion	Second	Action
Powers	Green	Approved Unanimously

2.0 Call to Order General Session of the September 22, 2020 Board of Trustees Meeting

2.1 Notification of Compliance with S.C. Freedom of Information Act

Chair Smith called to order the general session of the September 22, 2020 board meeting at 6:30 pm.

She said we were meeting in compliance with the Governor's orders, CDC recommendations and Town of Lexington ordinance. The auditorium has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before the meeting and will be after the meeting also. District staff will also sanitize the microphone before and after staff presentations or individuals speaking during Citizens' Participation. All board members, employees or other individuals in attendance are encouraged to social distance and must wear a face covering at all times.

There will be limited seating to maintain social distancing. Once that seating is filled, attendees will be asked to go to the Staff Development Room/Overflow Room, where they can watch the meeting while also observing social distancing guidelines.

The public is encouraged to watch the meeting on the district's YouTube channel. After the meeting, the district will follow its previously established process by posting a video of the meeting to the YouTube channel, LexOne Video site and our own website.

The district is in compliance with S.C. Freedom of Information Act by notifying the media of the date, time and place of the meeting.

The district tapes the meeting for accuracy in preparing the minutes.

Chair Smith called on Dr. Brent Powers for the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

3.0 Approval of Agenda

Chair Smith called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. A motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Motion	Second	Action
Powers	Anderson	Approved Unanimously

4.0 Citizens' Participation

Stephanie Berquist, Lexington, SC, parent of Beechwood Middle School students, advocated for five days face-to-face and believes that parents should decide if their children will wear a mask. She talked about exceptions that are made in schools such as vaccinations and the ability to play sports at this time. She thinks that along with the legal right to assemble that also includes the right to be in school. She says the online teachers are doing a good job but students, teachers and parents are struggling. She is advocating for legal, moral and psychological reasons for the students to go back five days face-to-face.

Jesse Oates, Lexington, SC, parent of students at Pleasant Hill Elementary and Pleasant Hill Middle Schools, advocated for five days face-to-face saying the immersion program does not work in the hybrid model. He believes that if private schools, sports leagues and the court systems are open and operating then the district should be able to provide five days face-to-face.

Kevin Helton, Lexington, SC, parent of students at Meadow Glen Elementary and Meadow Glen Middle Schools, advocated for five days face-to-face. Students can't keep up with the work on Chromebooks and missing homework and students have difficulty understanding teachers through the mask. He does not believe masks should be mandated and that it should be optional. He says students did not receive new material at the end of the year and still are not learning new material.

Stephanie Mower, teacher at River Bluff High School, said she values Lexington One's support of teachers. She cares about the health and safety of students and teachers. She believes the hybrid model is the best option to offer highest education while abiding by CDC guidelines and it is the best fit for the health, learning environment and well-being of students and staff. She has seen exceptional adherence to wearing masks and social distancing but still sees COVID in the schools. She is concerned that there is a stigma of negligence if someone contracts COVID and believes that we will begin to see a lack of testing or self-reporting. She believes the hybrid model continues to be the best practice.

Kathy Rhoden, Lexington, SC, parent of a student at White Knoll Elementary, advocated for five days face-to-face. She says her child is not getting the education he deserves and is falling behind. This is the time he needs to be building his educational foundation. She believes the risk of contracting the virus is small compared to her child falling behind in his education. She asked for the flexibility for parents to have the option to choose 100% virtual or five days face-to-face.

Susan Yates, Lexington, SC, parent of a student at River Bluff High School, advocated for the continuation of the hybrid model and 100% virtual school option. She believes in the science and sees the number of cases continuing to rise and doesn't think we should put thousands of students back in schools at the same time. She thinks we need to adjust and keep the students, teachers and community safe.

Irene Bearwalde, Lexington, SC, parent of students at River Bluff High School, talked about the challenges she knows the district is facing this year and expectations from parents. She says social media has highlighted issues that are not new this year but that may be more challenging in the current model. She says we are now seeing that children and minors are not immune to COVID-19 but are not getting seriously ill from it. She understands that all students are different and there are different priority groups of students and hopes the district can decide on how to bring the students with most needs back.

Madison Holland, Lexington, SC, student at Pleasant Hill Elementary School, said she was new to the district and says it is hard being new to a school and making friends by wearing masks and social distancing. She thinks all students want to go to school five days a week. She says three days virtual is hard and only has one hour zoom meeting on virtual days. She says she can go to dance and softball and wants to go to school.

Brittany Little, Lexington, SC, parent of a student at Pleasant Hill Elementary School, advocated for five days face-to-face. She says younger students cannot adapt to the virtual days like the high school students. She thinks the hybrid students are getting a different level of education than the virtual school students. She feels that since the number of COVID cases are dropping and we see that children in daycares are not

Citizens' Participation (continued):

getting COVID then we should be in school more. Parents are sacrificing at home and paying exorbitant childcare bills. She understands that COVID is real but feels that teachers are essential and as long as everyone is wearing masks they should be back in school.

