

**Union City Area School District**  
**SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Middle School/High School Large Group Instruction Room**  
**August 6, 2020**

President George Trauner called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The salute to the flag and a moment of silence were observed.

**Roll Call by the Secretary**

Blain Blakeslee, Stephen Gilbert, Douglas Hopson, Lori Lewis, Kimberle Thomas, and George Trauner were physically present. Barbara Miller and David Robinson attended via Zoom. Brian Gregor was absent.

**Others Present**

Matthew Bennett, Tara Lineman, Melissa Tomcho, Stacey Mulson, Ann Sill, Mischeal Knapp, Tim Petrilla, Mike Swanson, and Maryann Mook (Journal) were physically present. Amy Coleman, Amy Webber, Steve Thompson and Krista Byler attended via Zoom.

**Presentation**

Mrs. Coleman gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled “**Possible Credit Changes for 20202021.**” [See Supplemental enclosed in the Minutes Book] She stated that the MS/HS will be on a six-period day this year to allow for core content classes to be year-long. Each class will be approximately 54 minutes in length. The schedule is designed so students are staggered during time between classes to limit the number of students in the halls at one time. Following her presentation she confirmed this would be starting with the upcoming school year. She was asked if the waiving of science would affect their ability to enter college to which Mrs. Coleman stated that it would not because science can be replaced with something else, if needed.

**Superintendent’s Report**

Mr. Bennett reported the following:

1. The August 13 meeting is being moved to August 20 for personnel reasons.
2. Return to School Updates:
  - Mr. Bennett distributed the updated plans for all local school districts [See Supplemental enclosed in the Minutes Book]
  - Updated Numbers  
The updated numbers for 2020/2021 school attendance are as follows:
    - Returning Brick and Mortar - 676 - Approximately 77%
    - Zooming In - 85
    - UC Cyber (CAOLA) – 55 which is great
    - Moving Out of the District - 15
    - Going to PA Cyber-Charter school - 2

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- Undecided - 42
- Still trying to contact – 82

Mr. Bennett thanked the Administrators for all of the phone calls they've made to families. It was asked how many homeschooled students there are which total 19 as of today.

- One-to-one technology devices

We ordered as soon as we could on June 2, 2020. The order included 380 Chromebooks and 300 touch screen Chromebooks (tablets) and the original order totaled \$73,000 with the projected delivery date being July 15, 2020. Mr. Swanson has been regularly contacting the company - calling every day for past 3 weeks. The company (called Connection) is highly reputable. It was learned this week that the earliest we will see Chromebooks is end of September. The rationale that was given is that the government has become involved. (Mr. Bennett distributed an information sheet to that effect. [See Supplemental enclosed in the Minutes Book]

Here is back up plan:

- K4 - Use after School I-pads from Cub Club which were obtained through Mrs. Coleman's Grant
- Kindergarten - Older I-pads plus overflow from Iroquois School District.
- 1st Grade (65) - Chromebooks from Iroquois' overstock
- 2nd Grade (65) - Chromebooks from Iroquois stock

The balance of our need will come from older Chromebooks we already have which are 6 years old. We have 43 of them and can get them up and running.

- 3rd Grade will have last year's 12th grade Chromebooks
- 4th through 9th grade – We are in the process of placing an order 380 Chromebooks through Amazon. This adds about \$26,000 to original price, but we are still well within what was budgeted to which Mrs. Lineman concurred. We don't have another option if we want to be prepared. Mr. Swanson has been resourceful in acquiring Chromebooks from Iroquois and refurbishing our older ones.

Mr. Bennett added that this has consumed a considerable amount of time over the last couple of weeks. but we are in good shape and all is under control.

