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Minutes of a Special Board Meeting of the Governing Board

Office of the Board
Maricopa County, Arizona
August 19, 2021
5:00 p.m.

1. Opening Items - 5:00 pm

1.01 Roll Call

Barb Mozdzen, Board President; Jason Olive, Board Vice President; Lara Bruner, Lindsay Love and Joel Wirth, Board members.

Frank Narducci, Interim Superintendent; Lana Berry, Chief Financial Officer; Frank Fletcher, Associate Superintendent for Support Services; Dr. Craig Gilbert, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education; Dr. Wendy Nance, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Larry Rother, Sr Executive Director for PK-12 Educational Services; Leo Schlueter, Director of Elementary Education; Lyndsay Hartley, Director of Health Services; and Terry Locke, Director of Community Relations.

2. Action Items

2.01 Review of Options Related to CUSD's Mitigation Plan

Interim Superintendent Frank Narducci opened by apologizing to parents, students, and staff for the events surrounding mitigation strategies for the 2021-22 school year and acknowledged receipt of over 1,000 emails in the past few days. Whatever the Governing Board decides in moving forward, a fraction of the community will not be happy. He introduced administrators to share information to help guide the discussion this evening.

- Dr. Gilbert, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, shared data specific to CUSD by explaining the details of the dashboard, which is on the CUSD website and updated daily.
- Dr. Nance, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, shared the results of the staff survey. CUSD employs 5,201 people and 3,709 completed the survey within 28 hours. Broken down by employee groups - 33% support staff, 55% teachers, 8% professional certificated and 4% administrators. Ninety-four percent are returning employees and 6% are new hires.
- Lana Berry, Chief Financial Officer, discussed the impacts to the budget when schools were closed, specifically gap funding and explained information released this week for the Education Plus Up Grant, with the stipulation that school districts must follow all laws and remain open in order to receive the funds. This would total approximately \$60 million dollars to Chandler Unified School District over the next three years. Lana clarified the funds are to be used for loss of learning, including hiring additional staff and technology.

Mr. Narducci provided five options along with pros and cons in order to prompt discussion:

Option 1:

No modifications to Current Mitigation plan. When a school's threshold for confirmed cases reaches 1.0% (high), 1.5% (junior high), 2.0% (elementary) mitigation strategies are increased at the impacted site for a minimum of two (2) weeks. Masks remain strongly recommended, but optional.

2. Action Items (cont'd)

2.01 Review of Options Related to CUSD's Mitigation Plan (cont'd)

Pros:

Consistency through September 29, 2021 and beyond
Individualized to site impact (Localized data)
Parental Choice of Face Coverings
Protects funding

Cons:

Based on CDC and other health agencies, mitigation strategies not maximized district wide
Some age groups not able to be vaccinated as a parental choice

Option 2:

A modification to the current mitigation plan **requiring temporary face coverings for all students and staff at all district schools and facilities. Face Coverings would not be required outdoors.** Provide authorization to the Superintendent to remove the temporary face covering requirement as of September 29, 2021 to meet the State Law which prevents school districts and district governing boards from mandating face coverings in schools.

Pros:

Consistency across all schools
Layer of protection for children that cannot be vaccinated
Per CDC recommendation may not need to quarantine students

Cons:

Removes Choice
Potential impact on funding
Does not consider individual school or local data
May be temporary through September 29
Schools cannot control current status of lack of mitigation in the community

Option 3:

A modification to the current mitigation plan to include **temporary face coverings as an additional mitigation strategy for students and staff while indoors when a school's threshold** when confirmed cases reaches 1.0% (high schools), 1.5% (junior high) and 2.0% (elementary). The mitigation strategies are increased at the impacted site for a minimum of two (2) weeks. Masks remain Strongly recommended but optional for those sites that do not meet the threshold. Provide authorization to the Superintendent to remove the temporary face covering requirement as of September 29, 2021 to meet the State Law which prevents school districts and district governing boards from mandating face coverings in schools.

Pros:

Increase layer of mitigation at schools
Individualized data and mitigation based on local data and school site
Temporary wearing of face coverings during the higher threshold period only may lessen quarantine

Cons:

Based on CDC and other health agencies recommended mitigation strategy not maximized district wide
Potential impact to funding
Some age groups not able to be vaccinated as a parental choice

Option 4:

A modification to the current mitigation **plan to include a reduction to thresholds by .25% at all levels.** The modification will reduce school thresholds, of confirmed positive cases, to .75% (high Schools), 1.25% (junior high) and 1.75% (elementary). The mitigation strategies are increased at the impacted site for a minimum of two (2) weeks.

2. Action Items (cont'd)

2.01 Review of Options Related to CUSD's Mitigation Plan (cont'd)

Pros:

Increase layer of mitigation at schools earlier
Individualized data and mitigation based on local data and school site

Cons:

Based on CDC and other health agencies recommended mitigation strategy not maximized
Potential impact to funding
Some age groups not able to be vaccinated as a parental choice

Option 5:

A modification to current mitigation plan **requiring temporary face coverings for students who attend elementary and junior high school**. Face Coverings would not be required outdoors. Provide authorization to the Superintendent to remove the temporary face covering requirement as of September 29, 2021 to meet the State Law which prevents school districts and district governing boards from mandating face coverings in schools.

Pros:

Maximum mitigation for those who cannot be fully vaccinated as a parental choice
Per CDC recommendation may not need to quarantine at high rates

Cons:

Potential Funding impact
Limiting choice
Not maximizing mitigation at high schools where social distancing of students is most difficult to achieve

Mr. Narducci also shared additional options that other districts have tried:

- 1) requiring masks with an opt-out option for parent choice
this option is difficult to manage and some districts placed a limit on those requesting this option, although the mandate with the opt-out may cause the community to take masking more seriously
- 2) segregation in classrooms (masked in one room; unmasked in another)
this option makes it difficult to balance classrooms, can cause multi-grade classrooms, and is also impossible in secondary schools because of the variety of courses

Board members and administration discussed topics regarding notification to families in other languages, pool testing, schoolwork while quarantining, and sick leave for staff.

Approve Option 1

Motion by Jason R Olive, second by Joel H Wirth.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Barb R Mozdzen, Jason R Olive, Joel H Wirth

Nay: Lara E Bruner, Lindsay A Love

Barb Mozdzen acknowledged that situations change rapidly, and circumstances could be different in a week. Parents still have the option to send their children with masks or not and the option of online learning through Chandler Online Academy or any online learning. She pled with the entire community to work together to keep everyone safe and do the right thing.

Frank Narducci acknowledged that the board made a difficult decision, evidenced by a split decision, and assured that the administration will watch to make sure mitigation strategies are enforced. The decision will be communicated to our families, along with a stricter quarantine piece as well. He asked the community to come together and for families to work within the strategies that the Governing Board has given us. He recognized that numbers are lower, but that can vary, and changes will be made as needed. Mr. Narducci encouraged the staff and community to mask up - as it is strongly recommended in the mitigation plan and signage.

3. Adjournment

- 3.01 Adjourn the Meeting
Meeting adjourned at 6:45.