Amber Sease, Gilbert, SC, parent of a student at Gilbert Elementary, advocated for five days face-to-face. She said high school students are having a hard time keeping up with work and that the home environment does not work for elementary students to learn. Children shouldn't feel so much pressure and stress trying to learn. She is fine with students wearing masks as long as they can go back five days.

Justin James, parent of students at Meadow Glen Elementary and Meadow Glen Middle Schools, said he was initially a proponent of the lockdown, but now says children need to be in school five days. The hybrid model is too little school and too much on parents to teach children at home. He believes that teachers and the purpose of school is so much more than instruction. He advocated to close schools for the remainder of the year, start again in January and furlow teachers and lay-off staff versus attempting to educate students for two days a week at home.

Allison Purdy, Lexington, SC, parent of students at Pleasant Hill Elementary and Pleasant Hill Middle Schools advocated for five days face-to-face. On behalf of students, she says they are not getting the education they deserve and are falling behind. On behalf of teachers, she knows they are working harder than ever and believes they want to be back five days. On behalf of parents who are working full-time and being a teacher at home she says the hybrid model is not working. She doesn't see COVID cases rising in schools and that daycares have been operating with no masks and very few cases.

Jessica Becerra, Lexington, SC, parent of students at Lexington Elementary School, advocated on behalf of students with special needs. Her child is a special needs student in mainstream class and has thrived in a face-to-face environment and has made great progress. Her second child receives special services as well. The hybrid model does not work in the home on virtual days. It's hard to stay focused during transitions and online workflows and they are retaining nothing. Since the Governor and State Superintendent Spearman had asked for special education students to return five days a week, she would like to see the district adhere to this. Her children need their support group every day.

Dominique Jones, Lexington, SC, parent of a student at Carolina Springs Elementary and student at Northside Christian Academy, advocated for the hybrid model but would like to see solutions to return the students to five days. He would like to see solutions for putting whatever safety measures are necessary in place to maintain a safe environment. Once we have those solutions then we could move forward.

4.0 Superintendent's Report

Before Superintendent Little presented Phase 2 reentry plans, the board discussed the fact that the decision to return to school is an operational decision and operational decisions fall under the Superintendent's jurisdiction as outlined in his contract. The board has heard all of the constituent's comments and feedback and takes them seriously and provides input to the Superintendent in the district's decisions.

4.1 Next Steps District Instructional Model - Superintendent Gregory D. Little, ED.D

Superintendent Little introduced Dr. Shane Phillips to provide data on feedback the district has collected over the past two weeks from various stakeholders. Dr. Phillips provided hybrid model data on both a parent and a teacher survey. Summary of data indicated that parents and staff feel safe in the hybrid models across all school levels, however, when asked about extending the school schedule to four or five days, two-thirds of parents were comfortable but staff was not. Less than two-thirds parents and staff at high school level indicated they were comfortable. Dr. Phillips shared common themes that arose from feedback from support staff, parent, teacher and principal advisory groups. The most prominent theme for all four groups was safety protocols. All groups felt that the safety protocols in place were working but they expressed concerns about their efficacy when

4.1 Next Steps District Instructional Model (continued):

bringing more students back to the classrooms. Parents had questions regarding procedures going forward, school schedules/times and receiving information about positive COVID cases and quarantining. Prominent feedback from staff was advocating for the continuation of the hybrid model and virtual Fridays. All groups felt that communication was the most critical piece.

Superintendent Little reviewed lessons that have been learned during the first three weeks of school. The first lesson is that the impact of exposure and quarantine is significant when not able to socially distance; and, secondly, quarantine is disruptive and it is difficult to support the student and puts pressure on teachers and staff. The hybrid model is a stable educational experience because of social distancing and social distancing is easier to accomplish at the elementary level. Superintendent Little said taking into account all of the data and feedback, the district needs to take measured, deliberate steps to scale up to maximize face-to-face learning.

Dr. Little presented Phase 2 transition timelines. PreK through 2nd Grade Cohort A and B students will return for four days of face-to-face instruction beginning October 5, 2020. This also includes self-contained special education students in all grades and English Language Learners in 3rd through 5th grades. These students will receive face-to-face instruction Monday through Thursday with Friday remaining a virtual day. This is called the 4 + 1 model. On October 19, 2020, if plexiglass has arrived and been installed, Grade 3 - 5 Cohort A and B students and other priority groups in middle and high school will return to the 4 + 1 model. In November, pending plexiglass installation and additional safety protocols, middle and high school students will return. The 4 + 1 model provides stability and will keep students in school instead of facing constant model shifts. Another safety measure will include the requirement that PreK - 2nd grade students wear masks to further minimize exposure for all teachers, staff and students.