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At this point, Mr. Bennett opened the floor for question which were as follows:

1. Is this an extra \$26,000 if we don't go through Amazon? "No, it will be that cost anyhow, but Mr. Swanson got us a great deal through Connection." The snag was when the government got involved with restrictions.
2. The Board offered to donate their Chromebooks.
3. Were local companies checked? "We are checking with Amazon first."
4. What about connectivity? Mr. Swanson responded that we currently have 200 hot spots and can get more and are working on adding hot spots in the school which will equate to close to one Wi-Fi access point in each classroom to improve the Wi-Fi and ceiling-mounted cameras are being installed for remote learning.
5. How does distance learning work with confidentiality in the classrooms when some students cannot be videotaped? "It's not videotaped, a password is required for access and the teacher controls what is seen on the screen. It is recommended that students have a blank background. The teacher can end a link at any time in the event something disruptive or inappropriate should happen and they would follow-up with the building administrator. This will be good practice in the event we have to go completely remote again.
6. In the classroom, will they have screens or TV sets? "Active Boards."

- Mask Policy

- Previously, individuals only had to state that they have a medical condition to be exempt from wearing a mask. Mr. Bennett reminded the Board these are not his opinions but what is being handed to schools. Now the State says documented medical exemption will be required (effective 7/16/20) and can be done through the students' IEP or the 504 Plan to make appropriate accommodations. This is fluid and may change again.

- Red Phase

We would return to this phase if the State or Department of Health shuts schools down.

- If the State or Department of Health closes schools, learning will all be online. Last year we were caught by surprise and everyone did their best, but it wasn't up to par as to what is needed for public education, so we must be prepared. This is a complete plan that covers everything from accountability in homework to grading. If there is an idea that we may go to the Red Phase again, parents will be notified and technology will be sent home with students. It is our hope to never need to use this plan, but we are required to be prepared. This

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will be on the agenda on August 20. Once it is approved, Mr. Bennett will submit our plan to PDE and post it on our website. The administrators have been sharing it with the teachers to answer any questions prior to the start of the school year.

It was asked if this will be similar to those who are doing distance learning. Mr. Bennett replied that it is similar except that it will be everyone/

- Covid Exposure Map – Mr. Bennett distributed an outline of what steps are taken when students or a teacher becomes ill at school. Mrs. Coleman has been working with the Admin. Team, Department of Health, the School Nurse and Solicitor to develop this plan and an updated map will be shared with the Board via email when complete. This will clearly explain the required steps if any student, faculty, or staff is identified of having COVID, is exposed to COVID, and/or has symptoms. He was asked during the talk radio interview what will be done if someone has symptoms or tests positive. He replied that quarantining won't be necessary because we are set up to be socially distanced by at least six feet or will be wearing a mask. In order to have to quarantine, an individual needs to be with someone showing symptoms or testing positive for fifteen minutes, six feet or closer. There will also be procedures to visit the nurse and a health service reporting form must be completed. It will also explain the return procedures.

We have requested that the Erie County Health Department come in and inspect our school and plan before opening to provide any further recommendations to keep our students, faculty, and staff safe.

- PIAA
  - The superintendents sent a group response to PIAA which states that we are ready to support our student-athletes, but first they want to review each sport's safety plan.
  - PIAA took responsibility for cancelling the winter and spring sports, but now they are saying it is up to individual school districts.
  - Governor Wolf made statement today he recommends no sports through December 31 with the rationale that a cure or vaccine will be available. As a follow-up to that announcement, PIAA held an emergency meeting at 2:30 p.m. today which is being followed up by another meeting at 1:00 p.m. tomorrow with a press conference

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tomorrow. He handed out a copy of the press conference. [See Supplemental enclosed in the Minutes Book] He will update the Board as soon as he hears anything more.

**Administrative Reports** [See Supplementals enclosed in the Minutes Book]

Mrs. Coleman was asked how they arrived at a statistics class. She replied that when they were looking at college offerings for social sciences and education, Elementary Statistics was a class for introduction for college. Last year there was no student interest; this year there is. Mr. Hopson offered to show Parker's system when the kids are able to do so.

It was mentioned that there was no Elementary Report linked for the Board. Mr. Bennett stated that Mr. Shrouf has been on vacation and was excused from attending the meeting, but he will get the report and e-mail to all Board members.

It was asked about the planters noted in Mr. Thompson's report. Mr. Bennett stated that these are part of the safety and security plan as recommended during the audit to get something in front of the exits. They chose planters rather than cement blocks which are more attractive. They were purchased by a grant secured by Mrs. Coleman. It was also asked if the outside air intake at up to 40% would also be conducted in the winter months. Mr. Bennett replied that they are awaiting updated information from the Department of Health which are to be received monthly.

