



**GENEVA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 304
227 NORTH FOURTH STREET, GENEVA, ILLINOIS
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF A REGULAR SESSION
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Board of Education of Community Unit School District Number 304 met in a special session on Saturday, December 5, 2020, at 5 p.m. at the Coultrap Educational Services Center, 227 North Fourth Street, Geneva, Illinois.

1. CALL TO ORDER

1. Roll Call
2. Welcome
3. Pledge
4. Reminder to sign attendance sheet

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by President Egan.

Board members present: President Taylor Egan, Vice President Mike McCormick, Larry Cabeen, Dan Choi (via Teams), Policy Committee Chair Leslie Juby, Finance Committee Chair Dave Lamb (via Teams), Alicia Saxton.

Late: None. Absent: None.

The President welcomed everyone and lead them in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Policy 2:220)

(PRESS Policy 2:230) *Per Board Policy 2:230, attendees wishing to formally address the Board during Public Comments must register their intention to participate in person by completing a **Public Comments Form** [at this link](#). Copies will also be made available and collected at the entrance.*

None.

3. BOARD DIALOGUE TOPICS & PENDING ACTION CONSIDERATION

1. COVID Update

The Board President shared that the Board respects the work of the administrative teams and depends on their expertise as educators and leaders of the district. Our Board is elected to represent the community, students, and all stakeholders. This meeting is to understand the data and information behind the administrative decision to return to our in-person hybrid plan starting Monday, December 7. Since August, we have taken pride in the district's dedication to providing a safe learning environment for all students and staff. The development and successful execution of our hybrid remote learning plan has been the result of the collaboration of district groups. Board, administration, teachers, and our nursing staff to name a few. It is important in our current situation that we continue to inform, involve, and listen to all key players. The Board can only gather to discuss district business in a public meeting. For that reason, this meeting was called. We would like to respectfully understand the information gathered and the voices heard during this decision-making process.

The Superintendent shared that as administrators we need to follow the Board lead, and we did that with the approval of the hybrid/in-person and remote plan for this semester. In doing so, we presented that plan, and the safety aspects of it, because we knew we had a majority of parents, students, and staff, at the time, choose in-person/hybrid. We work very closely with the Kane County

Health Department and other local schools, as well as the Center for Disease Control and the Illinois Department of Public Health to stay on top of data. We enacted the plan with safety procedures that included wearing protective masks, and we also provided all our staff and students with masks. We also provided face shields to our staff as an added protection. We insisted on social distancing and followed that carefully. We also insisted on hygienic processes. We follow the three W's promoted by the Kane County Health Department. Students and staff that are absent from our schools with possible symptoms are placed in isolation or excluded from school until that period is over. We have been following those rigorous precautions ever since the year began. The week before Thanksgiving break, the Kane County Health Department asked all schools to take an adaptive pause for that week and the week following. Because we are partners with them, we went ahead with the recommended adaptive pause. They said they would assess it the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. We did meet and were told that schools were not high transmittal areas. In the contact tracing, they have not found that COVID is definitely being spread within our schools. We take this precaution because we know contact tracing does not exactly show the source of COVID-19. We value in-person education and have had no outbreaks in our buildings. As the projections were made that there would be an outbreak following Thanksgiving break, we said that we would assess things at that point. The numbers were climbing in the State and in Kane County, but have now leveled off. We look at what is happening in our schools, and over that two-week period, we had an additional 14 cases of COVID-19 reported. The Data Dashboard, that we update every Friday, shows what is in our school population. It does not show what is in our schools. We have also been told by the State and county health departments that their numbers are as accurate as they can make them. Knowing that schools are a safe place for students and staff, we felt we could return safely from the adaptive pause. There was supposed to be a big outbreak after that, and now we are hearing about the big outbreaks after Christmas and New Year's. That in-person time is so valuable. We did not want to have a situation where we are listening to emotions and projections that mean we cannot bring our kids back until after Christmas. It's like, how long would we keep them in full remote education. We are simply returning back to the model that was approved by the Board in the fall. We have also already put out the request for parents to choose a model for second semester. We are seeing a slight increase for in-person, however not everyone has responded yet. We asked principals to talk to staff, and they were saying that many staff want to be back in the buildings. We are a unit district, and we appreciate that we can be a unit district with our students and our staff. This is what is behind our decision to come back to in-person on Monday. Our concern is that, if we don't have them for these two weeks, that we may not have them for a very long time.

Board comments, questions, concerns: As administrators, you rely on the Kane County Health Department to provide you with data to make the correct decisions. Do they agree that it is appropriate to send students back on Monday? (Yes. They said this was a local decision and that they did not see why staff and students could not go back if it has been working for them. If we feel there is a need to take an adaptive pause, we will certainly do that.) We are a unit district, but I question the need to have everyone come back on the same schedule. Elementary could return safely, but the high school is a different situation. All of us started out thinking that in-person was the right thing to do, but as the density of COVID becomes increasingly clear, we need to be aggressive in our communications to parents. The concern at the high school is the number of students and staff in quarantine, and the quality of education that students receive during this time. We have heard from staff members that they would have felt more comfortable if we had waited longer before going back. I want to make sure that they had a seat at the table during the discussions. (What we have in place is that I depend on Dr. Barrett and Dr. Law. There is a separate committee that deals with COVID that includes leadership from different employee groups, plus Dr. Law has regular meetings with the different employee groups in the buildings. I also included the leadership teams from the buildings for their input and asked them to get input from their staff.) So, you feel confident that they were able to express their opinion? (Yes, and if an employee group were going to do a survey, I would want to know this in advance in the future.) One concern that has come up since August, is the concern of planning and the reason for this decision to come out early was so that parents could plan appropriately. With the back and forth of the plan for the students and teachers, in my own home there is a huge difference from the remote plan we saw in the spring and the current one. It is a concern that in the next two weeks that we might have to go back to remote before the winter

break, which is part of the reason for tonight's meeting. Are we in danger of taking the progress we made, the consistency we had at the beginning of the year and putting our teachers, students, and families in a position over the next two weeks? (This is a concern, but we cannot give you a 100% explanation on that.) We have to be informed to be that bridge of information to the community.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION TO CONSIDER MATTERS PERTAINING TO APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, DISCIPLINE, PERFORMANCE, OR DISMISSAL OF SPECIFIC EMPLOYEES OF THE PUBLIC BODY OR LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE PUBLIC BODY [5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)] [5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)] (Policy 2:220)

At 5:50 p.m., motion by McCormick, second by Cabeen, to go into executive session to consider matters pertaining to appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body. On roll call, Ayes, seven (7), Cabeen, Choi, Juby, Lamb, McCormick, Saxton, Egan. Nays, none (0). Absent, none (0). Abstained, none (0).

At 6:42 p.m., the Board returned to open session.

5. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:43 p.m., motion by McCormick, second by Cabeen and with unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED January 11, 2021
(Date)

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY _____

RECORDING
SECRETARY