Superintendent Little said that virtual Fridays are considered part of the mitigation strategy and are an integral part of the 4 + 1 model. Mr. Salters, Chief Operations Officer, explained that Fridays with no students in the building provides additional time for the custodial staff to clean and replenish supplies. Ms. Wood, Director of Nursing and Health Services explained that Fridays also provides a natural barrier to avoid the spread of any viruses. Ms. Wood indicated virtual Fridays are critical for the school nurses to give them time to investigate and report potential exposures to families and to perform contact tracing. The nurses also follow up with any student who is in quarantine to determine when they can return. Dr. Osborne-Smith explained the virtual Fridays provided collaborative time for students and staff. Students are able to get assistance from teachers during Friday office hours and teachers are able to collaborate and prepare lessons for potential model shifts and to support students who are in quarantine.

Superintendent Little reminded families that are in the Lexington One Online Learning Academy (LOOLA) that the opportunity to change to a face-to-face model will be available for the second semester. Due to staffing and class size limitations the district cannot honor changes from LOOLA to face-to-face for the remainder of the first semester or vice versa. LOOLA will be viable in the district moving forward after this year, however the framework of that will be evaluated. Jessica Buzhardt reported that with the introduction of elementary students to four days face-to-face, the employee childcare will begin to phase out as students transition to the 4 + 1 model; however childcare on virtual Fridays will still be available.

Questions and discussion from the Board regarding staffing numbers, vacancies and model shifts, reinforced the need to keep staff safe, regardless of the model. The available teaching pool and substitute pool is not plentiful this year due to the pandemic. The Board appreciated the surveys and feedback from stakeholders and asked administration to continue to keep them involved.

5.0 Action Items

Chair Smith explained that Board Policy BDH - Suspension of Policies, allows for the immediate suspension/amendment of Board policies due to extreme emergencies. The administration has reviewed policies and has a number of policies that need action. There could be additional policies as the year unfolds.

5.1 Policy JFAB Admission of Nonresident Students - Jeff Caldwell, Chief Student Services Officer

Chair Smith called for a motion to approve the administration’s request to temporarily suspend the portion of Policy JFAB Admission of Nonresident Students that relates to admission of International Exchange Students, due to COVID-19. This suspension will be in effect until the end of first semester - January 15, 2021. A motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Motion	Second	Action
Green	Anderson	Approved Unanimously

Discussion: Mr. Caldwell said this is not a suspension of the entire policy but the section that applies to foreign exchange students. It is not in the best interest of the district, schools nor students at this time to enroll foreign exchange students. Mr. Caldwell said the decision to suspend for the first semester may need to be adjusted or extended as the year proceeds.

5.2 Policy JICG Tobacco and Nicotine Use by Students - Jeff Caldwell, Chief Student Services Officer

Chair Smith called for a motion to approve the administration’s request to temporarily modify the Enforcement section of Policy JICG - Tobacco and Nicotine Use by Students, due to COVID-19. First offense consequence related to in-school suspension will be altered as follows: Students will report to In-School Suspension to complete the tobacco cessation course. Once completed, students will return to class. The second offense consequence which requires a student to complete six hours of school based community service will be temporarily suspended due to safety concerns. This modification will be in effect until the end of first semester - January 15, 2021. A motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Motion	Second	Action
Oswald	Powers	Approved Unanimously

Discussion: Mr. Caldwell said this approval is in relation to the consequences of the policy. The policy is not suspended, but the consequences will be altered. He said students’ time in the classroom is critical in the current hybrid model and this consequence would reduce the amount of time students would be away from class. The second offence consequence as it relates to students completing community service hours in the school building would be suspended so as to limit the movement of students in the building.

5.3 Policy JJIE and JJIE-R Student Drug Testing Program - Jeff Caldwell, Chief Student Services Officer

Chair Smith called for a motion to approve the administration’s request to temporarily suspend Policy JJIE - Student Drug Testing Program and JJIE-R Administrative Rule, due to COVID-19. This suspension will be in effect until the end of first semester - January 15, 2021. A motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Motion	Second	Action
Anderson	Powers	Approved Unanimously

5.3 Policy JJIE and JJIE-R Student Drug Testing Program (continued):

Discussion: Mr. Caldwell said that while this policy is critically important, there are several reasons this should be suspended in its entirety. The testing portion of this policy is a function of school nurses and they do not have the capacity to complete drug testing at this time. Additionally, with nearly 30% of the district’s students enrolled in LOOLA, these students would not be accountable for this policy at this time. Chair Smith said that since LOOLA will continue for the foreseeable future, administration should consider incorporating LOOLA students into all policies.

6.0 Adjourn Open Session - 8:40 p.m.

Chair Smith called for a motion to adjourn general session. A motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Motion	Second	Action
Anderson	Oswald	Approved Unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Brent Powers