Mrs. Byler was asked if the online learners would have access to meals. Mrs. Byler stated that the meal distribution will be similar to what it was in March in that families can order meals online or by leaving a voice message. She is working with Monark Transportation to set up pick-up sites in addition to pick up at the school.

**Representative Reports**

Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit Board of Directors

Mr. Trauner stated that the IU Board did not meet in July.

Erie County Technical School Joint Operating Committee

Mr. Gilbert reported that the JOC had a special meeting on July 23 regarding the renovation that adjourned at 9:45 p.m. with the following highlights:

1. The roundabout is coming but no cost has been given yet.
2. The JOC representative from the Wattsburg School District has resigned due to accepting a position with the School District.
3. The HR position was filled by one of the 40+ applicants who had a great resume.
4. The Act 93 employees and Business Manager have agreed to a one-year extension to her contract which remains the same. Negotiations will begin again next year.
5. Chris Coughlin attended and spoke at length on future renovation project. (Mr. Gilbert showed a booklet if anyone wanted to view it.) He stated there will be a quick timeframe and by September they want to have the design development finished. and by December have all of the construction documents completed.

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They hope to go out to bid in February and start construction May 2021 with the final completion date August 2022.

6. Mr. Gilbert had posed several questions based on our District's recently completed renovation, namely (1) Why didn't they contract with Smart Edge since it saved our District considerable money? Some thought it would be done with cheaper products and it was foolish; (2) Are we hiring a roofing consultant to which they were in agreement; (3) Are we hiring a Clerk of the Works which Mr. Emerick (ECTS Superintendent of Record) agrees should be hired; (4) Things seem to be moving fast and information is not be passed on from the Building Committee to the JOC – the participating school boards have not yet approved the renovation. Upon review of the past minutes, it was proven that this had not been sent to the various school boards for approval. It will be coming. He is hoping the superintendents will push to investigate the advantage of using Smart Edge, a roofing consultant and a clerk of the works after how much it saved our District. Mr. Bennett added that he is also in the minority and agrees with Mr. Gilbert. Mr. Emerick is strongly in favor of using Hallgren, Restifo, Loop and Coughlin Architects, and Mr. Bennett expressed his opinion and our District's displeasure during our renovation as well as the savings we received through Smart Edge and ESCO. Mr. Bennett added that it looks favorable that Denis O'Brien may be approved as Clerk of the Work, and he's hoping they will use our roofing consultant which save hundreds of thousands of dollars and we got a great roof.
7. Mr. Gilbert added that he was contacted by a parent of one of the classes that has not yet received their certifications for employment. He was assured that all will be certified by the middle to the end of August. Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Tomcho confirmed this with ECTS Principal, Joe Tarasovich, and they are in process.
8. Mr. Gilbert asked Mr. Bennett how the scheduling changes will affect ECTS students. Mrs. Tomcho responded that if we remain in the green, classes will start on August 25. If we go to the yellow phase, we will be fine and can continue with our current plant. ECTS students will be on an A/B schedule with a lab-assigned day and remote learning the other day.

Mr. Trauner asked what if any school district votes “no” to the renovation unless they agree to hire Smart Edge? Mr. Gilbert replied that there has to be unanimous support of all school districts in order to continue with the renovation plans.

**Other Business**

Mr. Gilbert announced that he will be out of town on August 20 and asked to be excused from the meeting.

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Mr. Trauner asked the Board to review the August 20 draft agenda. Mrs. Lineman was asked if the motion to approve the 2020/2021 District tuition rates was a special offer. She responded that it's offered every year as a discounted rate if a family resided in the District in the past or has family who resides within the District. It was asked the rate for our District vs. other districts to which Mr. Bennett replied that ours is a reasonable rate and some districts inflate the rate in order to discourage tuition students. Mrs. Lineman was asked how many would take advantage of this and she replied that there are three on the list.

**Executive Session**

Mr. Trauner reminded the Board that an Executive Session for the purpose of Personnel and Legal discussion would follow adjournment.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Blakeslee moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Gilbert. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

Mr. Trauner declared the meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Sill  
School Board Secretary